

Communication Tip No. 15: When Children Complain about School

When our children express or demonstrate that something is wrong at school or other activities, it's often our job as caregivers to read between the lines and address what's really going on.

They might say "I'm bored" and need your guidance finding a better school-life balance or engaging in more challenging academic work. When they say "it's too hard", the class material might actually be too difficult or perhaps they just need some help studying or learning how to manage assignments more effectively. If they're always tired, they'll definitely need some support in adjusting their schedules and maybe even diets.



But what about when a child says, "I don't like my teacher/coach/mentor"? This issue can be a little trickier to navigate. On the one hand, they might not like them because they are strict or present challenging material. On the other hand, it is important not to ignore that there is the possibility that the authority figure is acting inappropriately.

In order to get a fuller picture of what's going on, the first step is always to ask children why they don't like the teacher. Ask them to give examples and to help you understand what is going on. If the child is still being vague, remind them that they can tell you anything and that you'll listen with an open mind.

As in other situations, you may find that your child has a limited view of the situation. However, if what you hear from your child sets off alarm bells, you'll be able to take the next step and talk to the teacher or an administrator to find out what is going on to give your child such a negative impression.

As parents and caregivers, we have the opportunity to help kids deal well with negative feelings and challenges. And, if they are being mistreated in some way, keeping an open line of communication with kids will enable us to be their advocates!