

Checking In – How’s Your Child Doing at School?

The kids have been back at school for a few weeks and those first-day jitters are probably a thing of the past. But do you know if your child is really off to a good start? Is she keeping up with assignments and mastering all those new concepts? Is he behaving the way he’s supposed to and building positive relationships with teachers and classmates? This is the time – before the school year is too far underway – for parents to take stock of how things are going. Here are Marti’s tips on what to watch for:

I. What parents need to watch for

- Attitude
*Is your child eager to go to school in the morning?
Eager to tell you about his or her day?
Red flags: physical complaints; sad or flat mood*
- School work
*Teacher’s comments on papers
Organization of materials & understanding of expectations
Demonstrated knowledge
Red flags: avoiding tasks; seeking too much help*
- Friendships
*Does your child talk about kids s/he plays with, eats lunch with?
Does your child want to get together or talk on the phone with classmates?
Red flags: fear or anxiety about playground or bus; isolation; aggression*

II. Four tips for parents

- 1) Check homework every day and have child explain it
- 2) Ask open-ended questions
*What was most interesting? Hardest? Most fun?
What do you do if you get stuck? What happens if kids tease or fight? What do you do if someone bugs you?*
- 3) Reach out to teachers
*Send a note, call, drop by: “How’s it going for ____?” (schoolwork, behavior, friendships)
What can we do to support him/her and to make your job easier?*
- 4) Get to know child’s friends and their parents