

## School, Homeschooling and Daycare Q and A with Dr. Laura Markham

Laura Markham: 00:02:00 Hello, this is Doctor Laura Markham. In this audio, I'll be answering some of the most common questions that parents ask about school, home-schooling, and daycare. Remember, we're always applying our three big ideas. We start by regulating our own emotions and behavior. Then we connect with our child. Finally, instead of trying to control our child, we coach them to be their best self both by helping them with their emotions and by creating an environment where the child can thrive. So, let's see how to apply these three big ideas to daily life with children.

[\(Daycare related questions begin at Question #29\)](#)

[School-related questions, including home-schooling](#)

### Question 1:

Laura Markham: 00:42:00 Let's start with one of the most common questions I get about schools. Which types of schools are more likely to follow a philosophy similar to this course rather than rewards and punishment? Montessori was specifically brought up.

I would say Montessoris can be very emotionally, developmentally appropriate for kids, and can be schools that do not use anything punitive, but they can also be pretty rigid. It really depends on the people who run that particular school.

I speak at Montessori schools all the time, so there are a lot of Montessori schools, and they tend to be the ones that are most like my approach in the United States. That's great. They're wonderful, the schools I go to, and the teacher I meet, and the directors I meet. But that's not the only approach that is developmentally appropriate, and not all Montessori schools are going to be developmentally appropriate.

What really matters is that the teacher is warm and connected to the kids, and that the response to misbehavior is not punitive, but is well, all the things you've heard me say in this class about the child learning about the impact of their behavior on the other child for instance or on the property, and trying to do repair, and that the child is allowed to learn through play. That's what matters.

I see that that often happens with Waldorf schools, which pride themselves in educating the whole child. Waldorf schools can be really wonderful often. It also can be the case with Reggio Emilia schools. I like Reggio Emilia schools often. They're about a different approach to education where the kids use much more self-directed learning and learning groups. They do, the ones I've known, tend to be much more emotionally supportive to kids. But not all of them are probably.

I would say ask questions about their emotional intelligence curriculum. Many of them talk about social intelligence now, which is great, but you really want an emotional intelligence curriculum. You want to ask very specifically about the connection between the child and the teacher, and you want to ask them very specifically about how "misbehavior is handled." That's what matters most.

I want to, again, just stress that regardless of what happens at school, you, as the parent, have more influence on your child, and you can always talk with your child about their experience at school. If they're at a public school and come home and say to you ... When I say public, I mean like in the United States where you're more likely to have timeouts than in a private school. You can say, "Maria was in timeout again today, huh? Well, I wonder how Maria felt. How did you feel when your friend was in timeout? How did you feel when the teacher raised her voice to Maria?"

"Yeah, I know it must be hard for your teacher when she feels like the kids aren't cooperating because there are a lot of kids. I wonder how Maria felt. It must be really hard for Maria too." I think what really matters is that we talk to

our kids about these things, so they have a chance to put them in context and not get traumatized and to grow from them.

## Question 2:

Laura Markham: 00:03:41

This parent asks, "How do we support our children with the challenges of the school system without undermining the teacher?"

This is very simple. We simply acknowledge how hard a job the teacher has and why they're doing what they're doing, and we uphold our own family values. When your child says, "Mrs. Jones was yelling again," we might say, "Oh, my goodness. That's so hard. Poor Mrs. Jones. She must feel really overwhelmed. It must be hard. She has a lot of kids in the class, and when they don't listen to her, it must be really hard for her."

"Of course, it's hard for the kids because grownups should never yell at kids, right? Parents shouldn't yell at kids, and neither should teachers. But poor Mrs. Jones must be having a really hard time."

Now, you may wonder, "Well, what if my kid goes to school and says to Mrs. Jones, that adults shouldn't yell at kids?" Your child's not going to do this when Mrs. Jones is angry because your child's not going to have the nerve while she's yelling to raise their hand and say, "Don't yell."

But she might say it during a quiet moment, like when she's helping your daughter pick out a library book. Your daughter might say, "My mommy says teachers shouldn't yell at kids." Mrs. Jones will probably say something like, "Oh, well, I bet your mommy also says children should listen to their teachers." Your kid will say, "Yeah, she says that." So, it's done. It's fine.

The teacher has just sort of gotten a wake up call that she's not really supposed to be yelling at the kids, and that the parents hear about it, and she isn't going to take it out

on your kid because she also got that you're not undermining her, that the kids are supposed to listen.

That's generally what I would say about the school thing. If there's a heavy homework load, I would absolutely be an advocate for your child. There's zero proof that heavy homework helps. In fact, homework doesn't help. There's lots of evidence of that. I am a fan of switching schools if you needed to, if you don't get results by bringing these things up and advocating for your child. I realize that's not a decision to take lightly, but sometimes it's necessary.

I've seen people switch schools for bullying reasons. I've seen them switch schools when they couldn't stay with their child at dropoff. There are a lot of reasons to think about going to a different school. If you can't get results from the teacher, don't be afraid to go up one notch to the principal or the director of the school. In general, I think we're advocates for our kids, but we don't have to disparage the school. We can also explain to our child the point of view of the school system.

### Question 3:

Laura Markham: 00:06:04.5

Some people have asked about how to pick a quality preschool or daycare for their child. Always look for the relationship between the caregivers and the child.

you have a warm relationship between the caregiver and the children who are there where they clearly adore that person, and she or he adores them, and where there is not punishment, but there's understanding and empathy, then that's all you need. You don't have to worry about an enriched environment. Children who are young, I'm saying five and under, they do not need an enriched environment. Everything is about emotional development, and that person will also facilitate peer relationships, which is a part of emotional development. That's what really matters.

People often wonder, "Well, what about Montessori versus the play-based thing. What about academic versus

play?" Well, obviously, academic is not a natural thing for children developmentally speaking. But I would also say, you can't really tell what play is going to be like. A lot of schools say they're play-based, but they're not. They're very much short bursts of play, if that, or teacher-directed play.

I think these buzz words are just surface things, and you have to go deeper. I've seen Montessori schools that I think are the only place I'd ever want my child; they're so fabulous. I've seen Montessori schools that were pretty rigid and pretty not-so-great for kids, in their rigidity or their lack of peer support when kids have peer problems, or their lack of understanding about kids having separation issues when they say goodbye to their parents.

I think you can't just use the description like Montessori to tell you anything. You have to actually look at what goes on and observe. It depends on who the people are who are involved. I would always go by the relationships.

#### Question 4:

Laura Markham: 00:07:50.5 Another question is about a rigid academic environment where a six-year-old is in this rigid situation where the teacher's actually yelling or punishing the kids. If kids talk, the whole class doesn't go out or whatever.

I find that appalling, but it's very common. What I would say is talk to your child. Talk to your child in a way that doesn't undermine the teacher, but helps the child understand that this is not a way to act.

When your child says to you, "Mrs. Jones was yelling at Henry again today," you can say, "Wow, that must have been hard for everybody. How did Henry take it? Yeah, it was upsetting to him. How did you feel about it? Yeah, that was upsetting to you. Yeah, poor Mrs. Jones. She has so many kids to deal with, and Henry can be hard to deal with. Henry is very active, isn't he? Henry sometimes is loud, and Henry can be difficult, and there are a lot of kids

to try to keep focused. She has a lot of pressure on her to teach certain things and get them taught to you."

"But you know, we think it's never okay to yell at kids. I wish Mrs. Jones had more support, so she didn't feel like she had to yell. I wish she didn't feel like she had to yell no matter what, but sometimes grownups don't know another way to make things better, and so they yell. It's not a good thing. It's never okay to yell at kids. No one ever deserves to be yelled at."

