

Stay in School?

By Reg P. Wydeven
April 2, 2005

On Mondays our 2-year-old daughter goes to the YMCA for her 'Just for 2s' class and on Thursdays she heads to the library for story hour. I can't wait to get home from work those days to hear about the exciting stories she read or to see what art project she made, like the kite that she drags behind her as she runs through our house as fast as she can.

Our daughter just loves going to 'school' and she can't wait until she's old enough to go every day.

With all the legal troubles in schools these days, however, I'll be very nervous when that first day of kindergarten arrives.

For example, at the most esteemed learning institution in the country, Harvard, a librarian has filed an employment discrimination suit against the university. Sounding like a young Muhammad Ali, Desiree Goodwin claims she was rejected for 16 jobs at Harvard since 1999 because she was too pretty and too sexy.

Goodwin has master's degrees in both library science and English literature, has 7 years of experience in the library of Boston College and another 9 as an assistant librarian at Harvard. She claims she has suffered emotional distress and lost \$150,000 in wages as a result of Harvard's failure to promote her. Her case, though, was earlier dismissed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

In Milwaukee, Peer Larson and his father, Bruce, sued the school board because Larson had to complete three homework assignments over the summer for his pre-calculus class. Larson had a summer job as a camp counselor, making it difficult to complete the assignments. Feeling little sympathy, the judge dismissed the suit, explaining the school was well within its rights to assign the homework.

In Wilsonville, Oregon, Sally Miller was paid \$10,000 to drop her lawsuit against her 8-year-old son's school district. After the boy went to school looking quite shaggy, he explained to his teacher that his mother couldn't afford a haircut. A school employee then gave the boy a buzz cut. Because the school gave him a haircut without her permission, Miller sued the district.

In Florida, a 5-year-old girl was arrested for battery, cuffed and put in back of a police cruiser after an outburst at school where she threw books and boxes, kicked a teacher in the shins, smashed a candy dish, hit an assistant principal in the stomach and drew on the walls. The kindergartner went on her crime spree after her teacher took away the jelly beans she was using in a math exercise because she was misbehaving.

In Texas, a proposed bill seeks to put an end to cheerleaders' "sexually suggestive" performances at athletic events and other extracurricular competitions. Under the bill, if a school district knowingly permits cheerleaders to shake their moneymakers, money from the state will be cut.

Finally, in Spring Hill, Florida, a middle school golf coach was arrested for 3 counts of voyeurism after he was found hanging from the ceiling in the school gymnasium watching a 20-year-old female gym teacher and 2 students undress. What's worse is that the coach's predecessor was fired after being arrested for asking a 16-year-old girl to perform oral sex on him.

I'd consider homeschooling, but then I'd have to make ALL the brownies for the P.T.A. bake sale.

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