



What to Do If Your Child Is Having Trouble at School

Your child has been coming home from school unhappy, and she is having problems finishing her work. She complains about school and has stomachaches and headaches. You know there must be a problem at school, but what can you do?

Talk to your child about school.

Ask specific questions to discover what the problem might be:

- Are you having trouble doing what the teacher asks?
- Do you understand what the teacher wants you to do?
- Can you finish your worksheets on time?
- Are certain subjects giving you difficulty? Math? Reading? Writing?
- Can you see the work on the chalkboard or overhead?
- Can you hear the teacher?
- Are other kids bothering you in class? Talking loudly in class, hitting you, taking your papers or pens, teasing you?
- What things do you like about school?
- What subjects do you do well in? How are they taught?

Talk to your child's teacher about your concerns.

Contact your child's teacher by sending a note to school with your child or by calling the teacher. Ask to set up a time to talk about the trouble your child is having at school.

At the meeting, tell the teacher what your child has told you. Ask if the teacher has seen the same things in the classroom. You can also ask:

- Is my child working at grade level in her most difficult subjects?
- What can be done at the school to help my child?
- How can I work with you to help my child?
- Are there things I can do at home that would help, such as signing my child's homework and tests?
- What ideas do you have for after-school help?

Many programs are available to help your child. Organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, the Urban League, and local libraries and community centers offer tutoring help and mentoring programs.

If the teacher can't help, find someone who can.

Ask to speak to other people at the school:

- the principal
- the social worker
- the community advocate
- a special education professional. You have the right to ask for a special education assessment to see if your child needs special education services.