

What CEOs can learn at daycare [CA] ^[1]

Commentary

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EXCERPTS

Daycare teaches the essentials of compassion and co-operation: Share, be gentle, take only what you can use. These are lessons we all could profit from, says economist Jim Stanford

The smartest parenting decision my spouse and I ever made was to send our two daughters to non-profit group daycare. They started early, they received care vastly superior to what we could have provided at home, and their early experience with classroom routines will give them a huge head start in school.

But the most important lessons our girls learned were about how to treat other people. Just imagine two dozen toddlers beaver away in a big, busy room. The only way to avoid utter chaos is by establishing and enforcing clear rules about sharing, non-violence, co-operation and respect. As a result, a well-run daycare is one of the most egalitarian, inspiring places on Earth.

In fact, my only disappointment was the gradual realization that this nurturing and generally peaceful environment was completely different from the real world that my daughters were destined to inhabit. At daycare, they learn to be compassionate and co-operative human beings. But capitalism does not reward compassion and co-operation; it is driven by acquisitiveness and individualism. The rules of the game change once you leave daycare, and so do the teachers who enforce them.

In short, it will be all downhill for my girls once they hit the world of supply and demand, competition and survival. Too bad we don't enforce some of the same rules, and teach some of the same lessons, as prevail inside a daycare.

- reprinted from The Globe and Mail

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