



Episode 377 – Parents Role During Kids Classes | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

How's it going everybody, welcome! This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 377 and today were going to talk about the role that parents guardians play in youth martial arts classes. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host on this show, I'm the founder at whistlekick and I just, I love martial arts what can I say, it is, it's my thing, it's my passion and it became my career. I guess you could say, it's my job and part of my job is bringing you this show twice a week all for free and you can check out all the episodes at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. Of course, you can find all the products we make the things we sell that keep the lights on at whistlekick.com and if you use the code PODCAST15 you can save 15%. And whether you buy something or share this episode or leave us a review, please just do something to help us out. You know, it's a lot of work, it's a lot of expense doing the shows he may not realize but there's a lot that goes into it. So help me justify it to the accountants. Thank you. If you teach martial arts classes and if you're part of those classes involve children, you've probably noticed that there's a pretty important factor for a lot of those kids and that's the parents. Whether they're watching on the side or not, they have a tremendous role in those children's martial arts development.

So we're gonna talk about that, we're gonna talk about some of my thoughts on how to get the most positive impact out of the parents and maybe some things you can do if you're having some challenges and I'm basing this on you know, just my time as a martial artist, my time as a martial arts school owner, the time that I have traveling around teaching you know, sometimes I teach kids classes there are parents there and I've had to learn how to work with them especially since I don't have relationships



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with most of them because I'm in there once maybe twice a year. So this is all based on my own personal accounts and of course if you have different ideas, I'd love to hear them and the best place is to go to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com episode 377, there will be a transcript there, most episodes we do photos, not a lot of important, really relevant photos were gonna drop in here but there is a place to leave comments at the bottom and I would love for people to do that. Let's create some good discussion.

Of course different martial arts schools have a different physical setup so depending on that set up you may have a different relationship between the children in class and their parents. Some schools just flat out don't want the parents stick around, they have to go, they don't have a waiting area, they tell the parents we've got this, leave us alone. Then you have other schools that have a, kind of a reserve spot where the children can't see the parents but the parents can watch them over some kind of closed-circuit camera you know, TV kind of a set up. And then of course, the way that I see most often is some chairs benches set up and the parents are in the same physical space just off to the edges watching the children. There are pros and cons to all three of those and there's probably some other variations out there. So let's talk about them. Of course I don't have to tell you that parents are incredibly important when it comes to children and whatever a child is going to get out of life when a parent shows a child something matters, the child believes that. So for parents to show up to stick around to want to participate for good or for bad, they're attempting to show their child that hey coming martial arts class matters and I want you to get the most out of it. And I think it's really important to remember that those parents want what's best for their child so even if you disagree with them as to how to get that done, remember you're on the same page. You're trying to help, really you're coming from the same place, you're trying to help that child grow to advance to become a better person through martial arts. Now, I don't have to tell you that there are plenty of parents out there who will undermine the instructors authority telling kids, no stop doing that pay attention and it can be incredibly frustrating especially as an instructor who has their own style. I try to give kids a little bit of space. I find that if I let them mildly act out but I don't reward it, they tend to pay better attention once they realize that I'm not going to give them the attention that they're looking for so it tends to to steer them more into our, more towards attention for doing a good job that's what I try to give attention for. And it tends to work, I'd like to say I'm pretty good with kids, I'm certainly not the best. I don't even think I'm close to the best, but I've got a lot better over the last few years working with children and a lot of that comes from this kind of a transition. I used to be really hard on kids, I used to be really strict with them, I thought discipline and lots of discipline was the best way to get the best out of a child because that's what I grew up seeking, that's how I was raised both martial arts and also at home. But I learned it that's not the only way, and I learned that for most children at least now that's not usually the best way. Of course when parents try to discipline the child or supplement the discipline their instructor is giving that comes from a good place but it's often frustrating. It may or may not be helpful, in fact it usually isn't. I don't have to tell you that you're probably not so much of a parent a martial artist but more likely instructor. You've seen this, you see the frustration and you've likely experienced it. But of course that's a fine line because



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if the parents are on the side and the kids acting up and trying to get their parents attention, and the parents don't do anything, the child may think that it's okay to act the way they're acting especially if it's more subtle things that the instructor doesn't see, you know, maybe you've got a newer students towards the back of the room and you can't quite see what's going on there and are goofing off and the parents just let it go. So there's a fine line there. Now as an aside this is one of those reasons I really like the idea family classes, if the parents are going to be a let's get him involved. And family class doesn't have to be and probably shouldn't be taught the exact same way that you would teach a kid class or an adult class. There's a different dynamic, there's a different vibe to that class and of course there are advantages there to having the parent and the child together. Now, not every parent and child can handle this, but I'd say most of them can. And if you can build a curriculum for that sort of a class that benefits both, you're gonna see really good retention and it makes your job much easier.

