

## MORAL STORIES AND ITS ROLE IN CHILDREN' EDUCATION

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### **Abstract**

*We live in a society where children are exposed to many temptations, many dangers such as drugs, bullying, alcohol, cigarettes, cyber bullying, violence and it is very difficult to find a method to help them understand that all these can destroy them permanently and, to the same extent, understand that they must not follow this path.*

*Moral stories can have this role of awareness, whether they are told by parents or educators, but it is extremely important to find out if parents use them in their relationships with children.*

*This study is a part of a bigger study (Monica Turturean, 2016, 2018) which started in 2016 and its' purpose is discovering the role of the moral story for different people with different needs in order to use this results in educational activity but not only.*

**Keywords: storytelling; violence; drugs; questionnaire; moral story.**

### **1. Introduction**

For too many children worldwide, school is where they experience drugs, alcohol, violence. Many children also experience bullying associated with fighting, lack of control and indifference from parents and teachers.

These temptations in and around schools can be deadly. For the tens of millions of children and adolescents, these problems can lead to lower academic performance, school dropout and even to death.

If we want to help them, it is very important to establish some clear and specify objectives:

- to interrupt all the contacts with these problems;
- to offer unconditionally support for these adolescents;

- to establish a good cooperation school-family;
- to help them to ask for specialty control such as psychotherapy and psychiatry;
- to motorize them for a period, after intervention in order to see their progresses.

## **2. Problem Statement**

It is obvious that teenagers face major problems at this age, problems that they do not know how to manage, sometimes they are not even aware of their seriousness, therefore, it is extremely important to find solutions to help them.

It is important to make them aware that every problem has a solution, therefore, a good parent-adolescent or teacher-adolescent relationship can help to solve the problem quickly.

An easy way for the parent is to use moral stories, meaningful stories because they have the ability to identify with the character and understand the positive message of the stories,

More than this, ... there is also a need for what we might call moral literacy. The stories, poems, essays, and other writing presented here are intended to help children achieve this moral literacy. The purpose of this book is to show parents, teachers, students, and children what the virtues look like, what they are in practice, how to recognize them, and how they work. (Bennett, 1993, p. 11)

Why moral stories? Molenda and Bhavnagri (2009, pp. 153-159) revealed that moral stories entrench virtues and enhance good values among children such as helping, sharing workload, tolerating one's weakness and exchanging information.

Unfortunately, the literature is not very generous on this topic, there are so few writings about it, this is why we are trying, through research, to find some solution to this real problem.

## **3. Research Questions/Aims of the research**

The main objective of this study is to identify the perception / opinion of parents and educators regarding the effects of moral stories in children 'life.

The specific objectives of the study:

1. to identify the parents and teenagers 'opinion regarding moral stories;
2. to find out situations in which a moral story can really help;
3. to discover if the moral story improves or not the teenagers with different problems
4. to find out if a moral story can be used with teenagers or not.

The hypothesis of the study:

1. The parents believe, more than the teenagers, in the role of moral story to help the last ones to solve their major problem.
2. Many parents and children consider that moral stories can be use in any situations, neglecting if there are some cases in which the moral story cannot be used.

#### **4. Research Methods and the sample structure**

##### *4.1. The statistical method used in identifying parents and educators' opinions about the moral stories*

The study is based on the data yielded following a sampling survey which investigates the opinion of educators and parents about moral stories. The sample survey was applied to a non-probabilistic sample.

This auto-questionnaire was initially pre-tested on a non-probabilistic sample, consisting in open questions. Using frequencies analysis, we gathered some answers for the questionnaire' items.

The investigative technique used was the auto-questionnaire survey which was adapted, starting from the initial questionnaire used in the previous study, consisting in 6 questions administered in group.

