

AGES & STAGES



CLEAR HER MIND.

Set aside 10 minutes of “worry time” before dinner. Have her explain her worries to you and then encourage her to leave the anxiety in an imaginary box and put it away until the next day.

MICHELLE ANTHONY, M.A., Ph.D., is co-author of *Little Girls Can Be Mean: Four Steps to Bully-Proof Girls in the Early Grades*. She is an expert in developmental psychology, a mother to three young children, and a certified K-3 teacher.



LEARN TO GET ALONG.

Your child may have a true personality clash with his teacher. Discuss ways your child can react less negatively to annoyances, such as taking deep breaths before responding.

THINK POSITIVE.

Ask your child to reflect about other aspects of school that he enjoys.

ELIZABETH HARTLEY-BREWER is an advisor on children's learning and development and the author of *Talking to Tweens* and *Making Friends*.

Tossing, Turning

Why can't my child sleep?

BY MICHELLE ANTHONY, M.A., Ph.D.

We all have occasional trouble sleeping, but up to 10 percent of children report ongoing problems. Some wrestle with shut-eye because their brains won't turn off. For others, it's irregular routines, trouble sleeping alone, or overstimulation from TV. Poor diet and lack of exercise may also contribute. The first step in relieving your child's sleep difficulties is to find the cause. Check with your pediatrician to rule out a medical reason. Then, focus on adjusting your family's routine to foster better sleep. Try increasing his activity level during the day so he's more tired at night, but finish physical activity at least two hours before bed. The same is true for other stimulating activities, like TV or video games. Help your child learn to relax before hitting the hay by reading quietly to himself. **P&C**



Teacher Clash

When your tween dislikes her teacher

BY ELIZABETH HARTLEY-BREWER

You likely recall two sets of teachers from school: your favorites and those who seemed to give you a hard time. It's a fact that your tween is not going to get along with everyone, but it's disheartening when he comes home complaining about a teacher. You've worked hard to help him develop a love of learning and don't want the situation to discourage him.

It's common for children in this age group to have an issue with a teacher. It can occur because tweens are beginning to analyze behavior and pass judgment. They're more conscious of a teacher's attitude toward them because they want to be liked and care deeply about fairness. Tweens can therefore become upset if they feel picked on, defensive if they think they irritate the teacher, and enraged if they're not getting fair treatment. The result: hostility expressed as hatred.

Respond by taking your child's feelings seriously; they are real for her and certainly shouldn't be dismissed. But don't rush into the school and request a change of class, as your child's resentment may be unjustified.

Tweens are new to making judgments and don't always read situations correctly. They can misjudge cues and comments and take offense where none was meant. Ask your child to keep a daily record of her complaints, so you can get a clear picture. Consider if something at home might be causing your child to argue more and irritate the teacher, or if a friend is a bad influence: 10-year-old boys are renowned for playing the class clown.

When you are sure there's good evidence of a poor dynamic, on either side, ask for a meeting with the teacher and gently explore solutions to the problem in order to regenerate your child's enthusiasm for school. **P&C**