

### ***A Letter To A Teacher***

Dear Teacher,

Please do not think I am a bad parent. My child has what the medical profession calls an attachment disorder. This disorder affects children who did not, for whatever reason, emotionally bond to their birth mother, and who then carry this lack of bonding with later mothers. The vast majority of children who have this disorder are adopted, and therefore not living with birth parents.

Here are a few things you may find helpful as you deal with my child in your classroom. I want the best for my child, and I also want your day to do well in your classroom. I don't suggest these things to be arrogant, to suggest that you couldn't figure them out for yourself, or to tell you how to run your classroom. I offer them as ideas for things these children resent to better than what we would traditionally consider as appropriate behaviors and consequences with a child.

Children with attachment disorder tend to need the following:

- A tight, but loving, structured environment where the rules never change, but the consequences often do.
- Adults who say what they mean, and mean what they say, and who don't rely on giving lots of chances before consequences fall.
- Someone who will not be easily manipulated by a child who desperately needs to be in control of all interactions with adults, and who understands that these children are expert liars who can fool even experienced teachers and counselors.
- Someone who will check out all the facts before giving my child any benefit of the doubt.
- Someone who understands that, if a child is "flunking out" in all other areas of life, getting schoolwork done must sometimes take a back seat.
- Someone who knows that there is reason for why my child is doing the things he/she is doing, and that, until he/she stops acting out, he/she will have a very sad life, and so holds my child responsible for his/her actions and doesn't excuse those actions because of my child's problems.
- Someone who realizes that my child is quite superficially charming with adults he/she doesn't have to be in a family relationship with, but lacks the ability to true closeness with family members, especially parents.
- Someone who will not prejudge my parenting skills without asking me why I do certain things with my child.
- Someone who understands that my child doesn't show affection to his/her parents, but will ask to go home and live with you as a way of distancing from me.
- Someone who will be a strong, consistent adult with my child so my child can feel safe enough to be able to go back to being a child, and
- Someone who calls me to check out the stories my child tells before jumping to the conclusion that the child must be telling the truth because of his/her apparent sincerity.

Thank you so much for reading this letter, and I hope we can talk more about this wonderfully challenging child I have brought into your classroom.

Thanks to Gary Flanders, "An Open Letter to Teachers"