

Nurturing First Day of School Teachers: Do's and Don'ts

by Marcy Seitel, Adelphi Monthly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Things never to say to a First Day School Teacher:

That's great you teach. Better you than me. I could never put up with the kids.

Great that you'll teach. Now I don't have to look for anyone else.

It's great you let the other adults have a quiet meeting for worship.

We're lucky to have good child care for our kids. They seem happy.

Because:

The fact that teachers usually teach because they feel led to, and that they have real gifts and ministry to offer children and youth, are often missed. Other adults focus on their own needs that the teacher has filled which are likely NOT why someone has chosen to teach.

To support teachers:

Recognize that teaching is likely a leading, and if you can, recognize a gift in the teacher and acknowledge it for him or her. Talk with teachers about the connection between their spiritual journeys and their teaching.

Ask teachers about their class - not just about the behavior of the kids, but what the lesson was about and how the lesson went.

Share with a teacher something that happened during meeting for worship or announcements that you think might be meaningful to the teacher.

Share a favorite Quaker story, verbally or in writing, with a teacher - this will become a resource that a teacher can call upon.

Offer to help find resources, offer something you know about, or otherwise help teachers prepare the content of their lessons.

Thank teachers informally or during business meeting for the work they do. Other committee work is often more visible to the rest of the community.

Ask teachers to share with the whole community what is being taught in their class; invite them to share stories about the students' engagements in the classroom.

Express appreciation. A statement like "I'm glad you are teaching" is always welcome.