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News from the Blues  
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Fall Tip

## Grounding the Helicopter Parent

Some parents say they're advocating for their child. Others say they're just keeping a watchful eye. No matter how they describe it, helicopter parenting—the term used when parents are too involved—can cause problems.

Traits of helicopter parents might include arguing with teachers to have grades changed, micro-managing play dates and considering themselves their child's best friend.

Not everyone agrees that parents can be too involved. In fact, a recent survey of educators noted that, "dealing with overzealous parents was an even greater challenge than maintaining classroom discipline." And some experts say excess attention may leave kids unhappy and unable to form their own values. In the quest to create a perfect world for children, helicopter parents might be doing them an injustice.

If you tend to hover, there's good news. It's not too late for a safe landing. You can find the right balance between providing advocacy and support on one hand and teaching your child's independence and problem-solving skills on the other hand. These tips can help:

- Give yourself a time-out. Before you question the teacher, bring the forgotten lunch or homework to school, or sign your child up for something without asking him, take a breath. Ask yourself if your child really needs you to do this for him. Consider the learning experience that may result if you don't act. This could be the lesson that teaches your child to remember to double-check he has everything before leaving for school.
- Balance your reaction with common sense. Your child didn't share with a friend during a play date? Don't blow your top and stop play dates until age 30. Instead, talk with your child about your family's rules for sharing and your expectations.
- View failure as an opportunity for growth. Remember that the painful moments provide children with a better understanding of who they are and where they need to do better.

For more information and expert advice on parenting and other health and wellness information, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) members can visit My Blue Community, an interactive health and wellness community, through BCBSTX's Blue Access for MembersSM.

Sources:

"Parental Control," National Education Association  
"How Not to Be a Helicopter Parent," GreatSchools  
Education Resources Information Center