



SCHOOL DAY BLUES

FIRST TERM TIPS

This is the time of year when families can flood our phone lines with requests for help for their children with TS who have returned to school and within days developed a rash of new symptoms. Returning to school each year is nerve-wracking even for children without TS, but for those whose symptoms are flaring, this can be an extremely difficult time.

Again and again we urge a cooperative approach to educating a child with TS. Some teachers are wonderful, some are not, but this is true in life as well, so these experiences of adapting to new classrooms and procedures are valuable lessons for our TS children who will have to accommodate themselves throughout their lives to what is expected of them.

Talking things over with your child's teacher is imperative, but don't rush up on the first day to give your 'story' to the teacher. With large classes, a teacher needs time to be familiar with all students, so let a teacher have a week or two to observe your child in class before you go to school to seek assistance.

Be prepared — gather your information and don't overwhelm the teacher. Our Educator's pack is a very good tool to educate your teacher on what it means to have a TS child in class. Teachers are asked to read large volumes of material, so keep it simple!

Make sure you are educated about your child's TS — be prepared to answer questions about how it affects your child in school. Don't give your teacher information you have not read yourself.

Don't over-worry your child — sending your child off filled with anxieties will only result in the opposite of what you wish. Be happy and confident in your child

— your child will pick up the positive vibes and feel better about himself.

Don't make yourself an adversary in the first week. Often the problems parents experience with their child's teacher come from lack of understanding. With patience and education, you can get through to most teachers, who after all, are interested in productive and happy students too! Often a patient attitude will be rewarded.

If this is not so, there are steps that can be taken to compel the school to listen. The school counsellor is often a good place to start as many have the experience with students with disability to understand your child's needs. Enlisting their help and/or that of the principal, may achieve what you want, but this step should not be taken without good cause. Once you become an adversary to the teacher, sorting things out can be much harder.

TSAA can help you if you get stuck. Sometimes a visit from one of our committee armed with videos and other educational material, not to mention knowledge of the system, can produce a positive result.

If your child is subject to outright discrimination or hardship, there are further things that can be done, depending upon which school and what system, private or public. Not many cases get to this point.

TS is a recognised disability, and as such, has a legal status in terms of your rights to an education for your child. It is rare for the process to get into legal determinations, but we are here to advise and help you work your way through — one of the benefits of membership!!