

Why are Kindergarteners Having 'Gender Reveal' Parties in School?

Homeschooling in America [is growing](#) by leaps and bounds and it isn't difficult to understand why. In many traditional schools, parents are being treated as bystanders in the education of their own children, and the perception of what is considered acceptable and unacceptable for the classroom is topsy-turvy.

In California, the Rocklin Charter School was at the [center of a controversy](#) at the end of the 2015-16 school year that involved a kindergarten teacher who introduced gender issues to her students without discussing it with parents first. Not only did the teacher read the children two books on transgenderism, but she also hosted a "gender reveal" in which one of her students went into the bathroom as a boy and emerged as a girl.

Many parents reported that their kids were left confused by the books and the gender switch. "My daughter came home crying and shaking," [one parent said](#), according to CBS Sacramento, "so afraid she could turn into a boy." Parents said they would have appreciated being informed before such subject matter was brought up. "It's really about the parents being informed and involved and giving us the choice and rights of what's being introduced to our kids, and at what age," said parent Chelsea McQuistan.

Earlier this month, the school board met and decided that they would continue to allow controversial books such as the ones the teacher had read but would also try to inform parents before they're shared with kids. Many parents weren't impressed. "Endeavor to notify is too loose in my opinion,"

said parent Wendy Sickler, according to [CBS Sacramento](#). “Who is accountable for that? What will we be notified of? There’s nothing in the proposed policy that guarantees this won’t happen again.” Elizabeth Ashford, spokesperson for the school, said it simply isn’t possible. “It’s impossible to say that every controversial topic the teacher’s gonna be able to give a heads up on, that’s just not how classrooms work.” As of this writing, at least [fourteen families](#) have pulled their children from the school.

Why would a school think it is appropriate to teach controversial material to kindergartners? That is not their job. That’s the job of the family and the community, as determined by parents. It’s the job of a school to educate children in certain disciplines, such as reading, math, and science. A solid foundation of American civics is also increasingly rare, and we are feeling its lack in our current political debates.

Consider what happened to actress Janine Turner, who was asked to talk about the Constitution at Eubanks Intermediary School in Texas for Constitution Day in September. She has been asked to speak about the Constitution hundreds of times before for tens of thousands of people without complaint. After this speech, however, parents and the school district, who had access to all of the materials she spoke about ahead of time, condemned her for being political. “At no time did anyone, six months prior in March, four months prior in May, or the day before in September, ask me to remove any of the materials,” [Turner said](#), “If they had asked me to do so, I most certainly would have done it.”

The words “abortion” and “sexual trafficking” both appeared in the handouts Turner provided, but only as [examples of legislation](#) that is often difficult for the average citizen to read. Parents and school officials said these topics were not appropriate for ten-to-twelve-year olds. One wonders if parents would have said the same thing if Planned Parenthood

wanted to hand out pamphlets about birth control or abortion at the school.

When schools apologize for the controversy of teaching the Constitution but shrug at the idea of sponsoring transgender “reveal” celebrations, it is no wonder that homeschooling is growing. From 2003-2012, the number of kids homeschooled in the United States [grew by](#) 677,000 students or 61.8 percent.

Many families who choose home schooling do so because they can’t afford the price tag of a private school that will fit their needs but don’t want their children on the front lines of the culture wars; others simply feel that it’s the responsibility of parents to educate their children. Homeschooling is growing across a [wide range of backgrounds](#) for reasons as unique as the families who choose it.

Parent (and fellow Acculturated contributor) Bethany Mandel has three children who are not yet school-age, and she has yet to decide if her children will be in a charter school or homeschooled. What she does know, however, is that her children will not be in the “progressive” district school for which her family is zoned. When she and her husband were new parents, they considered district schools since homeschooling wasn’t really on the radar because “it’s not what Jews do,” she told me, and yet, as is true for many families, “private school is beyond what we can afford.” Mandel said:

Because I travel in conservative social circles, more and more people I encountered were homeschooling and it seemed less daunting. We still have public school on the table, there is a Hebrew charter school in the town over that we were tempted by, but the values in public schools were well beyond what we’re comfortable with.

The cultural difference between the Mandel family and what would be taught in schools was simply too great. “We live in a very liberal area and, in our local school district, there is

at least one trans-identifying kid per grade it feels like. Last year, I met a social worker who specializes in gender identity issues in schools and she says she has so much work in the area, she could be full-time if she wanted to. That sent up a warning flag for us.”

Seasoned homeschooling parent of four April Thompson said that there were a variety of reasons that led her to homeschool but, as she has seen changes to district schools in recent years, she has seen more parents become interested in taking charge of their kids’ educations. Schools are simply going beyond their purview into the teaching of values, and that isn’t what families want. “It does seem that more and more time and energy of schools is spent on political and cultural trends and not what most people would consider education,” Thompson told me. “Often, I think parents see outside forces and so-called experts are taking advantage of their kids in a captive setting to push values that don’t line up with their own. Many parents flinch when they see how much the schools have encroached on areas that have previously been the purview of families—like when and how sexuality is taught. When they realize that not only do they not have any input into serious matters but they have no rights either, then homeschooling starts to look more and more attractive.”

When a civics lesson is seen as controversial, but a kindergartener’s gender switcheroo isn’t, who can blame these parents for opting to home school their children?

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