##### *4.2. The sample structure*

The sampling survey was applied to a non-probability sampling group. The educators were selected randomly from a group present to a conference and the parents were selected randomly from a group present to an official school' holiday

- *parents: 42*
- *teenagers: 42*

##### *4.3. Data analysis techniques*

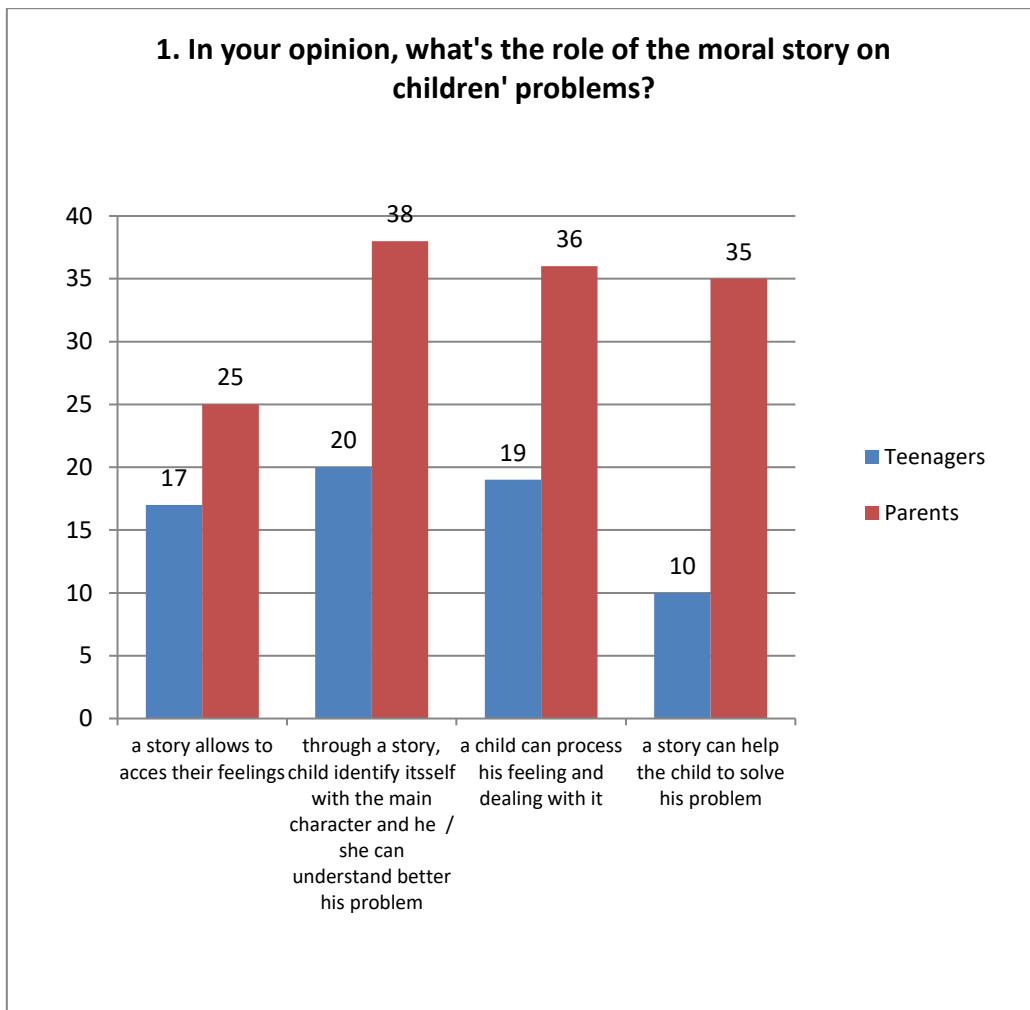
The Statistical Package for Social Science Program (SPSS) was used to summarize and run correlations on data obtained from the survey. Frequency distribution was used to mention demographics of the parents and educators. Correlation technique was utilized to discuss relationship between parents, educators and their need of using moral stories in real life.

The **favoured** surveying technique was the individual filling in of the questionnaire in a group. (Rotariu T., Iluț P, 1997, p. 54). This surveying technique was chosen because it is the easiest and the less expensive.

The parents and the teenagers were ensured about the confidentiality of their answers and informed that all the results will be used for scientific purpose only.

