

ADDRESSING PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL.

There may be times when serious conflicts arise and you will need to meet with a teacher, a guidance counselor or principal to discuss them. Check out these ideas before you go to that meeting.

Acknowledge your child's feelings. “If you get repeated complaints that make sense, you do need to validate your child's feelings and then take some action,” “Unfortunately this may interfere with the trust you want to exist between parent and teacher, but in these extreme cases, your child needs to know that you take her feelings seriously.”

Consider the teacher's point of view. While it's important to acknowledge your child's description of an event, you should also keep an open mind and listen to what the school has to say before making a judgment, particularly when serious complaints and discipline issues arise. “The story you may hear from your child may not be the whole gospel truth,” “It's usually a complex situation that requires a perspective from the teacher. But don't dismiss your child's complaint either.”

Evaluate teachers fairly. There will be some teachers you may love and your child may dislike, there may be others your child may love, but you may not. “There are ways to work out a positive relationship with your child's teacher, even if you have issues about the teacher “Keep in mind that your child may feel very different than you do, both positively and negatively. And your job is to advocate for your child and remember that you are not the one in the classroom, he is.”

Meet with the administration. If a respectful meeting with the teacher does not produce solutions for your concerns, then you need to go to a guidance counselor or principal and say, “my child is having a difficult time,” and explain why. Approach this meeting with specific information, and offer to brainstorm what can be done to help.

Describe specific incidents in a factual way. “You cannot expect immediate action, but it’s important to give the feedback, and to ask the school system to address these issues with the teacher and find a solution that works for your child,”

