

Second Grade, a Life Changer
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My Mom has told me the story of when I started school. She says that for the first week I was fine. Then when I found out it was not just for a week like swimming lessons, let's just say I was not a happy camper. Kindergarten was an adjustment. It went from hanging out with my Mom all day to hanging out with a bunch of people I did not know. You were told when to eat and when to take a nap. You go from basic rules to watching your teacher tear up your fireman you worked so hard on because you forgot to put your name on it.



Cameron Cooper with his mom and dad and Dr. Dan Tollett and Kristi Coleman of Utrust

First grade also was an even bigger change. New teacher and her new rules. No naps and no snacks. Tests and more tests and something else new; homework. So not only did we do all this work at school they were now sending it home too? When I went into second grade I did not go in with a lot of enthusiasm.

Mrs. Sandra was my second grade teacher. I did not know at the time but this teacher change my outlook on school forever. First of all, if we needed to go to the restroom we did. Not a big deal. If we needed to sharpen our pencil, we did. Not a big deal. If we had a question about something we raised our hand and asked. If she did not know the answer, she googled it. Wow, if she did not know everything and had to look it up then it was okay that I did not know everything. I remember her saying "if you knew everything you would not need to be in school".

I don't remember her really yelling at anyone. If someone "made poor choices" she calmly called them up to her desk and discussed it. That may seem like a silly thing to remember, but I remember it always bothered me when anyone got yelled at. She was full of surprises. Before tests she would give us gum. Gum had never been allowed before in school. Mrs. Sandra had heard that chewing gum while taking a test calmed your nerves and made you do better. I don't know if this is true or if she was trying to be nice but I just got my first report card for seventh grade and I have made the gold honor role.

I haven't missed being on the gold honor role since being in Mrs. Sandra class. Every Friday we would have a spelling test. If you made an A on the test she would give you a sour jolly rancher. Many people may think they incentives or bribery is wrong but I never missed getting a jolly rancher. Needless to say those days are gone but I still enjoy spelling (with or without a jolly rancher). I did not know it then but Mrs. Sandra was helping to instill a sense of pride and accomplishment in yourself when you do well.

Mrs. Sandra never considered anyone not teachable. If we did not get something she would try a new way to teach it. Money, looking at it on paper was a lot harder that it seems. But when she got out her bags of coins and we worked with it that way it made sense. Also, geometry on paper was not so clear. Touchable foam shapes much clearer. She knew some of us just need a little something more concrete. Science was great in her class. I could not believe that when we started learning about life cycles that we also got to watch some. We had real caterpillars that turned into real butterflies and real eggs that turned into real chicks. Wow! I had no idea school could be so cool Needless to say, Science is now my best subject. .

Thanks to Mrs. Sandra I look forward to each new school year. School is what you make of it. Not only do you learn about new and interesting things that will help you in your adult life you also learn lots of life lessons. Hard work pays off when it comes to grades or life itself. Also, eat as many sour jolly ranchers as you can, it can't hurt.