



Helping Your Child Do Well In School

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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It's almost the end of the school year and many parents are concerned about whether their child will pass or be in the same grade for the fall. Worry will not help you or your child!

You cannot change another person but you can do specific things that may positively change the academic future for your son or daughter. Following are a few tips to get both of you on the right track:

1. Don't blame the school for everything - Teachers get into their profession because they care about children and want to help them to learn. If a child doesn't have the same goals and is disruptive in the classroom, the teachers will become frustrated and may make some choices that you do not feel is in your child's best interest, like asking them to leave the classroom. They cannot, however, allow your child to interfere with the learning environment of the other children.
2. Don't believe everything that your child tells you - Every parent hopes that their child will tell the truth but that doesn't always happen. Children don't lie to get into trouble but they may lie to get out of trouble. If they think that you will believe every word that they say without checking this out, they will likely tell you a story that isn't accurate.
3. Don't ignore the situation - Pretending that the problems will go away is not very responsible and not only allows things to fester but also models passivity to your child.
4. Do make an appointment with the school teacher and/or principal- Your child and the professionals involved need to know that you care about the situation and are willing to be part of the solution. Your child also needs to know that you will be getting information that might discount the stories s/he has told you.
5. Do go to the school with a list of questions- Ask for facts about what is happening. Is your child doing and submitting homework assignments? Is s/he participating in class? What specifically are the areas of concern? Are there academic or behavioural issues? What strategies are put in place to help the child? What options are available? What can I do as a parent to help?
6. Do talk with the child about what you and the school expect - Make sure the child knows exactly what s/he is to do from now on. Do not negotiate or listen to any more blame about what is wrong. Focus on clear goals that have specific rewards and consequences. Writing out two or three things on paper will help to reinforce and prevent "I didn't know" statements in the future.
7. Arrange to have professionals involved if necessary - Arranging for a tutor or therapist can make a huge difference! Often a child needs to have someone outside of the school and family who they can trust to help them do better. Most parents have coverage for a psychologist through their Employee Assistance benefits or through their medical insurance and therefore don't have to pay full fees.
8. Show consistency and follow up - If you want your child to be consistent, you need to model this for them. Set up appointments with the school or arrange

to have email contact with the teacher so that you know what is going on before the problem escalates to an unmanageable level.

Yes, we are nearing the end of the school year but it is never too late to help your child to do well. Begin using these steps today and I think you will find that tomorrow gets better for everyone involved.