

The “I’ve Got” Interactive Book Series for Children
<http://www.ivegotbooks.net>
Taryn Grimes-Herbert

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE STEPPING IN

1. Am I making this about me? – This is a difficult question and it requires true reflection. Sometimes when my kids go through something that strikes a nerve, it’s hard not to take it personally. It can be very emotional. But then I remember, this is not about me. It’s important that everyone involved see that I am the adult, and that I am behaving as such, respectfully to all involved, with a calm, reasonable demeanor, in the best interest of my child. It’s a known fact that teachers tend to judge our children by their parents.

2. What are my expectations? — This is a tough one, too. If I go to my school to talk to teachers or administration, what is it that I expect them to do? Is it a reasonable expectation? Does it benefit my child or all of the children? Is it revenge oriented? What do I expect the school to do about the problem? If I am clear with my expectations, they are less likely to take it as an attack.

3. Will I be making it worse? – My kids watch every move I make, especially when they see me walking down the hallway of their school. They are not alone. All of their friends are watching, too. So if I ever walked in behaving in an irrational way, it would not only give my child the wrong message, but it would give all of the kids the impression that the proper way to handle a situation is to freak out. Plus, I’d be embarrassing my child, which could possibly lead to future teasing.

4. Am I protecting my child from consequences that will help them learn? – One of my biggest fears is that my intervention might prevent my children from learning a lesson that they will need in the future. If they are disrespectful to a teacher and I get them out of detention, it gives them the idea that the rules don’t apply to them. That message is not only inaccurate, but it could possibly land them down a difficult path. Childhood is meant to be valuable, not perfect.

5. Would it be better to advise my child to handle the situation on his or her own? – This is the give a kid to fish part. When my son experienced daily bullying, I did step in on a few of the bigger issues (safety, class placement, progress, etc), but it became very apparent that the only way to battle the bullying behavior was to emotionally arm the victim. I could not fight his fight. He began to feel empowered, and eventually he faced each challenge with confidence and respect for everyone around him, avoiding violence. Through the exercises in I’ve Got Plans and I’ve Got A Choice, he learned to focus on his future, choose to be happy, and soon the bullying became more and more irrelevant to him. There was even one point where he expressed his sympathy for the kids with the bullying behavior because he realized that his life would most likely turn out so much better than theirs.