I think the number one reason the parents will overstep the lines is because they don't know where they are. Not every instructor is good at setting the expectations with parents when they enroll their child in classes. To say here's what I need from you, here's when I need it the rest the time just let me do my job. I'm a big fan of writing those things out giving a sheet to parents saying hey if you're gonna stick around and assuming that your school permits this, if you stay for class here is when you do and when you don't interact with your child. If those interactions are understood and the parents feel safe in giving you the authority to do what you need to do, the child is gonna benefit, the parents are gonna benefit and of course you're going to benefit, everybody wins when those expectations are understood. But unfortunately, I don't see that too often and because instructors are afraid of offending the parents for losing students they don't correct parent behavior. Now if you're in a school in your listening to this and you're saying, you know Jeremy that makes sense, I really should set the expectations of parents, it's not too late. It doesn't mean you have to set everybody down and scold them, keep it positive. I would argue that the vast majority if not every single parent bringing their child to your school right now, things good things of your school otherwise they probably wouldn't be there. Maybe they have some concerns, maybe there are some issues, maybe they'd give you 9/10 but it doesn't mean that you can't write something up and give it to them either in hand or email to them, let them know hey here's what's expected. And it's important to make sure that there supporting each other, if you have parents on the size they're probably talking to each other. And to make sure that they all feel safe together watching, that's something of a tremendous amount of control over.

One of the things I've said on the show before is that I don't believe anybody gets a black belt without putting in time outside of class. I also don't believe anyone gets a black belt without support outside of class. And were talking about youth, those parents are pretty critical. So having them on your side and understanding that your all in this together, you're all trying to help this child grow through the martial arts is pretty important. On the flipside, any problems that you see with that child more than likely can be tracked back to the parents. That doesn't mean that you go in guns blazing or with an accusatory way, if you have a student who's habitually a problem, it's probably not the child's fault, it's probably the parents fault. But before you go in and in and sit down in and say hey you know, this kid stinks because



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of you, have some empathy. You don't know what's going on, you don't know what's going on at home, you don't know what's going on in their lives and maybe it's time for you to all sit down, the parents, the kid. If you have Junior instructors that are typically working with them, maybe all sit down, you have a conversation. Is that uncomfortable? Yeah. Does it take time? Yes. But is it important? Absolutely. It's the best way to find options that may become solutions. I like to think that the parents are the executives in this business of raising a child and we as martial arts instructors, we're consultants. We've been hired because there are things that we do really well but we have to report back and it's important that the executives give some direction. To me it's a collaborative process and the better the communication, the better that child's going to fair. And sometimes you find a parent-child relationship that it's kind of unhealthy. It doesn't work well with the parent sitting on the side no matter what you do it's just doesn't seem like getting better. Don't be afraid to tell the parent hey I would love for you to give me a few classes where you're not there. Let me work with the child without them feeling your eyeballs in the back of their head and let's see what happens. You don't have to say it's gonna be forever, just pick four classes. Give me enough classes to evaluate and see if this has a positive impact and they might not agree that but I bet you most of them will. If you explain why, if you explain that you're just trying to suss out what the best environment for their child, and that's not something a lot of people do in that kids life. So, if they believe you if they trust you, it will probably happen.

When we look at the numbers a martial arts participation, kids make up the majority. So having a good understanding of how to interact with your youth students' parents is critical to the growth of your youth program if that's a goal of yours. Understanding how to work with kids, how to work with the parents, how to work with them together to get the results that you're after, why not why not develop at skillset? Because if you can teach kids, you can probably teach anybody. And if you can get a, I'm choosing my words carefully, a prickly parent to work with you in helping their kid, you can probably work with anyone for anything, anywhere.

Thanks for tuning in today, remember this is episode 377, would love your feedback at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. Remember PODCAST15 gets you 15% off gear and uniforms, sweatpants, hats, shirts, got a number of new products and in fact, there's a section over there for new products. So you can just bookmark that and check that once a week and you'll be all spun up on what we're doing. We'd love for some help whether that's a purchase or sharing an episode, leaving us review on Apple podcast or Google podcasts or go to our Facebook page leaving us review there, all those are helpful. And if you want to follow us on social media, we are @whistlekick on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube ,and Instagram. You can email me Jeremy@whistlekick.com. Until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.