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Society For Quality Education

Quick Study

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Summary

- Some children struggle in school, and their parents want to help them.
- There is a bewildering array of possibilities.
- Parents can order a free copy of a book that will help them find the best solution for their child.

Permission is granted to reprint some or all of this text. The author is available for interview. Call Doretta Wilson, 416-231-7247.

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Could Do Better

by Malkin Dare

It's the time of year when parents are feeling pretty good. Christmas is over and the kids are back in school. But perhaps it's also the time when some parents feel the return of familiar guilt pangs. Maybe their children are struggling in school, and they have the uneasy sense they should do something to help. But what?

The Society for Quality Education has the answers. We have produced a book called *How to Get the Right Education for Your Child*, which outlines the resources available to worried parents. Here is a brief outline of what our book suggests.

Working with the System

Parents can look for help at their child's current school.

For example, it may be possible to elicit the necessary changes by talking to teachers and the principal, asking for special education help, working with the school council, or switching teachers or programs (for example, into a different stream or out of French immersion).

If this type of intervention is not successful, parents can shop for a better publicly-funded school in their area. Excellent publicly-funded schools do exist, and there are ways to identify and access them.

Most parents start with this option, which is sensible because it's free. But it is also the option with the least chance of success. Working with the system generally pays off right away, or not at all.

Supplementing the System

The second option is to provide supplementary support to the children who struggle in school. This option is so wide-spread that it has been given its own name – afterschooling.

If parents are unable or unwilling to do the supplementation themselves, there is a bewildering variety of after-schooling services on the market – some very good and others not so good. The best way to evaluate these options is to talk to other parents and research the services on the Internet. Once parents have narrowed down the possibilities to three or four, they should visit each of the candidates, asking to see their success rate data.

There are drawbacks to afterschooling. It can be quite expensive. In addition, it is usually tiring for children since it necessarily takes place after school, and sometimes they can be uncooperative. Furthermore, afterschooling tends to be of limited effectiveness, since it is usually for only a few hours a week.

Opting Out of the System

Those who decide to withdraw their children from the publicly-funded system can choose between private schools and home-schooling.

For parents who can afford them, private schools may be the answer, but there are no guarantees. As with after-schooling, it is important to shop carefully, asking for success rate data and the names of parents with children at each school.

Home-schooling is not as daunting as most people think. It is perfectly legal, and there is an incredible amount of support in terms of both teaching materials and the local homeschooling network. Homeschooled children typically score around the 85th percentile, and they are highly sought after by many universities.

A much fuller description of the available options can be obtained free of charge from the Society for Quality Education. Just visit www.yourchildseducation.ca or call toll-free 888-856-5535 (416-231-7247 in Toronto) and ask for your free copy of *How to Get the Right Education for Your Child*.