



Help your child love school from preschool through high school



Easy steps to ensure school year success

by **Jody Capehart**

Have you ever heard your child say, "I hate school"? If so, you know how deeply it can penetrate your heart. Parents can respond in a variety of ways.

Denial: "You've probably just had a bad day."

Blame: "If you didn't have such a bad teacher, this wouldn't be happening."

Anger: "Just deal with it. Why, when I was your age, I walked through snow, sat on a wooden bench and ate dinosaur bones for lunch."

Empathy: "I can see how much you don't like school. Let's try and figure out how to solve this together."

When you determine the reasons behind your child's aversion to school, you'll be in the best position to help him or her. Without playing the "blame game," examine all factors, especially those involving the student, teachers and parents.

THE STUDENT FACTOR

Depending upon your child's age,

there can be a wide range of contributing factors, some easier to resolve than others.

Preschool Angst

Your child is anxious about starting something new.

Your child hasn't spent much time away from you and has separation issues.

Your child has a fear of going to the bathroom unassisted.

Your child has social issues with other children.

Elementary Struggles

Your child may begin to notice that other kids in the class are catching on more quickly and fears falling behind. Your child may become withdrawn or overly aggressive, or he or she may become the class clown to cover up shame or embarrassment.

Your child may be subject to bullying on the playground, in the bathroom or at lunch. These areas should be safe places for your child but sometimes can be just the opposite.

On the positive side, in these earlier years, your child is still in a self-contained classroom. The teacher should be an advocate and communicate with parents to help determine, and intervene, if she's aware of bullying, a learning issue or some other contributing factor behind your child's negative feelings. Work together with the teacher to find a solution.

Middle School/Junior High Challenges

Your child feels vulnerable and is less likely to enjoy school during these years because of everything that is changing—physically, emotionally, mentally and socially.

Your child is entering the dialectic stage in which he or she has a high need to debate, dialogue and dispute everything.

Your child is trying to discover his or her identity. The more confident your child is — knowing his or her unique personality and learning style and how it affects learning — the more he or she will feel equipped and empowered to learn.

THE TEACHER FACTOR

As a parent, it's natural to want the teacher to perfectly understand and instantly grasp how your child learns. Realistically, teachers have classrooms full of students who often learn in different ways.

Some years you are blessed to get a teacher who understands your child and his or her particular learning style, and other years that's just not the case. Unless there is an obvious due cause for concern, be careful not to impugn the teacher.

When you do feel it's appropriate to talk to your child's teacher, set up an appointment, be prepared to express your concerns with grace and begin positively. "I'm having a concern," you might start out, "and I thought you would have some

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good insights into how we can solve this."

THE PARENT FACTOR

Of course, we can't overlook another factor: ourselves. So, take a deep breath!

Could you possibly be part of the problem? Are your expectations too

mold others to our way of learning.

Remind yourself that your child is wired by God for a unique and specific purpose. Then remind your son or daughter of that truth from God's Word (see Ephesians 2:10, for example). Above all, listen with an open mind and a heart

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of wisdom, and pray to see the situation through the lens of love.

—Used with permission of Focus on the Family



high? Does your child learn differently than you or others in your family? It's easy to think that the way we learn is the only right way, and then we attempt to

Topeka Rescue Mission to Host 16th Annual Back-to-School Fair

For the past 16 years, the Topeka Rescue Mission has been hosting a Back-to-School Fair benefitting homeless children residing at the Mission, as well as families in need from the community. This year's event will take place on August 6th, 8th and 9th and will provide backpacks loaded with grade-appropriate school supplies. Children residing at the Mission will also receive new clothing and shoes with remaining items distributed to families in need who sign up for the Clothing Bank. The only eligibility requirements for a family to participate are that they are not already receiving school supply support elsewhere... and they are in need.

Most of the children participating in the event have grown accustomed to getting near everything they own second-hand. That's what makes the backpacks and supplies received from the Back-to-School Fair even more special – the items are all brand new and will belong only to

them. Each face lights up with delight as they pick out their bag and then examine the new "treasures" inside.

It's not just the items that make a difference to a child. It is the knowing that they have the opportunity to start out the school year like the other kids in their classrooms and experience a taste of normalcy in a season of life that may otherwise be quite challenging. Arriving at school on the first day with confidence because they have everything they need and feeling as though they fit in truly does make all of the difference in the world.

The dates of the Mission's Back-to-School Fair are: August 6 (9am-3pm for children residing at the Mission), August 8 (9am-3pm for children not residing at the Mission) and August 9 (9:30-11:30am for children not residing at the Mission). If you are in need of support from the event, please contact the Distribution Center at 357-4285 or stop by 401 NW Norris to fill out an application.