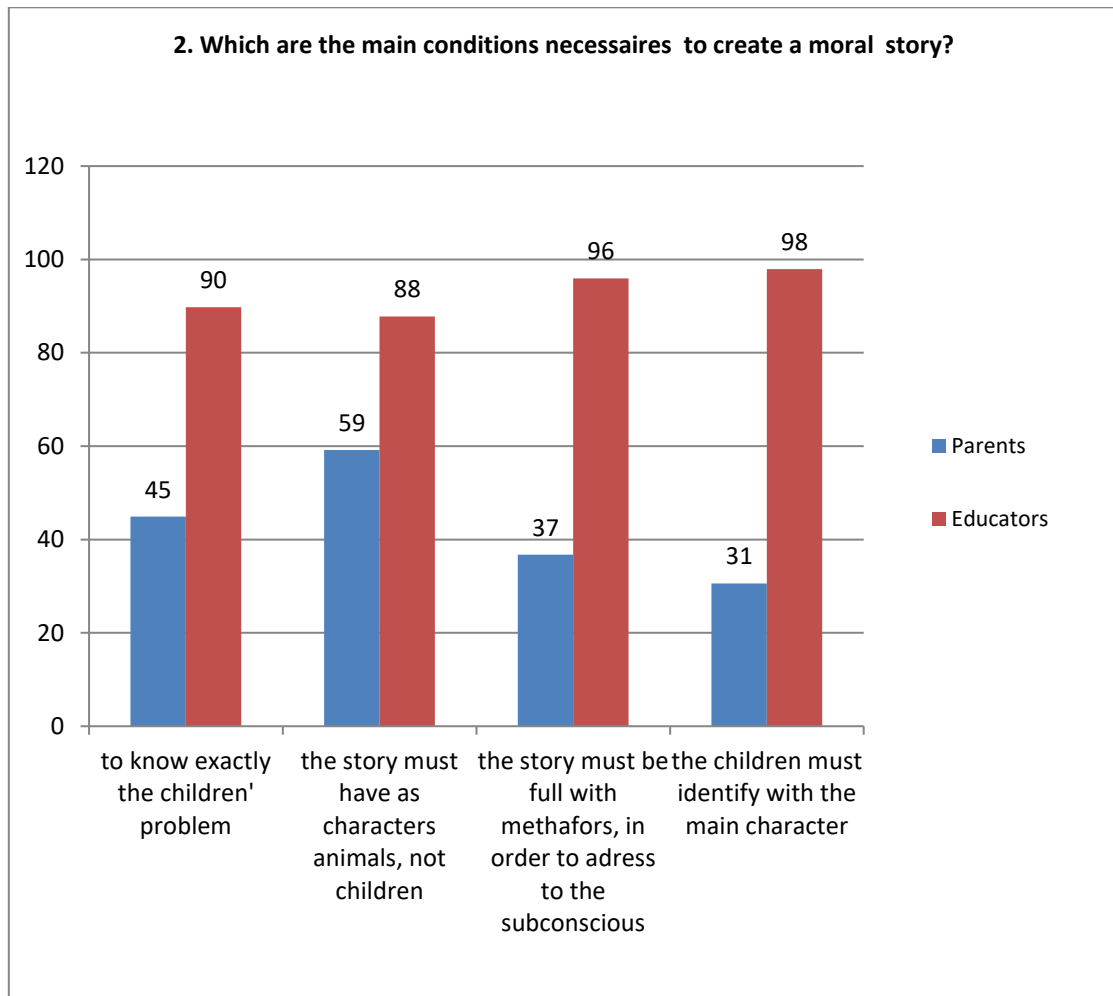
## 5. Findings

Figure 1: the structure of answers at question Q1



As we can see, 90.4% of parents consider that the main role of the moral story is: through a story, child identify himself with the main character and he / she can understand better his problem; instead, only 47.6% of teenagers consider that the main role of the moral help children in that way. There are significance differences between educators and parents regarding the same subject, so, parents and teenagers have different opinions regarding the role of moral stories.

Figure 2: the structure of answers at question Q2



Looking on the numbers, we can see that 98 % from parents considers that the main conditions necessary to create a story are: the child must identify with the main character and to know the child' problems. 59 % of the teenagers consider that a story must have as characters animals, not children, which means that there are big differences between parents and teenagers regarding the main conditions necessaires to create a moral story.

The most important skill for a person, according to this questionnaire to be a good story teller (100 % of parents chooses this answer), the teenagers have chosen the same skill, and this is an important observation because is the one of the few questions where both parents and teenagers have the same opinion (Fig.3).

