

Help for Troubled Students



Is Your Child Disruptive at School?

Each day, we drop our kids off at school or at the bus stop hoping they have a great day. No parent wants anything bad to happen to their children or secretly hopes that their child is not causing trouble all day. No parent teaches their child to be disruptive, to break school rules, or to defy authority “just because.” But as any teacher or school employee will tell you, there are kids in our classes where it sometimes feels like this is the case. We have students who cause disruptions from the moment they walk through the front doors. For some students, even the most simple and obvious correction of behavior erupts into defiance or argument. As a parent, when the school communicates about concerns, how do you respond?

How to Respond to School Staff’s Concerns

Of course no one wants to receive a call about their

child's misbehavior. No parent wants to have a conference in which they find out that their child is failing or behind academically. This type of news is always difficult to hear. How parents respond will determine whether students go down a path of entitlement or a path of learning, growth, and improvement. As parents, we can choose to bulldoze obstacles, ignore them, or help our children navigate the challenge they are currently facing head on. The latter will be a path that will lead them to greater success down the road.

Options for Change

The protective instinct as a parent is strong. Our intuition tells us that we need to remove every obstacle and every inkling of potential friction from our kids' lives. We want them to live a life of safety, comfort, and opportunity. Unfortunately, what we have seen in recent years is that the effort to eliminate the challenges our kids face has fostered a society where kids are less and less motivated and equipped to solve problems on their own. When kids encounter obstacles, it is vitally important that parents help children identify the issue clearly. Parents must support kids to manage their emotions while they develop a plan for moving forward.

Holding Our Kids Accountable

Often, the first step in this process is ownership. Kids need to honestly assess the situation and accept their role and responsibility. When the challenge is a low grade or poor student behavior, taking a step of

ownership allows students to accept that they are the ones who need to take responsibility to move forward.

Unfortunately, when parents bulldoze or excuse children from the behavior (and especially when they place the blame elsewhere) kids miss out on the opportunity to problem-solve their way past barriers. Kids need parents to hold them accountable and to help them navigate the tricky waters of ownership and responsibility.

Partner with the School

The good news is that school staff is eager to partner with parents to walk with you down this road! Be on the lookout for workshop opportunities and chances for you and your child to get involved at school events. Also, when the school calls to discuss an issue with your child (i.e., grades or behavior) be sure to take a breath, listen, and partner with the school to map a pathway forward!