



To: **Principals and Teachers**

Topic: **Every teacher is a champion for learners within their classroom. Adapted from Rita Pierson's 'Every child needs a champion' quote.**

Message Objective(s): **To assist teachers to build meaningful human connections with children they teach.**

**Message: 10 Tips for being a champion for children in your classroom.**

**Rita Pierson** stated that 'every child needs a champion-an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connections and insists that they become the best they can possibly be'. She understood the power of human connection and the impact it has on building resilient and determined individuals. Many a times children in our classrooms give up on trying to succeed because of the many obstacles they face on a daily basis. Teachers must not give up on them but believe in them and motivate them to try harder even if it seems impossible to achieve. The following are tips for teachers to become champions for their children every day.

- 1) Make human connections with all your learners, even the most difficult ones. Make an effort to like and care for them. If learners feel loved, liked and cared for, they are likely to want to learn.
- 2) Understand learners from your observations and interactions with them based on current situations and not what other teachers say about them. Sometimes teachers make up their minds about some children before they even teach them. Start afresh with them and share their success story with others.
- 3) Fight in their corner outside the classroom. Fight for their inclusion in extramural activities. Some learners are easily excluded because of how teachers perceive them.
- 4) Make every step a learning opportunity. Learners will make mistakes all the time. The trick is not to focus too much on the negative but to allow learners to learn from their mistakes. Take the mistakes into learning opportunities.
- 5) Be patient as the learners will fall back and touch base. Touch base with them regularly on any issues you might have worked on. It is time consuming but it is worthwhile in the long run.
- 6) Self –affirmation. You may believe in them but do they believe in themselves? Break the negative self-fulfilling prophecy and get them to recognize (and verbalize) their positives. If they say it enough, it will become part of them!



- 7) Work with them not against them. Let them take the positives they are making not because of you but because of them. It is important for them to own the success to build more success.
- 8) Get others on board. Get those that had negative relationships with them in the past to join the bandwagon of praise. It is amazing to how positivity can snowball.
- 9) Reflect with them what is going well. Change what is not working. Let them take ownership of the change.
- 10) One more thing... Remember, human connection is key. As Rita Pierson said, 'Learning sometimes occurs because someone insists that you recognise the excellence in yourself'.

**Watch, 'Every child needs a champion', by Rita Pierson on YouTube.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F23ak31YnTI>

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**References:** (Psychosocial Support: A Model for South African Schools (2021),