Figure 3: the structure of answers at question Q3

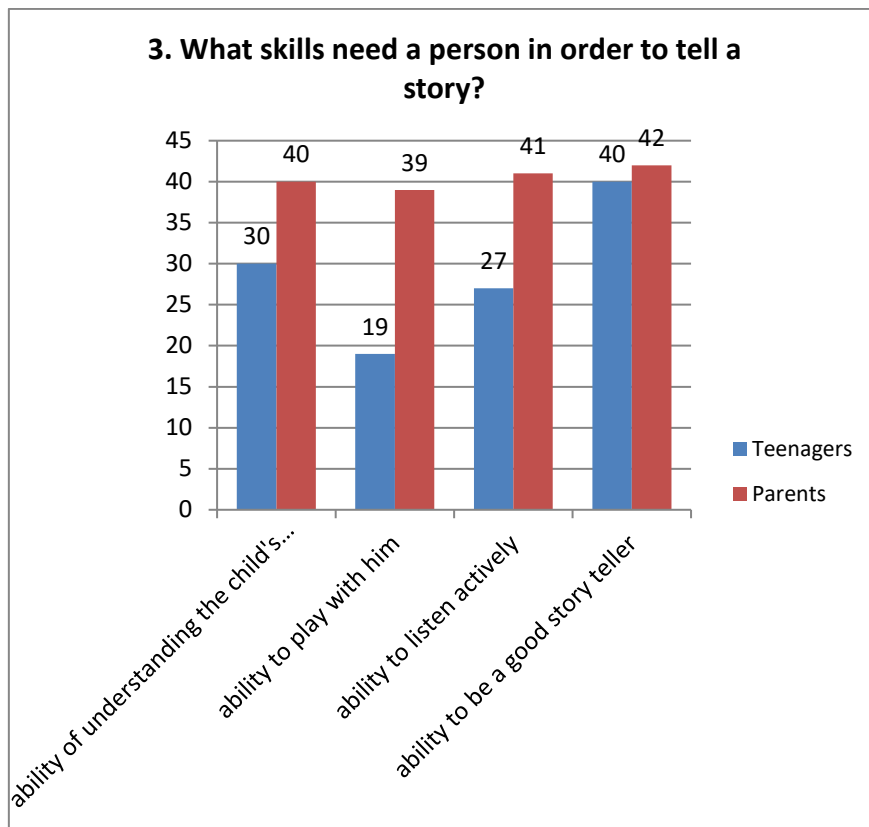
