**Mr. Justin Simms**

**Profile:**

Mr. Simms has been an elementary school teacher for 10 years. He has been teaching grade two for the last three years and before that grades one and three. He says that this gives him a really good perspective of early childhood learning sequences.

Mr. Simms returned to college after three years in the military and received his Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. He became interested in early childhood education while raising his own children and has been taking online courses related to child development and early learning for the last five years. He will complete his Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education and would then like to become a specialist for his district.

Mr. Simms has served on many of his school district's early childhood committees during the past three years. He is particularly interested in developing curriculum for the early grades. He also attends conferences and presents workshops on the relationship of developmental stages and learning.

Mr. Simms applies concepts of early childhood development in his own teaching. Because he understands that young children need concrete experiences in order to learn, each lesson includes examples from the students' lives and hands-on learning tools. In fact, he displays an object representing each letter of the alphabet to remind his students of letter sounds. He says that this is important for his Native American students since they hear and use other language sounds besides English.

Mr. Simms replicates real-life experiences to teach his students mathematics. For example, he used pictures of cows and their calves to teach addition concepts.

While Mr. Simms uses current instructional theory for his lessons, he is very traditional in his classroom management. Students sit in rows so that he can see all students all of the time. His first rule is that students speak only when asked to speak. Directions are followed the first time they are given. Homework is due the next day, and no excuses are accepted. Mr. Simms believes that the discipline that students learn in school will transfer into their own lives at home.

Students in Mr. Simms' class know that they must follow his rules or risk significant and embarrassing punishment. For example, Mr. Simms gives extra duties to students who do not bring in their homework. He says that this teaches the children responsibility and service to the school community. Duties include cleaning school grounds, washing desk tops in each classroom, or collecting and disposing of classroom and office trash for the school. Since these are after school duties, students are late getting to their home chores, which means that they often do not have time for their own interests. Typically, students do not take the chance of offending Mr. Simms.

When state test scores are returned, Mr. Simms' children typically have higher scores than any other second grade class in his district. Therefore, he gets accolades from his school principal and from the district board of education.

Communications:

Notes to/from parents

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Sanders:

Welcome to our community and Kelsey Elementary School. I hope that your move went smoothly and that your son Rupert will quickly make friends in his new school. I am attaching our class rules so that you can review them with Rupert. This is very important because I have already had to speak with him several times about his behaviors.

Beginning tomorrow, I will be imposing the same penalties on him as I do on other children for the same infractions. Since he will miss his bus ride home, you will need to pick him up after he has completed his additional duties. I expect your cooperation with this.

Thank you.

Mr. Simms

Reply from Mr. Sanders

Dear Mr. Simms:

We believe in discipline the same way you do. I have a very worn black belt to prove it.

However, I do not believe that Rupert's behaviors should inconvenience me or my wife. We are just getting established on our new ranch, and we must attend to business. If Rupert misbehaves, just let me know. I can assure you that this will never happen again. I can't take the time to travel the fifteen miles to school to get him. If he misses his bus, he will have to walk home.

Sincerely,

Mr. Sanders

Notes to/from parents

Dear Mrs. Bermejo:

This is to inform you that Charlita has not been doing her homework for the past several days. I am sending extra assignment pages with her so that she can complete all of this week's work tonight. For the remainder of the year, I will be signing her homework calendar so that you know that she is copying her homework assignments correctly.

I would like you to supervise her homework time and initial the homework calendar when her work is completed. It would probably be a good idea for her to put her belongings near the front door each evening before she goes to bed. This way, she is less likely to forget to bring her homework to school.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Mr. Simms

Reply from Mrs. Bermejo

Mr. Simms-

I am alone with Charlita each evening. I work on Mr. Horseman's farm, and I am too tired in the evening to help Charlita do what she should know to do. Besides, Charlita also works on the farm each day after school until 7:00. As far as I'm concerned, that's her homework. I'm not sure why she needs homework from you when she is already spending six hours with you in school.

I can't be her mother and teacher at the same time. It's hard enough just being a single mother. If she has to be punished, I'm not going to do it.

Mrs. Bermejo

Note from Administrator

Dear Mr. Simms:

I'm very impressed with the education you are providing for your students. I walked by your room yesterday, and the students were all actively involved in what you were teaching. I will be very happy to recommend you for the specialist position you want.

While I do not want to interfere with the management of any classroom, I am hearing that your consequences for inappropriate behavior are not accomplishing the behavioral outcomes you want. Do you think that is because the punishment might "not fit the crime?" It's important that you recognize that each behavior has a function; and to change the behavior, we must help the child satisfy the same need, but in a positive way.

You have been so interested in learning about early childhood development that I would like you to consider working with our behavior specialist to learn some different strategies for young children. I'm trying to support you, but I can't keep driving students home when they miss the bus.

Sincerely,

Stefani Barreto

Principal

Mr. Simms's Reply

Dear Ms. Barreto:

If it's good enough for the military and I survived, I think that these children can survive too. Maybe the reason that I keep seeing the same behaviors is that you are driving the children home. If we make the parents come, they would take more of an interest in their child's behavior.

Justin Simms

Third Grade Teacher Note

Hi, Justin!

I'd like to complement you on how ready the children are for the third grade. You've made my job at the beginning of the year very easy. I just have one question, though. Can you help me understand why the children seem so fearful? I was talking with them about our rules for the year and one child started crying. Can we talk?

Eartha

Mr. Simms's Reply

Eartha-

I'm the same with my rules that I am with learning. Students know what I expect. Can't have learning without discipline. I'm not sure that there's anything to talk about.

Justin