Laura Markham: "Is there anything you can do to make the situation better? No, no, probably not, but what could you do in that moment when she's yelling at Henry, and you feel bad inside? What could you say to yourself to make yourself feel better?" You're basically giving your child support to deal with the trauma. You're helping her see it from the teacher's perspective, but you're also helping her see it from Henry's perspective or the other child that's acting out.

I think this is really all we can do with our kids, but remember, by the time a child is six and a half, that child is already basically formed. Their brain is continuing to develop, of course, but they've already got the basics, and so they're going to be able to use your explanation, and they're going to be fine. They're not likely to be traumatized. But that doesn't mean I wouldn't go to the principal and say, "You know, this teacher yells at the kids all the time. That shouldn't be a way the teachers handle a class, should it?" Obviously, we're advocating for our child and all the children in the class, but I think we can also intervene directly with our child to protect them.

### Question 5:

Laura Markham: 00:10:05.5 This question is about a new teacher that her child has where she misses the old one, but even six months in, she's still having a hard time with the new teacher. If you can, you can help her to laugh about it and whatever's making her anxious in the classroom. You can help her to

grieve the old teacher by writing a letter to the old teacher, and you can help her bond with the new teacher.

There's an article on how to help her bond with the new teacher that's on my website.

<https://www.ahaparenting.com/Ages-stages/school-age/Help-kids-adjust-school>

What matters in adjusting to any new classroom is always the relationship with the teacher.

You can also talk to the teacher about the fact that your child is having a hard time bonding with her. I had that happen with my daughter and a teacher. She was crying every morning about going to school. I think she was in the fourth grade. When I spoke with the teacher -- this was early on in the year -- he said, "Oh, you know, she never acts like there's a problem. I didn't know there was a problem, but I'll pay a little extra attention to her."

Sure enough, within a week, she loved him and loved going to school. It was just a matter of him connecting with her. Before that, she was one of the easy kids who he didn't notice. I think for all kids if we can just get the teacher to pay some attention, that helps enormously.

### Question 6:

Laura Markham: 00:11:30 There's a question here about her son in first grade who dislikes school. We all want our children, especially in those early years, to love school. She's asking, "Plus, my son doesn't like school, and should we homeschool?"

I don't have a yes or no on homeschooling. I think it depends on a lot of things. Some of the most creative children I've ever seen were homeschooled, and I think some kids are really not cut out for school, kids with learning disabilities, kids with ADHD. Some of those kids do so much better when they're homeschooled.

I want to add that I have counseled moms who are trying to homeschool who end up feeling like they never get a

break from their kid, and their children are fighting with each other all the time. They just need a break. In that case, I don't think it's good for anybody if mom is feeling resentful of the kids while she's homeschooling.

I think you have to look at your unique circumstance, but it's not an all or nothing answer. Some people homeschool for a year, and then the child goes into second grade or whatever.

If a child's getting bullied, I would always try to intervene with the school, and I would pull the child out. If the child has a teacher who's a bully, and there are such teachers ... I'm a big fan of teachers in general. I think most teachers work very hard to be ... They do it because they love kids, and they work very hard to connect with the kids.

But there are teachers who are bullies, unfortunately, or who are just sticking it out to retirement, or are sort of done with this and are resentful. If my child had one of those teachers and I couldn't get them transferred, I would pull them out of the school. If you have the luxury to homeschool, and you can't get a better situation with school, then there's nothing wrong ... Nothing wrong, it could be that homeschooling is the answer to your prayer and to your child's prayer! Just don't see it as a permanent situation. Just say for right now we're going to do it, and try it. If it works, keep doing it. That's all.

### Question 7:

Laura Markham: 00:13:25.5 What do you do if your son's school uses the Clip Down Method where you move a clip with your name on it, yellow to red? Isn't this publicly humiliating? Yes! It is. I think there's a lot of stuff online about this now and how it's publicly humiliating. I think you could get some good examples, some good articles that you could use as examples for the school to give it to them to try to argue with them.

Really, you just have to talk to your child about it. "This is how they do it. It's hard for the teachers when they have

so many kids, and they don't know how to handle it. What would you do if you had a lot of kids in the class, and the kids weren't cooperating with you when you ask them to do something? What do you think about the yellow method? What do you think about the red? What if you got a yellow? What if you got a red?"

I would also say, "You know I love you no matter what. I don't care if you ever get a yellow or red. What I want is for you, as much as you can, to cooperate with the teacher and to follow the rules in the class. If there's ever any time you can't, I want you to feel safe with the teacher to ask the teacher for help." But what happens at home is always going to be more important than what happens at school.

I'm not actually that worried about your child having this happen at school, unless you have a child who has issues like super active issues or attention issues, in which case, you could consider taking them out of that school, because if they end up in the yellow or the red a lot, it's going to hurt their ability to love school, to want to learn, and that's not what you want for them. They might as well not be at school. I would homeschool before I would let that happen to my child, so you might look for another school if it's a constant thing for your child.

### Question 8:

Laura Markham: 00:15:00

This parent says that her seven-year-old has screaming meltdowns about homework, and they're getting worse, and homework is getting to be more as he gets older.

Most of the time, kids who have homework meltdowns do it for one of three reasons. One, they have a screen addiction, and they don't want to stop the screen long enough to do the homework. I don't see any sign from your question that that's operative here, but I would just say screen addictions are very common in children. Screens are bad for a child's brain development. The more a child uses a screen, the more chance they have of being addicted, but some kids really can't handle **any** screen usage.

- Laura Markham: I think, before kids start getting homework, you want to stop having any screens during the week so that they do have no distraction from homework. Because it also means, even if the screens aren't used until after the homework, it means that the child will race through homework to get to the screen. So, screens are a recipe for children to not be successful at school.
- Laura Markham: A second reason kids have homework meltdowns is that they have a learning issue, and the work is just too hard for them. So, that's actually very, very common. If you don't have a screen problem and you don't have an anxiety problem with your child, and you don't have an overreaction to their homework problem, like you're being controlling about the homework, then most of the time, it's a learning issue. In that case, you want to have your child assessed for learning issues.
- Laura Markham: The third reason I sort referred to, which is that some kids have an anxiety issue about homework. Often, that's about perfection, so these are kids who have a problem with perfectionism. They're often oldest children, and they really worry about they have to be perfect. This can be made worse by parents who are too involved with the homework, and make kids do the homework over, or do it better or react badly to the homework or try to control the homework.
- Laura Markham: I just want to say, if your child is having homework issues, really important that you make sure that you're not contributing to those homework issues. Notice if you're getting triggered. If you're getting triggered, if you're losing your temper, that's going to absolutely make things worse. Your child, by the time they start school and have homework to do, your child really needs you to be the person who provides the safe-holding environment. You want to make sure that when they start to get anxious about homework, you're super calm.
- Laura Markham: I want to go back to you and just say, if none of those things sound like that's the issue, please, have him assessed for learning issues. Because that's often how we find out about learning issues, is that our kids will let us know through homework meltdowns.

**Question 9:**

Laura Markham: 00:17:40 There's a heartbreaking question here about how to deal with a teacher who punishes kids at school or daycare and how to deal with kids who've been punished a lot in school or daycare, because there's an eight-year-old who has been punished a lot. I would just say, I'm so sorry. No kid should be in a situation where they get punished a lot in school or daycare, and I would pull my kid out of that school or daycare and not let them go.

