

I'm afraid of wimps and you should be, too



The other day I was talking to my friend who has her kids in public school in Irvine and she mentioned her kids aren't allowed to run on the pavement at recess. Since my kids go to private school, this was a new concept to me.

So, I asked around. Seems this is standard practice in the public school. When I asked the parents why, they said it was because the school didn't want the kids to fall and get hurt on the pavement. Some suspected it was for legal reasons.

What? Has it come to this? No running on the playground?

"What about skipping?" I asked my friend.

"Um, frowned upon I think," she said with a laugh.

But, this is part of a wider trend that worries me. The other day we were out to dinner with some other families and a mom asked if I could move because I was sitting where her daughter wanted to sit. Me, the adult, move because of the whim of a kid. I said "No, she's just fine there."

I know a mom who has guarded her grade school son from every possible form of failure, handicapping him with the incapability of handling it. Smothering our kids with gentleness, covering them with failure padding, and interfering with normal kid-like behavior are all scary remedies to parental/adult fears and weaknesses.

What is the end result of this kind of sheltering? To me, it seems the consequences of overprotecting our kids are going to be much worse than any scraped knee or hurt feeling.

The Orange County Register's very own Sam Miller wrote an article called "Are we raising a 'Nation of Wimps?'" that spotlights a book about this subject—"Nation of Wimps." When I heard this recess story, I remembered Sam's article and ordered the book. (The comments on this article are very good, as well.)

I am afraid of the wimps that we might be raising—you should be afraid of wimps, too. Not just physical wimpiness—character wimpiness, emotional wimpiness.

I don't want this to be a complaining post about "kids these days" or "parents nowadays." What I want to know is what can be done? What have you done?

If you want to read more on "Nation of Wimps" go to Crabmommy's interview with the author.

Picture taken from the Etsy store of "Fine Art Images."