



As you likely know, there was a recent post about our MDO program from the parent of a former student. It has been difficult to know the best way to respond to that recent post - as a church-based program we take our values seriously and aim to respect people's perspective, even when points may be framed in ways that, we believe, are inaccurate. And as a program we always aim to protect the privacy of our children, teachers, and families all while aiming to be better for kids and families in the future.

In the specific circumstance referenced by the parent, mistakes were made, by teachers and by administration. When we became aware of those mistakes, we took measures to address them and to ensure that similar mistakes won't be made in the future. In this case, the measures included letting go of a teacher and making changes to our operational procedures.

We love every one of our children and their families, and we're proud of our program's rich tradition of providing spiritual, emotional, mental and physical support to so many beautiful children through the years. We strive to make this a better, more loving environment every day. That makes admitting when we fall short hard and heartbreaking, but it is always important and we commit to continuing to improve and live out that love for children and families each day. Hopefully our children and families see this every time they are with us.

We recognize that social media is rarely the place for thoughtful conversation and any response we make to a post will likely be criticized, picked apart and misconstrued. That is why in both this circumstance and in all circumstances we ask that anyone with a concern or comment connect with us directly. But recognizing the hard work and care of our staff and the positive experience of so many families at our MDO program, we felt a need to respond and remind people that they can learn more by connecting with us directly.

Obviously there are strong feelings in this circumstance. When something has happened that involves your own child, no amount of apology or context will ever be enough. We've had conversations with this parent, both immediately after the event and in the several weeks after that her child remained in our program. We expressed our apology and outlined our planned actions directly then, and will always be happy to engage with any family members who have any question or concern about the experience of their child.

Nearly every teacher and staff member of our MDO is a mother, too, and we love our own children and protect them fiercely. In the age of social media, it's easy to throw digital stones at people, businesses and institutions with whom we have no personal contact, whose eyes we don't have to look into when we've hurt them. As we alluded to earlier, some things in these posts are facts, some simply allegations, and nearly all are lacking important contextual details that would bring a human element to the story.

There are, of course, some details that we simply cannot share, to protect the privacy of our children, their families, and our dedicated teachers and staff. For their sake, and for ours, we will not engage in an online debate or comment war. Rather we aim to respond in a way that we hope will invite anyone to reach out to us directly if you ever have a question or concern. We'd be glad to set up a time for you to talk with the MDO staff in person and if you are looking for a place for your child, we welcome you to come to our center and see the warm and loving environment that we strive to create for all our children.

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