Laura Markham: If you have a kid who's had that experience, play with them, get them laughing, do ... This kid's already eight, but do puppet shows about it, and get the kid laughing about it. In the puppet show, have kids who torment the teachers and get away with things, and the teacher tries to punish them. I would just do whatever you could to be silly and get them laughing. I guess that's the important thing to say.

**Question 10:**

Laura Markham: 00:18:29 This parent is asking a question about homeschooling. I'm a fan of homeschooling, but I'm also ambivalent about homeschooling. If you have a lot of inner resources and you can handle being at home with your kids full-time, then homeschooling can be an amazing and wonderful thing. In your case, one of your children really had a hard time with kindergarten and thought it was the worst thing ever, and it really didn't work for her.

Laura Markham: I would probably, in that case, wait. She's only four-years-old. I would probably wait a year, and no reason she can't stay home with you for a year. But the other thing is, you might find a different kind of kindergarten, a more nurturing environment, if she didn't have anyone she could bond with there at that kindergarten.

**Question 11:**

- Parent: 00:19:13.5 Thank you, first of all, for the live call and for your wonderful information in the book and the course. My husband and I have both found it very helpful.
- I have a four-year-old son, and here in Canada, that means the start of kindergarten. It has been a big adjustment year for us, and we have always applied positive parenting. We've been doing a lot of emotion coaching over the last six to 12 months as he's developed transition issues leaving the home and going into the school environment.
- Parent: Your recommendations have worked really well with respect to speaking with him and really meeting him where his emotions are.
- My question comes, though, when the school system doesn't always adopt the same approach and how you deal with issues that might come up, when teachers or educators don't handle emotions at the school in the same way that you would parent at home, and the impact that that can have on that inconsistent messaging when your child comes home from school maybe, in my case, upset or even angry at some point earlier in the year when it wasn't being addressed in the same way that it would have been from myself or my husband.
- Laura Markham: Yes, this is a challenge that most people whose children are not homeschooled face. They're not going to handle things the way you would at home. Sometimes, it's mild differences, and sometimes it's huge differences that really break your heart, honestly.
- Laura Markham: I would say the first thing is that what happens at home is always going to be more important than what happens at school. That's the first thing. So, really reassure yourself that although it has an impact on your child, it's not at all the same as if you were doing those things at home.
- Laura Markham: The second thing is, most of the time, you can help your child to work through it at home without even talking to

the school. If your child comes home and says, "The teacher was yelling at James again. Poor James. He's always in trouble, and he looks scared when the teacher yells at him. It hurts my ears. I wish he wouldn't do that."

Laura Markham:

When you have a sensitive child, that's what they're going to see is going on at school, and they're going to come home and be upset by it. Your job, as the parent, is to listen and to empathize with your child and to say, "Of course that was upsetting. Oh, my goodness, poor James. He must have felt terrible. Poor teacher." You want to add some context here. "Poor teacher. The teacher has a lot of children to handle and doesn't always know what to do. It sounds like the teacher doesn't have enough training to stay peaceful when she's having a hard time, and a child is acting out. That sounds terrible. I'm so sorry about James, and I'm also sorry that the other children like you have to listen to this. I wonder what could be different?"

Laura Markham:

Sometimes, you can actually talk to the teacher, and the teacher will change their ways. Not likely, but sometimes. If it's your own child who is being yelled at or given red lights over and over again, red marks by their name or whatever, I would absolutely go to the school, ask the teacher, and see what you can work out. I think sometimes you have to go to the principal. Sometimes you have to ask for another placement for your child if the teacher really can't deal with your child.

Laura Markham:

Often, once the teacher knows that you're trying to work with your child at home to help them behave in the classroom, and often once the teacher sees any difference in your child that's positive, often they can be more positive. I have seen this really turn around with teachers who say to the child, "Will you be my special helper? When you get here in the morning, will clean the blackboard for me?" or whatever.

Laura Markham:

The child feels connected and valued and begins to act differently. I've seen things that can totally turn around. I wouldn't give up easily. When a child is new in the school, you can expect there to be some bumps.

I would just add, we can't protect our children from everything. If it's serious, I would even consider pulling your child out of school, but that would be a last resort, obviously. Usually, even though you can't protect kids from everything, you can help them to deal with it in a way they end up becoming stronger for it.

Parent: Listening to your response, it's a little bit of both. It's things he's witnessed or heard in the classroom where we don't use the same language at home, and a little bit of anxiety with, for instance, struggling when his zipper gets jammed in his coat. Early in the year, he would start to cry, and how that was managed, I guess, is the right way of putting it.

Laura Markham: Right, so often ... Right, that's often ...

Parent: It's not necessarily disciplinary. It's just more when he feels these emotions, they're being handled much differently than they are here. I appreciate your comments about resilience, and not being able to protect them, and how to talk to them about that, and how people will speak differently and problem-solve differently. We tried to talk to him about that as well, but it's also just what he observes and what he hears in the classroom, and how to sort of lessen the impact on him.

Parent: Because I like the word that you use, sensitive. He is a very sensitive child, so when he feels that someone in the room is upset or angry or frustrated, he really internalizes a lot of those feelings.

Laura Markham: Yes, yes. I would say that highly sensitive kids do tend to be a little more anxious, and he may also be on the more anxious spectrum. I would teach him skills to use when something happens that feels too hard, like when his zipper gets stuck.

I would explain to him that, "Of course we're always here to help. We're always your backup. Sometimes when you're out in the world, you'll feel all alone for a few minutes, like 'Oh, no! Who will help me with this?' There won't always be someone to help, but don't worry because you can handle it. What could you say to yourself

at that moment with your zipper? What could you do? And when you get upset, how could you calm yourself down?"

Laura Markham:

I would have discussions, but even make games out of tools to help him manage his own anxiety and his upset when he feels like he can't handle things. Give a mantra to use because I think so often when we raise kids tenderly, and then they get out into the world, and they have not been toughened up in a sense, they have a big reaction to the world. I still think it's better to raise them tenderly.

Laura Markham:

My own boy was a tender person who I was worried how he would do in boy culture and relating to other boys, and he did just fine. He stopped wearing his heart quite so much on his sleeve, and he just would shut his mouth or whatever and try not to cry. But I think in the long run, we are still doing them so much of a service to help them be whole human beings with access to their whole heart, but they just need tools from us for when their zipper gets stuck.

Parent:

Okay, thank you.

Laura Markham:

Okay, thank you.

### Question 12:

Speaker 3:

00:27:04

My question is that my son is six-years-old, and just essentially like since 10 days ago, he has started to behave very harshly at home. I have been listening to your programs since I became a member, and we are adopting those techniques. Currently, I am feeling that we have been improving ourself, so at least I expected him not to get worse, but in the last 10 days, when he doesn't get what he wants, he becomes so angry.

Speaker 3:

I stay calm and don't react or anything. It goes away, but it is kind of weird for me that he becomes kind of this too much anger. I'm afraid something is going on at the school, which I don't know. I keep speaking with him and asking

him if there is something going on, but I had no success. Do you think there is anything going on? I don't know.

Laura Markham:

I don't know. I don't know, but I will say that two things could be happening. It's one of two things. The first thing is, before you started this course, were you parenting in a conventional way?

Speaker 3:

I can say yes. Yeah, I was kind of more strict, and I didn't have this connection that was such as said in your talk. I am trying to work on that, so I think I have improved a bit. Yeah. I was more strict beforehand.

Laura Markham:

Okay. So, it's been almost three months that you've been listening to the course and working now to connect with him, and you say that you've improved, which is wonderful.