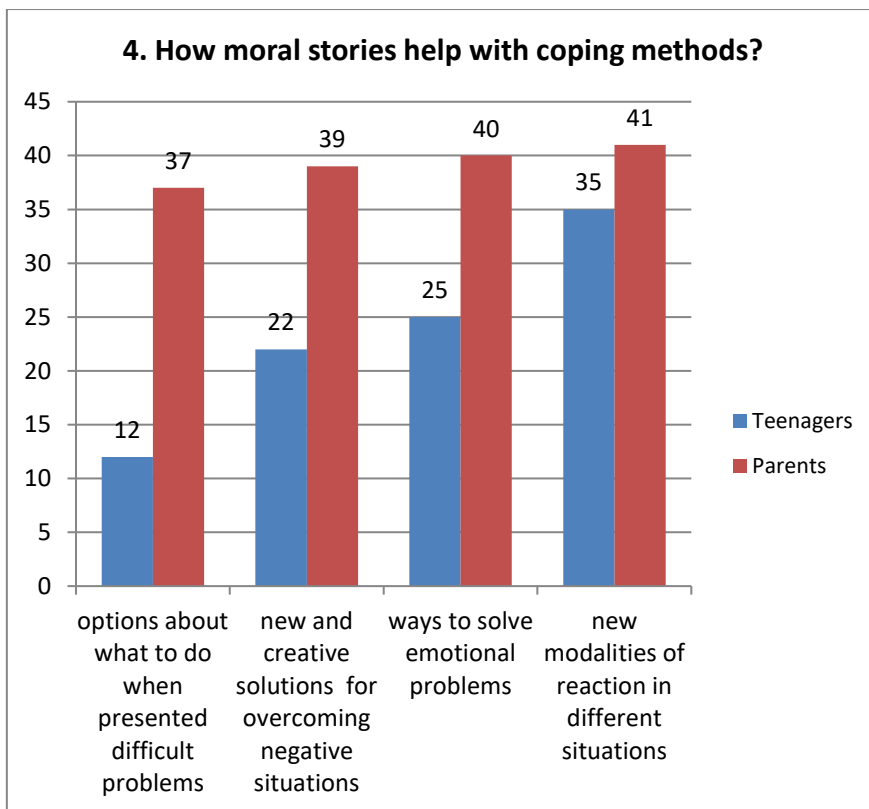
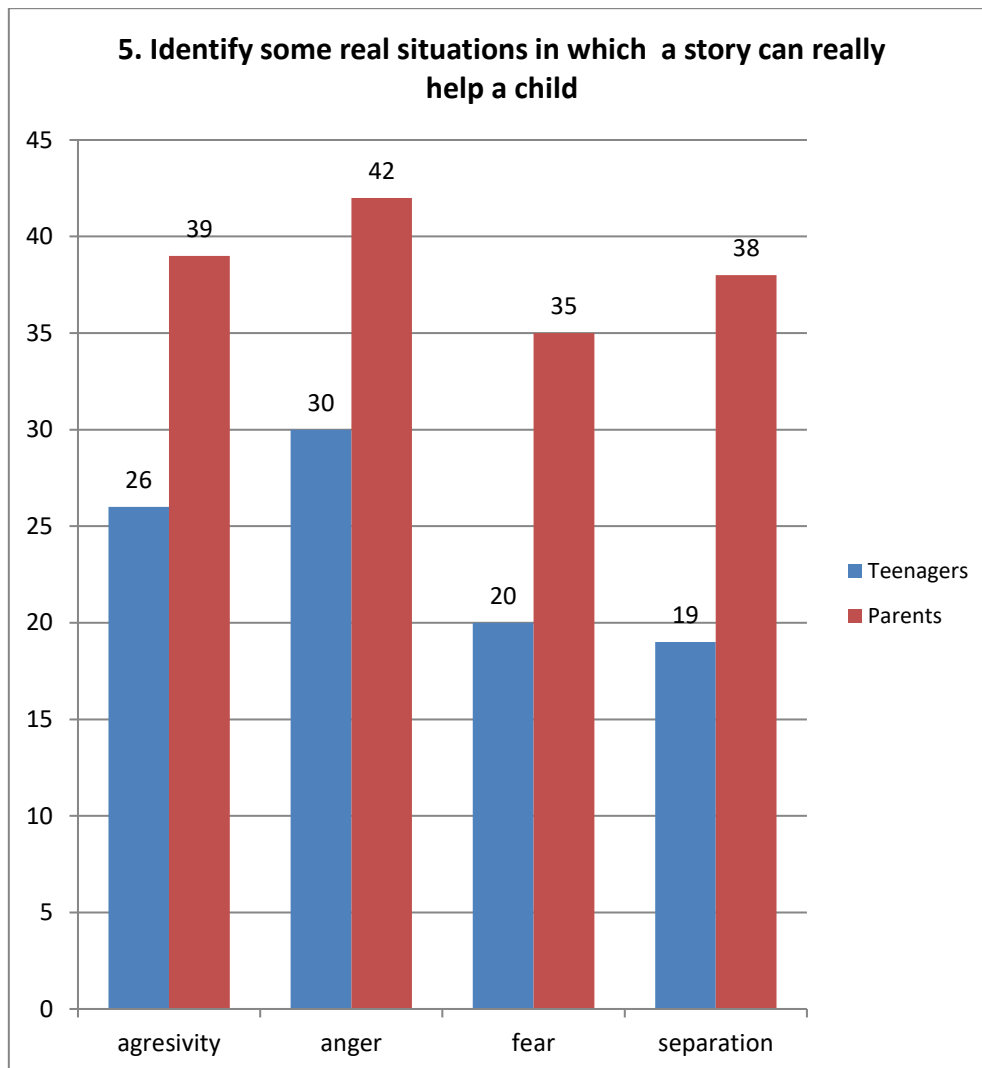


