

When Your Child Says, "My Teacher Doesn't Like Me"

When a child says, "My teacher doesn't like me," take the feeling seriously without deciding immediately what the teacher intended. Start with: "It sounds like something at school made you feel singled out. Tell me what happened." Ask for observable details - what was said or done, when it happened, who was there, what happened just before, and whether it has happened more than once. This helps separate the child's feeling from the conclusion about the teacher's motives. CDC guidance notes that students report stronger school connectedness when they believe teachers care about and support them, and teacher caring is associated with better engagement in reading and math.¹ If the relationship seems strained, focus on repair rather than blame. CDC guidance on restorative communication includes validating feelings, listening, taking responsibility when appropriate, and using collaborative problem-solving after conflict or misunderstanding.² Contact the teacher with neutral language: "My child has said they feel discouraged in class. Could you help me understand what you are seeing?" Ask what interactions go well, when tension appears, and what one change could create more positive contact. If there are repeated incidents, keep brief notes with dates and examples so the pattern is clear. School connectedness matters because students who feel cared for, valued, and supported at school are more likely to have better grades, attendance, and graduation outcomes.³ The goal is not to decide who is right after one conversation. It is to understand the pattern and help the child and teacher rebuild a workable relationship.

Did You Know?

- ✓ CDC reports that teacher caring and support are associated with stronger school connectedness and improved engagement in reading and math.¹
- ✓ CDC restorative communication guidance emphasizes validating feelings and collaborative problem-solving when a relationship has been strained.²
- ✓ Students who feel connected at school are more likely to have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and graduate high school.³

Research Sources

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Teacher Caring and Support." August 28, 2024.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Promoting School Connectedness Through Restorative Practices." January 2, 2025.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "School Connectedness Helps Students Thrive." Reviewed November 18, 2024.

Teacher-Relationship Check-In

Use this page to move from a painful statement to specific examples, a calm school conversation, and a workable reset.

Child's name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher/course: _____ Follow-up date: _____

1. Hear the Exact Story - About 3 Minutes

Ask what happened without arguing with the child's interpretation.

What happened: _____

2. Separate Facts From Conclusions - About 2 Minutes

Write what was observed and what your child believes it means.

Observed: _____ Child thinks: _____

3. Look for a Pattern - About 2 Minutes

Ask whether the same type of interaction has happened more than once.

Dates/examples: _____

4. Contact the Teacher Neutrally - About 2 Minutes

Describe the concern and ask what the teacher is seeing from their side.

Teacher perspective: _____

5. Agree on a Reset - About 1 Minute

Choose one positive interaction or support to try, then check back.

Reset plan: _____

What Parents Can Say: "I believe that you felt hurt. Now let us find out exactly what happened and what can make school feel better."