

Navigating Report Cards

Opening up report cards can be a stressful endeavor; as parents, we can't be with our children in school, and can only hope they are performing to the best of their abilities. Sub-par report cards can cause waves at home and send concerned parents into a spiral of worry and helplessness. Even disappointing report cards can be a positive step in improving your child's academic career. Here are some tips to help avoid the dread associated with report card days.

Don't Yell: If you are upset with your child's grades, chances are he/she is well aware of his/her disappointing performance. Losing your cool will only make matters worse. Wait until you can be calm and collected to have a confrontation.

Use the "Compliment Sandwich" Strategy: Look for the positives and be sure to begin and end with one. This technique takes the air out of the "you never see the good things I do" argument and lets your child know that you can acknowledge a job well done as well as an unsatisfactory performance.

Listen: Give your child a real chance to explain. When children feel that their parents don't listen to them, they can easily begin feeling misunderstood and anxious. Kids face a lot of pressures in school today, including judgmental peers, difficult teachers, and high expectations. Just knowing that their parents are willing to listen and offer empathy can be a huge help for students. Also, when you understand your child's side of the story, you can better decide on the best course of action.

Communicate: If you have concerns about your child's academic performance, don't hesitate to schedule a parent-teacher conference. The teacher spends time with your child every day and may be able to offer some helpful insights into what is going on. Make a note of the points you want to discuss beforehand so you are prepared and touch on all of your concerns. Be calm and realistic- your child is not an angel, and you're there for help, not to criticize the teacher.