Speaker 3:

Yes, I think so.

Laura Markham:

Have you seen, before this, before the last 10 days, which would be sort of the 30 and maybe the 60 days before that, what did you see in your son? Was he any different when you worked to connect?

Speaker 3:

Yes, I was feeling that he was better. We had more peaceful time together. He used to come to me and explain more about his school, and it seemed much better.

Laura Markham:

Okay, so I was going to say that sometimes, when we offer more understanding, children feel safe to show us their old past anger. But not all kids do that. Many kids just feel safer to talk to us more, and things are pleasant, and they're more cooperative. It sounds like he was that way until the last 10 days. I don't think this is backpack emptying. I think this is something else.

Laura Markham:

I said it was one of two things. I don't think it's backpack emptying. I think it is something that has happened to him in the last 10 days that is making him very angry and upset. Is he ever away from you? Is he ever with someone else, a babysitter, another family member, where he's not at home?

- Speaker 3: No, no. He's only at his school, and then at home, it's with us, my husband and I.
- Laura Markham: Okay, so I'm wondering what could be different in the last 10 days?
- Speaker 3: He also-
- Laura Markham: I would ask the school. He also what?
- Speaker 3: Also, he doesn't want to do his homework at home. That's the new thing.
- Laura Markham: That's new in the last 10 days?
- Speaker 3: Yes.
- Laura Markham: That he doesn't want to do his homework. So, something is clearly going on at school. We don't know what, but he's upset. I was wondering if he was being bullied, but the fact that he doesn't want to do his homework implies that there's something with the teacher.
- Speaker 3: Yes.
- Laura Markham: So, I think you need to go to the school. I would go to the teacher, and I would say, "He doesn't want to do his homework. He's gotten very angry just in the last 10 days." I would also, with him, I would definitely go to the school, but I would also sit your son down and say, "Sweetheart, it's breaking my heart to see you so upset. I see you don't want to do your homework, and you used to want to do your homework. Something is going on, and you're very angry lately. I wonder what you're so upset about. Something is going on, and I am here to help. That's what moms and dads are for."
- Laura Markham: If he says, "No, nothing is going on at all." You can say, "Okay, then we need to talk to the teacher because you used to want to do your homework, and now you don't. Something is happening, and we need to help you."
- He might, at that point, scream at you, "No! No! Don't talk to the teacher," in which case you know there's something

going on that you'll find out with the teacher. Or, he might say, "Yes, please talk to the teacher. She's done this and this and this wrong." Then, you'll know what's going on, right?

Speaker 3: Sure. Thank you.

Laura Markham: All right. Good luck to you.

Speaker 3: Thank you so much.

Laura Markham: You're very welcome.

### Question 13:

Speaker 4: 00:32:10.5 Okay, first of all. Thank you so much for this training because I'm so happy I don't have to punish anymore, and life gets much easier now with all your help. My son turned eight yesterday. Everything got much better. He feels more secure and more self-confident, and I think he's more easy at home. The problems are more outside home.

Speaker 4: For example, at school, it was not easy since the beginning of the year and even last year because my son is quite impulsive and has a lot of energy, so it's quite difficult to get him calm and do some things. That's why for me, it was so important to find out about your course because it's helping even more with a child like this.

Speaker 4: I also received emails, for example, from the school transport organization that he doesn't stay seated in the bus. He gets up all the time. He follow the class for English because he's going to school in French and he has some English courses. We wanted him to get better at it, so during the holidays, he went for a training of five days in the morning, and there it was nightmare. He didn't listen. He would get up. Stand up on the tables, something that he never did at home or elsewhere.

Speaker 4: I don't know if all these things are related to the fact that I'm not punishing at home anymore. I'm more listening to him and to his needs, and that now, outside the world, he's just misbehaving. I don't really understand how to control the situation anymore. As I said, it was never easy at school. Every year, we wait, and we know that after one month, they would call us to tell us that it's very hard.

Speaker 4: We are used to difficult behavior. He needs attention. He speaks very well, so he wants to speak all the time. It's difficult for him to keep his impulses and to raise his hand, for example. He always knows the answers, and he gives the answers because he can't raise his hand. It's just not working well. It's also difficult for him to handle his emotions.

Laura Markham: I don't think this is related to the course. That'd be my hunch. I think probably the special training he did where he was learning English, and he stood on the table, that the person who was doing it was either not an experienced teacher or was not able to manage the class. I have often seen that happen where there's some sort of a special thing that the kid goes to do, and a kid who was challenged in a regular class becomes completely out of control in a special situation.

Laura Markham: I'm hearing that that's what the situation was. I'm less concerned about the standing on the table, and more concerned about the normal difficulties that your son is having in school where he can't raise his hand, or he doesn't raise, he just blurts out, and he wants constant attention.

I have seen what works best in that situation is usually to work with your child and the teacher to help your child regulate in the classroom, to give them self-regulation tricks in the classroom.

Laura Markham: Those tricks can be having jewelry that they have on, like a bracelet on their wrist that they're able to fidget with or chew on, even. It can be that when they start to blurt out, that the teacher has a special code that the teacher uses with the child to say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa! Hand," and uses your child's name, and he puts the hand up.

Laura Markham: If you've taken this course, you know I'm not a big fan of sticker charts. I have seen them work in a classroom, but only when the child was also getting support, the kind of support I'm talking about where the teacher would say "Hand!" or whatever. Because if it's just sticker charts and the teacher's negative, the child will not be able to do it, and then they'll just feel like a failure.

Laura Markham: Sticker charts can work if the teacher's positive about them and says, "Yes! Hand!" when she sees the kid's hand go up. Every time the kid's hand goes up, she's like, "Yes! Hand!" and makes a little mark somewhere or something, I'm talking the positive mark, not the negative mark. Yes, hand. So that the kid knows he got a positive mark for putting his hand up.

Laura Markham: Most people, it's like that little dopamine hit that you get, most people really like it when the teacher says, "Yes, Hand!" because he put his hand up, and he's going to go for more of those. He sees that smile on her face -- that might be enough -- but that little mark that she makes on this little paper up at her desk or up on the wall will also really help. The child is learning, is basically training himself to raise his hand.

Laura Markham: That's just an example. There are all kinds of classroom management techniques that teachers have. The most important thing is the teacher being able to work with your child positively. I realize he's a handful for any teacher, but I think you should have a meeting and talk with her and ask her whether something like that -- it's extra work for her -- but will something like that work? Because now's the time. He's eight-years-old, and now's the time to help him develop his own skills to manage himself in the classroom.

#### Question 14:

Parent: 00:37:52.5 Thank you so much. Your course has just been life-changing for me, really helpful, illuminating stuff. Reparent myself, right?

- Laura Markham: You know what? That's the name of the game. It's all about reparenting ourselves. That's where the change comes from.
- Parent: Yeah, it makes so much sense. I have a question. There's sort of some stuff behind it, but the main question is I have a daughter. She just turned six-years-old, and she's been in a private school for pre-K and kindergarten. It's a pretty small school, and she's a little sensitive, so she can get a little overwhelmed, but tends to adapt well. We're considering switching to a larger public school either for first grade or second grade, and I was wondering what are some tips to help with that adjustment because we're considering whether or not to do it.
- Parent: Obviously, saving money would be great because I'm not sure if my job will be secure. There's usually layoffs. I kind of worry about things like that, and so even though I think the smaller environment might be better for her, I think she could be still resilient in a bigger environment. I want to know kind of what's a good way to help her adapt and cope with that change.
- Parent: The other thing, there has been a bit of friction between myself and her dad as well in the house that we're trying to work on it slowly as well, but I just don't want it to overwhelm her with a lot of changes. A lot of it's, I'm sure, my own work to do to help keep things peaceful. Yeah, I guess mainly any tips on how to cope with the school-type of change.
- Laura Markham: The keeping things peaceful is really critical for all kids. It just gives them a secure foundation so they're less anxious when they go out in the world. You might want to check out those couples audios (Conscious CoParenting), that are the bonus. That could be helpful to you with your husband.
- Laura Markham: I would say for yourself, you've had some worries about your job. Really doing some self-care, some working on yourself. It's something that we all need to be doing sort of on an ongoing basis. Meditation has been shown to really help if you have a tendency to be a little bit anxious, or

even if you don't. If you have worries in your life, it can really help you to be more resilient and cope.