Figure 4: the structure of answers at question Q4



As we can see, 97.6 % of parents considers that a story can offer new modalities of reaction in different situations and 95.2 % of teenagers consider that a story can offer way to solve emotional problems. We can conclude that a story can help teenagers to face different problems, emotional or behavioural.

Figure 5: the structure of answers at question Q5

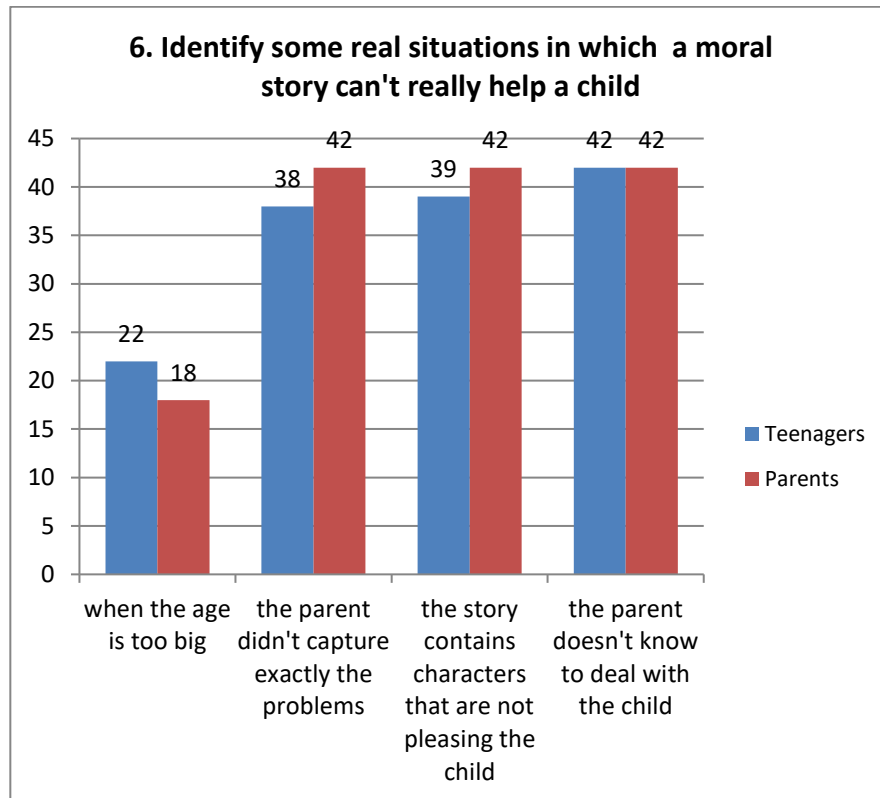


It is interesting to see that 100% of parents considers that a story helps children to deal with anger and 92.8% of the teenagers considers that a story can help a child to deal with aggressivity; in another words, a moral story help teenagers to deal with emotional problems.

It is quite surprising to discover that there are 3 situations in which a story can't help a parent (according to 100 % of parents): the parent didn't capture exactly the problem; the story

contains characters that are not pleasing the child and the parent doesn't know to deal with the child. It is relieving to see that these teenagers (over 90%) offers the same answers.

Figure 6: the structure of answers at question Q6



## 6. Validation of the hypothesis

We can notice that the first hypothesis „The parents believe, more than the teenagers, in the role of moral story to help the last ones to solve their major problem” was validated by the answers offered by educators to the item 1 (90.4% of parents consider that the main role of the moral story is: through a story, child identify himself with the main character and he / she can understand better his problem; instead, only 47.6% of teenagers consider that the main role of the moral help children in that way).

It is good to find out that the second hypothesis “Many parents and children consider that moral stories can be use in any situations, neglecting if there are some cases in which the *moral* story cannot be used.” was invalidated by the answers offered by parents and teenagers, both thinking on the real situations in which they cannot really help. These situations are: when the age

of the child is too big, when the parent didn't capture exactly the problem, the story contains characters that are not pleasing the child, the parent doesn't know to deal with the child.

### **7. The main limits of the study**

1. sample consists only of parents and teenagers from Iasi County, so these results cannot be extended to the entire population of Romanian educators or parents.
2. there will be no pre-testing the subjects, which means that we cannot verify the accuracy of the results;
3. there is no control group.

### **8. Conclusions and suggestions**

Taking into account the frequencies of the sample' answers, we notice that both parts (parents and educators) considers that the moral stories have a positive role in children' life and it is recommended to be use in many situations, but, taking into account the strengths and the constrains of this topic.

So, it is very important to make some sugesstions:

- the parents must consult an psichologist or a therapist when they want to create a story; otherwise, they can harm the child;
- a story must be adapted to the real problem: violence, alchool, cyber bullying, drug addiction, not to „speak” generally;
- both parents must know and minimize, as much as they can, the limits of a moral story.

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