

## **The effects of always rescuing your children**

During the weekend I had the pleasure of spending time with two infants of a similar age and I couldn't help notice how different parenting styles affect the way children react to things. When one boy called Harry, accidentally slipped over going down the hill (not causing any injury) his father instantly rushed to him and pampered him with kisses to tell him that he was alright. This reaction seemed to encourage the boy to need even more reassurance and hence started to cry and give the message that he really had hurt himself. After being consoled he then wanted to hold a hand as he went down the hill.

Several hours later on the same piece of hill, Josh, who is more active, slipped heading down the hill. He looked around to see if anyone was looking, and when no one paid him any attention, he started to pick himself up and carry on. His father, who was accompanying him, supported him to get up and commented by saying; "Oops, up you hop, you're fine. Perhaps next time you need to take a little more care," indicating to Josh that there was no need to make a scene, but offering a solution. Off Josh wandered down the hill again.

Over the course of the day it was very evident that whenever Harry had even the slightest of mishaps, his parents would rush to him and give him a cuddle. However when Josh did anything that may have hurt, he just looked for a reaction and then got on with it. If an adult did respond to Josh it was generally with a "you'll be fine" attitude.

Let's put this into perspective. What would happen if a mother bird never pushed her baby bird out of the nest because she was scared it would hurt her baby? The baby bird would never learn to fly. If we constantly protect our children from experiencing possible dangers then they are not going to have the opportunity to learn problem solving skills, disappointment, resiliency, and many more skills. When parents rescue, fix, and overprotect their children, they rob them of the opportunity to learn that they can survive disappointment, the ups and downs of life and learn many life skills in the process.

So think about how you want to parent your children. The next time they have a mishap – do you want to rescue them or will you assist them by turning it into a learning situation. If you support them to make the right decisions you are teaching them a life long skill.

Good luck – if you want to discuss this or any other parenting issue, please contact Brenda at the Kindergarten Association. This tip is supplied by the Nelson Kindergarten Association with funding assistance from SKIP.