Laura Markham:

Actually, I'm going to make a suggestion to everybody listening. There's a book by Linda Graham, G-R-A-H-A-M, called Bouncing Back, I do recommend Bouncing Back as an extra resource in the course. Her whole thing is resilience, how we can handle it when we're worried about losing our job or when we do lose our job or when we fight with our husband. How we can handle it and stay more calm ourselves. But also when we work to foster resilience in ourselves, I think we get a lot of ideas about how to foster resilience in our kids.

I think the question you're really asking me about school with your six-year-old is, how can we help her be more resilient, if she ends up moving to a more stressful situation school-wise, and how can we help her adjust to that in a positive way.

Laura Markham:

I would say, first of all, take her to the school she might go to to play at the playground. Is that possible to do?

Parent:

I'd have to find out if I could do it in the summer, but if I can, I will try to do that.

Laura Markham:

It's very effective to take kids to a playground that they get used to and really enjoy. Just say, "Wow, this is a cool school and has such a great playground. I love this playground," your third time or something. "I wonder if there'd be a way for you to go to the school maybe when you're in first grade or second grade. What do you think? Would you like to?"

Laura Markham:

Have this conversation. She might be like, "No way. I'm not going anywhere except my old school." You can say, "Well, you know, you can stay at your old school for a while, but sometime you're going to want to go to a new school. You might want to go to a school with a great playground." Now, maybe they have a lousy playground, and that's too bad if that's the case, but-

Parent:

No, it's actually better.

Laura Markham: Is it? Good. Okay, that's all in your favor. If it's at the playground where she had fun, that alone is going to make her want to go to that school, right? Then, you can even do things in the summer sometimes like at the end of the summer, when they start to open up the school and the office staff is there, even before teachers get there, you can go in and say, "Hi, I'm so and so. Here's my daughter so and so. Is it possible for us to use your bathroom? We've been in the playground. Can we use your bathroom?"

Laura Markham: It's actually, again, I know this sounds crazy, but it helps the child feel like, oh, as you're walking through these quiet hallways, the classroom doors are shut, you're not able to go in the classrooms, but you can peek in. You use the bathroom, and, again, they start to feel like, "Oh, this isn't an alien place. This is sort of part of my neighborhood, part of my life in some ways." You know what I mean? These are things that actually make it less threatening just as an idea.

Then, the most important thing, if she does start a new school, is all about her relationship with the teacher. If she has a good relationship with the teacher, she'll adjust. If she doesn't, that will be harder. So, I think it is really important to put special energy into helping create that relationship.

Laura Markham: You can't control the teacher, but you can influence the way your daughter sees her. You can actually take a picture of her with the teacher, and put it on your refrigerator and talk to it in a friendly way that makes the teacher seem approachable, even if the teacher maybe isn't so approachable, right? You can also, of course, talk to the teacher about the fact that your daughter has come from a very small classroom and she's done fine, but if the teacher could make an effort to connect with her, it would make a huge difference. I think any teacher would understand that and would respond to it.

Laura Markham: There's an article on the Aha! Parenting website that talks more about those ideas, that is about helping your child adjust to school. You can also go look that up.

- Parent: Okay. I'm just curious, really quickly, is it easier to do it for first grade or second grade, or does it matter?
- Laura Markham: I think it'd be easier to do it first grade.
- Parent: Better to do it earlier.
- Laura Markham: I think in first grade because that's when most people make the switch, and that way, if there are other new kids, she's not the only new kid. I think it's hard to be the only new kid because, by second grade, it's unbelievable, but there are already cliques that have formed. In first grade, other people are starting too. She's not the only one who's new.
- Parent: Okay. That makes sense.
- Laura Markham: Okay.
- Parent: Thank you. Appreciate it.
- Laura Markham: You're so welcome.

### Question 15:

- Laura Markham: 00:44:32 This question is: "My daughter will turn five in July. She meets the age cutoff for September 1st for public kindergarten. She appears to be academically and socially ready, and she's excited. However, some preschool teachers or parents advise a delayed start since a younger child may not be mature enough to make harder decisions about peer pressure."
- Laura Markham: You say she's socially ready. If she were just academically ready, I wouldn't do it. I've seen people who are academically ready, got jumped a grade, and they suffered for the rest of their lives, feeling like they socially were not ready. But you say she's socially ready. The age cutoff is September 1st, so a July birthday, she's turning five in July, she won't be the youngest kid in her class. There will be August people -- unless the August people all decide to

hold their kid back, and then she might be the youngest one.

Laura Markham: You say she's excited about school and she's socially ready. Honestly, I see no reason to hold her back. I actually think that it's just as likely if you hold her back and she's the oldest one in the class, that when she's 11 or 12, and she's beginning to physically mature, and the other kids in her same class are a little younger than her, especially the boys, she's going to be very self-conscious about that.

Laura Markham: I've seen that happen to girls who are held back, so I'm not a big fan of holding kids back if they're socially mature enough to go, and they're excited about school, along with being academically ready. I will just personally share that my daughter had a July 15th birthday. She was always one of the youngest kids in her class. There was, I think, always at least one August kid. And she says, "Yeah, I was always the youngest. That's okay. I held my own. It's fine."

Laura Markham: I will tell you also, I had a December birthday, and back in the day, December 31st was the cutoff, so I always was the youngest kid in my class. I was always proud of it. It was like, no problem. That's cool. So, I personally am not seeing it be as much of a problem if the person is socially mature, but I'm talking about girls.

Laura Markham: The research on it shows that boys are the ones who have a harder time with maturity usually. They're a little more behind usually. I would therefore gather, they might benefit more from being held back than girls would. I do have anecdotal evidence, not in my family, but in other families, where I've seen girls who are held back have a very hard time at age 12. That's my opinion, and I don't see any reason to hold her back.

### Question 16:

Speaker 6: 00:47:01 I've got an almost five-year-old who's just started at primary school. I just wondered how to explore the different approaches to discipline, to praise, and punishment that take place in my daughter's school, how

to explain and explore it with her. Because, at the moment, she's quite impressionable. She absorbs a lot of what she experiences and what she's told by her teachers. At the same time, I've chosen to put her into a faith school, so I don't want to undermine her teachers.

Laura Markham:

Yes, and that's important. We don't want to have her be disrespectful to her teachers, certainly. At the same time, we want to help her to handle anything that happens and to understand it. I think the first thing, and I know you know this because you even said it in your written question, but I just want to state for the record, for everybody listening, that you are the most important person always. What happens at home is always going to be more important than what happens outside the home.

Laura Markham:

That's a good thing, that your child will be learning from you how other human beings should be treated and will be most affected by the way that you treat her. But, that said, as you say, she's not even five-years-old, and she's quite impressionable. Here she's going off to school, and the teacher has lots of authority. What happens to a child in that situation?