Teaming up with your child's Teachers

A successful school year begins with teamwork—among you, your child and your child's teachers. As your child heads back to school, consider these suggestions for building a positive, collaborative relationship with his teachers. Go to ThrivingFamily.com and search "Teaming up With Teachers" to get worksheets on communicating with your child's teachers.

Treat the teacher as an expert

Be positive in your attitude and approach, making it a habit to contact the teacher under positive circumstances. Showing up only when you want to discuss a problem can push a teacher into defensive mode as soon as you walk through the door.

Ask, "What can I do?"

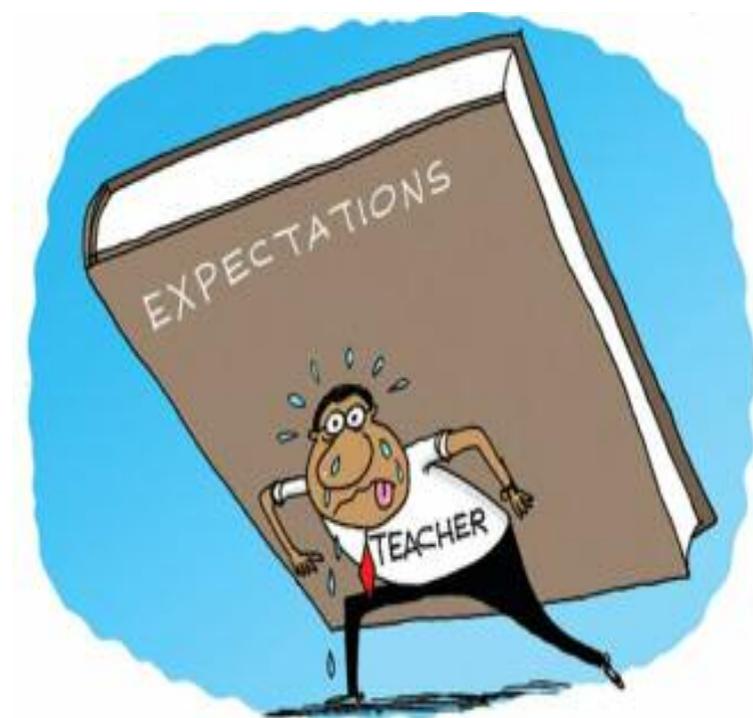
When discussing your child, start many of your questions with, "What can I do ...?" Let the teacher know you and your child are taking responsibility for learning.

Recognize limitations

Recognize that there are practical limitations on expectations of your teacher. If your child needs to follow a certain system for keeping track of homework, create the paperwork yourself so that the teacher needs to only fill in a few blanks.

Be objective

Don't rely solely on the information you get from your child about a particular incident. Naturally, your personal loyalty rests with your child, but do your best to



look at the situation objectively and see it through the eyes of the teacher.

Discuss with your child

Discuss the conversations you have with the teacher openly with your child. Emphasize the positive areas that you and the teacher discussed, and brainstorm how to use those strengths to improve in other areas.

Value variety

Help your child understand and value a variety of teaching methods. Every teacher is a lesson in learning. By helping your child appreciate the unique styles of different teachers, you'll prepare him to use his strengths to cope with life's many other differences.

—Cynthia Ulrich Tobias

OPERATION BACKPACK kicks off another school year!

Topeka North Outreach, Inc. is set to begin its 9th year providing Weekend Snack Sacks to area children in need through its Operation Backpack program. To start the new school year, backpacks and school supplies are being collected for eligible children whose families are: working poor, single or widowed, foster or adoptive, disabled, or grandparent parents.

Once school starts, children will receive a Weekend Snack Sack full of nutritious, single-serving size food items every Friday that they may take home in their new backpack.

The desire is to look after orphans and widows, the poor and the needy, as God instructs us to do in His Word. TNO is currently raising funds, collecting school supplies and backpacks, and collecting snack type food items in order to reach 500 children in eight schools.

TNO will distribute backpacks & school supplies to needy children on Sunday, August 10 at 3 pm at Northland Christian Church's Connection Café. Donations should be brought to the Connection Café by noon.

Volunteers are always welcome to help assemble the Weekend Snack Sacks the first Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. (beginning September 4) at Lyman Learning Center, 2032 N. Kansas Ave. Over 15,000 Food sacks were distributed to needy children in Topeka during the last school year. Volunteers are also needed to distribute the Snack Sacks on Fridays.

TNO is a 501c3, non-profit, all-volunteer organization whose mission statement is: "Reaching out to our neighbors in need, with the love of Christ." If you would like to help, please contact TNO at 785-286-1370,

topekanorthoutreach@gmail.com or topekanorthoutreach.org

Items needed:

- Folders with pockets
- Spiral notebooks, wide, 70 pgs
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- Markers, wide, classic, washable
- Pencils, pencil box & pink eraser

- Glue stick & Elmer's glue
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- BACKPACKS

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