Laura Markham:

One thing I would do is I would ask a lot of questions and listen a lot to what she has to say. Children will usually share with us if things bother them. Like does she ever come home and say, "Oh, the teacher shouted at Robert," or, "George got into trouble today?" Does she come home and share those kinds of things?

Speaker 6:

Yeah, she shares quite a lot of that. They have a discipline system where they have clouds and thunderstorms for children who misbehave. She's someone who seen as a as being quite "good". She's never experienced that, but it's always the other children who end up on thundercloud or get shouted at or get put in time out, that kind of thing.

Laura Markham:

Okay. Thank goodness she's not getting shouted at and put in time out, but still, obviously, it could be upsetting to her to see that happen to the other children. You want her to understand it somewhat.

- Laura Markham: So, when she shares it with you, you can notice how she's feeling about it, and then you can comment on it. She might say, "He seems like he gets shouted at a lot." Now, she might say, "Yes, he does. He deserves it. He's bad." She might have already taken in the teacher's attitude, or she might say, "Yes, I know, and he always looks so upset." Or, she might say, "I don't know why he can't behave himself." There could be any number of reactions. Hopefully, she'll share those reactions with you.
- Speaker 6: Yeah, it tends to be more along the lines of her echoing what the teacher says. So she says, "He makes bad choices a lot." The language the teacher uses.
- Laura Markham: Yes, of course.(chuckling) I love that language. "He made bad choices." Don't we all wish we could make always make good choices? Anyway, so when she says that, you can say, "Yes, I know. I wonder how he feels about it? Poor George. He made bad choices, and he shouted out of turn, or he wouldn't stand in line properly," or whatever he did wrong.
- Laura Markham: "I wonder what kept him from doing that?" Anything you can do to help her look at it from George's point of view will help convince her that the world is not, in fact, made up of good children and bad children, but all of us sometimes have a hard time making good choices, and there are reasons for it. That will help, if you can say, "Oh, poor George. I wonder how he felt. It must be hard for him when the teacher shouts at him," or whatever.
- Laura Markham: Then, you could, of course, of course, say, "You know, your teacher has a hard job. She has to keep order in a classroom with so many kids. If everybody is shouting out all the time, it's hard for her, so that's why teachers end up getting frustrated, and they shout." We know how that is. Everybody shouts sometimes. They get frustrated.
- Laura Markham: "I'm sure your teacher's not actually unhappy with George. I'm sure she likes George, but it's hard for her to know what to do." I would sort of, again, introduce empathy for the teacher, which is how you don't undermine the teacher, right?

- Speaker 6: Okay, that makes a lot of sense.
- Laura Markham: Then, you could say, "Oh, and George was put in time out. We don't use time outs at home. I think it's hard for kids to be in time out, don't you? Do you think it was hard for George?" Now, I have, by the way, heard some kids say, "No, I think time outs are fine." Or, even say to their parent, "I got a time out in school, and I decided that I'm going to try to not do X, Y, Z wrong anymore. I'm going to be good." They actually are able to do it.
- I wouldn't make a big deal of the timeout so much as to simply say. "It might be hard for George to be in time out. It must be embarrassing for him. I don't like time outs, but many schools use them. That's what schools do. I guess that's what this school does." You're presenting it as a different choice that you don't think is great.
- Laura Markham: She's not going to say to you, "But, mom. Why don't you think it's great?" She's not going to go into that probably. And, if she did, you could simply say that you think the child's embarrassed and that maybe there's a better way to help him not do those things, right?
- Speaker 6: Okay. Yeah.
- Laura Markham: Is that helpful?
- Speaker 6: Yes, it is helpful. It kind of echos what I've been trying to do, which is just explore it a bit with her, and talk to her about it, and be as honest as I can be at an age-appropriate level. That sounds good.
- Laura Markham: I think as she gets older, there may be times when you will actually disagree with the teacher, where you will say, "Oh, that sounds very harsh, what teacher did with this child." You can say, "It's hard for teachers. They're on the front line. They have a hard job, and they have to make the best decisions they can. I guess she was just very upset, the teacher." You can always do it with empathy.
- Laura Markham: That way, your daughter doesn't feel like, "Oh, the teacher's a bad person." I think that's what undermines

the teacher is when the child starts to think, "This teacher doesn't deserve my respect."

Speaker 6:

Yeah.

Laura Markham:

Okay, great.

Speaker 6:

Yeah, that's great. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Laura Markham:

You're so welcome.

### Question 17:

Speaker 7:

00:53:43

Yeah, it's about my five-year-old son, and trying to encourage him about school. In his first year, he was fine, but he doesn't want to go anymore. He's in second year now. Over the summer holidays, he was complaining of sore tummies and headaches. I'm not sure if that's connected with the school. I think he's a bit scared of the way the teacher talks to a problematic boy in the class. I was just wondering if there was anything you could recommend because I think it's really important for him to enjoy school at this age and he doesn't seem to be at the minute.

Laura Markham:

Yes. The first thing I would say is try to help him play and laugh about the idea of this problematic boy in the class and the way the teacher talks to him. It sounds like this might be worrying him from what you've just said. Play school with him. Play school with the teddy bears. Be the bad kid yourself. Let him be the teacher. Let a teddy bear be the teacher and be mean to another teddy bear.

Laura Markham:

Act it out, and ask your son, "Oh, no. Seems like the teacher's being very stern with this boy, but the boy was acting badly. What should the child do? What should the teacher do? How do you think the other kids feel?"

Act it out with him, and you'll learn a lot. Then, be a little crazy and silly and get everybody laughing. Get your

characters laughing, but also get your characters to be crazy, like have one of your characters be really, really, really bad and do everything wrong, and get in big trouble.

Laura Markham: Then, be completely silly and get your son laughing. I think this will help him with his anxiety because kids don't just complain of a stomach ache as a way to get out of going to school. They actually feel the anxiety in their stomach. They feel worried. You know what I mean? It sounds like he's actually feeling worried, and you're right. We don't want that to change the way he feels about school.

Speaker 7: He will say, "Why are you making me go, mommy, when I don't want to go?" It's really hard to counter that, I guess.

Laura Markham: It is pretty hard to counter that. Is there a different school he could go to?

Speaker 7: I'm just not sure how long to give it and whether that would be more disruptive, or ...

Laura Markham: Yeah, it is disruptive to switch. That's good thinking on your part. Does he actually really talk to you about what's happening? Will he describe everything?

Speaker 7: Not very much. He'll say things about the boy. He'll give me little snippets of some of what the teacher says, but he won't give me huge amounts of information. Over the summer, we had a lot, a lot of sore tummies and headaches.

Laura Markham: Is he with the same teacher?

Speaker 7: No, but they have settling in days before. He liked last year, and then they had the settling in days at the end of the term. Then, over the holidays, there was this anxiety. He knew he was going to be with this boy as well.

Laura Markham: Oh, so partly it's the boy.

Speaker 7: I'm not sure. Or, is it the combination of both, maybe? I don't ...

- Laura Markham: Does he himself have interactions with the boy that might be bothering him?
- Speaker 7: He said last year before he was in his class that he was scared of the boy, but he hasn't mentioned that this time. It's quite a small class. There's only 22, I guess. He doesn't mention specific interactions.
- Laura Markham: Well, it does sound to me like something worth talking to the teacher about, that he doesn't want to go to school, that he seems a little worried about this boy. See what the teacher says about it. It would be good if he could feel more connected to another child there. We don't really know what's going on. We don't know why he's upset. It may or may not be about this boy. It may or may not be about the teacher.
- Laura Markham: The kind of playing that I've described will actually really help. I would start it immediately, and I would do versions of it for a while and see if you get any difference. I would also get him laughing in the morning before he goes to school, not about the boy, but just about anything. Make sure you have time to get some laughter in before school because that will help him not feel so anxious before he gets ready to go.
- Laura Markham: When he asks you why are you sending me, you can say, "Well, all kids go to school, but I want you to have a good time at school. Tell me why you don't have a good time. What do you think is hard for you?" School is non-negotiable, but you want to make it better. You want to understand what it is that's getting in his way.
- Laura Markham: I would really work on it. I would work on it with the teacher. I would work on it with the laughter in the morning. I would work on it with laughter with him other times. I would try to help him make friends with other kids so that he has a positive to look forward to and not just a negative to be afraid of.
- Speaker 7: Like play dates and things you mean.
- Laura Markham: Exactly. Yeah.

Speaker 7: Thank you.

### Question 18:

Laura Markham: 00:58:46 This parent says, "Every day my eight-year-old comes home from school tired. He doesn't want to go to school. He cried almost two weeks every other day. But then, since the last two weeks, he's developed self-hatred. He doesn't cry anymore, but he whines all day and gets triggered constantly. He says, 'I am bad,' and gets angry and throws things."

Laura Markham: I'm assuming from what you're describing this is new behavior this year, and, if this is the case that he was having this hard time when he started school this year and in the last two weeks it's changed he's now just enraged instead of coming home crying, I think something is very wrong. He may be being bullied. He may be being molested. I don't want to scare you, but this could be a big thing.

Laura Markham: It may be a smaller thing, like a learning disability that's really come to light this year, or that the teacher didn't really notice last year, that you didn't really notice. It might even be a vision problem. When my son was his age, he started to come home from school with headaches, which are something your son described, headaches. My son, turns out, couldn't see the blackboard at all. He never, ever once mentioned his eyes. It wasn't until I took him to the doctor, and the doctor said, "He must be failing school."

Laura Markham: So, it might be that your son feels stupid because he can't see the blackboard, and that could be what's going on. But something's going on. Please, do not wait. Sit him down, empathize. "I see your suffering. I see something is very wrong. You can tell me what it is, no matter what, and we'll solve it." Listen, restate what he says, listen some more.

Be careful not to overreact. Sometimes when kids have big things that they're afraid to tell you, they test you with less vulnerable answers first to see how you react.

If he says he's stupid, empathize with how bad it feels not to understand. Explain to him that everyone learns differently. There might be a simple way to help him, that sometimes, it's even a matter of checking his vision.

Laura Markham:

If he says that there's no problem and just generally attacks you or says he's bad, then this is a bigger thing. This is something like he's getting bullied. Tell him you see the change in him. It is okay to tell you what's upsetting. It's not okay to just say there's no problem, and that you will not blame him no matter what. He can tell you. It's safe. It's your job to keep him safe.

Laura Markham:

You should be aware that sometimes when something bad happens to kids, they are told that if they tell you they'll be killed or you'll be killed. Obviously, that's not true, but kids threaten other kids. He still might be afraid. If you don't get anywhere, then you need to go to the teacher to figure out what's happening. If that fails, make an appointment right away to see a counselor who's experienced in working with kids who've been bullied or traumatized.

Laura Markham:

Don't wait. Something's wrong here, and the fact that it's just recent, there's been a shift in it, makes it even more upsetting to me that it's gotten worse lately.

### Question 19:

Laura Markham:

01:01:35.5

This parent says, "My son's kindergarten teacher voiced concern about his ability to transition from one activity to the next quickly. She says he needs lots of reminders, and she's concerned that he'll have trouble in the fast-paced first grade. He's academically and socially at the top of his class, so that's not an issue. He just takes his time."

Laura Markham:

First of all, he'll be better able to cope with transitions at the age of six than at the age of five. Second, it might be that he takes his time because he's less compliant. Maybe

if he felt more connected to the teacher, he might be more willing to move faster, as she asks. So, it's partly, possibly, a connection issue?

And I would begin talking with him about transitions. What are they like at school? Listen, empathize, ask questions, ask how it feels to him.

Laura Markham:

How do the other kids handle the transitions? Does he feel okay about how he's handling them? Does he ever feel rushed? Is there anything he would like to do differently? Does the teacher seem to disapprove? Would it be possible to speed things up? What would that take from him? I would then start talking about transitions at home, just comment on them. At home, we can take our time. At school, there's so many more kids, so everyone has to move a little faster.

Laura Markham:

Oh, yeah, you're wanting to take your time with that. I totally understand. We can wait a little bit. It's not like there are lots of people waiting the way there would be at school. I think as your son discusses this with you and gains more awareness, he might even change his behavior.

### Question 20:

Laura Markham:

01:03:04

This parent says that her older two kids, nine and seven, need to do additional math and literacy practice at home on top of their schoolwork in order to keep up with their class. Sometimes she has to bribe them with sugary food or screen time. She asks, "How can I get my kids to understand the importance of this additional study, and what words can I use to prevent meltdowns and the need for bribery?"

Laura Markham:

I'm afraid I have bad news for you. I don't have any magic words. You really can't get kids to appreciate the importance of additional study. They just don't have the context for that at ages seven and nine. You can only make it really fun, and that probably includes the sugar. You can hope that as they get better at it, they'll take pleasure in that mastery and want to do more.

Laura Markham: I'm also hoping that maybe this is a temporary situation, just until they catch up, because as a permanent situation, it's pretty hard to expect kids to do work at school all day and then come home and do homework, and then do extra work on top of that.

So, you want the words to prevent the meltdowns. I would treat this the way you would a child who has a learning disability who's being asked to sit down and do homework.

Laura Markham: You would sit with them. You would titrate it, so you set a timer. They decide for how long the timer goes. They work for only that long. Then they get to run around the house for two minutes. Then, you set the timer again. Basically, it takes super-human effort from the parent to help your child stay on track because it's just so hard for the kid. They're also having to put our super-human effort, the kid.

Laura Markham: So, I don't know how much homework your kids already do, but personally, I think kids have way too much homework. Asking a seven-year-old to do this, you can expect to have meltdowns. I don't know a way for them not to have meltdowns.

### Question 21:

Laura Markham: 01:04:57 This parent says that her five and a half-year-old son finds it difficult to follow the teacher's instructions, and refuses to try challenging work. She's asking if applied behavior analysis, or cognitive behavior therapy, will help him. He tested in the superior range on an IQ test, so the school thought of putting him in an accelerated class, but they're concerned that he refuses to try.

Laura Markham: Well, I think it would be a mistake, premature, to put him in the accelerated class because right now, he refuses to try challenging work. He's clearly afraid of failing, and I think that might be setting him up to fail. But I do think getting him support to shift his self-worth is a great idea. I'm not a big fan of ABA. I don't think it will be helpful in that, but cognitive behavioral therapy, if you have a good

person, could be very helpful, if you have a counselor he really likes and respects.

Laura Markham:

But I am wondering where this self-worth issue is coming from, and also the defiance issue. I'm not following the teacher's instructions. For that, you're going to need to do some family work, so ask the therapist you're considering how they handle those issues and how much family work they do. Finally, you might want to do an academic assessment. The fact that he tested well on an IQ test at the age of four doesn't really tell us much because he could easily have a learning disability that's getting in his way and making learning hard for him, and still test at a very high level. If that's happening, that would explain why he refuses to try difficult work. So, I'm thinking an academic assessment is in order as well.

### Question 22:

Laura Markham: 01:06:36

This parent says, "When I picked up my second grader yesterday, I learned she ran out after having conflict with her teacher, and had to be brought back by the principal. She's done this at home, but never at school. I hugged her and tried to empathize with her about her tough day, but all she says is she hates school, which isn't usual for her. She does well academically and has a group of close friends. The next morning, when my mother-in-law took her to school, she was almost tardy because of dawdling, so she refused to go, and came home. She knows school is non-negotiable."

Laura Markham:

I would say something is wrong since she didn't hate school before and now she does. Also, now, she ran out after conflict with the teacher. I'm betting she was publicly embarrassed, and I imagine she dawdled the next day because she was embarrassed to go. But then when she realized she'd be tardy, and everyone would stare when she walked in late, she just couldn't walk in, which is understandable. I remember my daughter went through a phase of if she was late, she wouldn't go because she just didn't want everybody looking at her when she came in.

Laura Markham: I would start by empathizing about how something happened and how embarrassing that must have been. We don't know what it was that happened with the teacher, although I would ask the teacher for sure. I would also talk about how her friends are looking forward to her coming back, since that's her anchor to the school. I would get her talking and laughing about this, whatever happened, and see it completely from her point of view, be her back up.

Laura Markham: "Wow! Oh, no wonder you were upset." Then, make an agreement about how to make it bearable for her to walk back into that classroom.

Finally, she cannot run out when she's mad at the teacher. This is dangerous, and she'll get kicked out of the school and have to go to a different school where she doesn't have any friends. So, what can she do instead next time she gets angry?

### Question 23:

Laura Markham: 01:08:22 This parent says, "Due to my health challenges, my boy went to childcare at three months and school at two and a half years. He had a bad experience in both places, so when an incident reminds him of these places, he goes into fight or flight mode. One example is that when someone looks angry, he's afraid and needs to run away. That makes it challenging for him to go to school."

Laura Markham: It's very upsetting to hear your child had such bad experiences as a baby and toddler that he's that afraid, that he would run away from anyone who looks angry. I don't know where you live, but I think your son needs therapy. I recommend a trained EMDR child therapist who can help him work through this old trauma. You can also help, by talking with him about how bad childcare was for him, how it caused him to be afraid now, but how he's now able to protect himself, and he doesn't need to run away when someone is angry.

Laura Markham: I think he does need some expert help before he gets any older. EMDRIA is the international organization that trains people to use EMDR, and it's proven to help trauma. They do train child therapists. If you don't have an EMDR person near you, but you can find somebody who does somatic experiencing work with children, that's also very good.

#### Question 24:

Laura Markham: 01:09:44.5 This parent asks about her strong-willed, sensitive three-year-old who did start a private preschool, but couldn't handle it. It was too structured for a three-year-old, and she was stressed. They had to pull her out. They decided there just wasn't enough free play, and also that the color charts that were used for behavior and took time off play for bad behavior were hard for her to handle. When they try pre-K again next year at a different school, a local public school, how to help her adjust.

Laura Markham: That is a tough one if they're going to use rewards and consequences and color charts at school. But I would say that what you do at home will always be much more important than what happens at school. You can talk with her about how hard it is for the teacher with 28 kids in the class to maintain order, and that the teachers don't really know how to keep order in the school without the color charts, so that's what they use.

Laura Markham: You can talk with your daughter and let her tell you if she thinks it's a good idea or a bad idea, and you can do all of this now, way before she goes to school. After all, she's already had an experience of the color charts at her last school. I would ask her a lot of questions and listen to her answers and chat with her about it. What does she think when a teacher uses color charts? Did she have an experience where she felt that it was unfair? Did she ever have an experience where it was motivating to her? How will she handle it if the next classroom she's in, they do use color charts?

Laura Markham: I hasten to add, before you have this discussion, talk about the next classroom in very positive terms. You need to start by talking about all the new friends she'll make and the great teachers she'll have, and there's a wonderful playground there. You can take her to see the playground, and she can look forward to playing there.

Laura Markham: Once you've established that it's going to be a wonderful experience for her, then talk about some of the things that might be harder. She's probably not used to having to raise her hand and ask to use the bathroom, for instance, and that might be what she has to do in her new classroom. Or maybe she's not used to sitting in her seat for a long period of time, which sometimes is what you have to do in a classroom, unfortunately.

Laura Markham: Be careful to try to keep the overall feeling about the school positive, but bring up the things that might be hard. Ask her, "If this is hard for you, how will you handle it? What can you do if they have a color chart, so that you can have a positive experience with it?"

I also want to reassure you that most kids, even when there are color charts, do have good experiences. I know your daughter just had a negative one, so it's hard to see her in a classroom and feel like that's going to be a positive thing, but it might be.

Laura Markham: It will depend a lot on the teacher she gets, so, if you can make a request about which teacher, and if you know people who have had kids in the school, the public school, by all means, ask about the pre-K teachers. Ask which ones handle a child like your daughter best. If you can possibly swing a request, that could make a big difference to her.

Laura Markham: Another way to prepare your daughter to be able to cope well when she begins school is to play school. Every day, have a little school session where you pretend to be the teacher, and she pretends to be the student. Once in a while, shake it up. Reverse it. Let her be the teacher, and you be the student. When you are, be naughty. Make her laugh. Generally, when you're the teacher, be totally positive and loving and affirming of her so that she begins

to think of school as a good place to be where a teacher will care about her and listen to her.

Laura Markham:

If she goes into school with that (positive) attitude, she's more likely to bring that out in whatever teacher she gets. Make sure you have all kinds of situations in your games where you're the teacher, and you have an expectation, and you have a color chart sometimes. You can say, "Let's use the color chart today, okay? I don't really like it, but some teachers use it, so it's good to know what it is."

Laura Markham:

Outline it for her. See if there's a way she can beat the game. There's nothing wrong with learning to sit down and sit still and follow the rules. Is it a way that I wish our children had to develop? No. But it is what we ask of them in this culture, and it won't hurt her to learn those skills. The more you help now, the better she'll be at them when she is in the classroom and overstimulated and reacting to things with her sensitivity.

Laura Markham:

You also mentioned that she's sensitive. If she has sensory issues or high sensitivity, it might be helpful to take her to a physical therapist who is skilled in sensory issues, because sometimes kids who are highly sensitive do have mild sensory issues. Sometimes a physical therapist, just a few meetings with someone, can give the child some ideas for how to cope with an influx of information that otherwise might be overwhelming for them. A child who is highly sensitive and has a hard time in an overwhelming, noisy classroom situation sometimes can get some skills that can help them to cope better, be less overwhelmed, and, therefore, more cooperative with the teacher.

Laura Markham:

Finally, I just want to reassure you. Your daughter will be a year older when she starts this new pre-K then she was when she started that last preschool. She will have much more inner resource to draw on to cope with it. That year of maturity will make a real difference in her ability to manage herself.

Laura Markham:

In a public school, there are more children who have a harder time managing themselves. Private schools counsel those kids out. You had to pull your daughter out, but private schools don't want kids who have a harder time

sitting still, who need more attention from the teacher. Often, they counsel those kids out.

Laura Markham:

Public school can't do that. The teachers have their hands full, usually more than in a private school setting. That's not a great thing for any of our children. It's why smaller classes work better, but it does mean that your daughter is likely not to be the most difficult child for the teacher. Therefore, she probably will get a little more leeway from the teacher, I'm hoping, so that she doesn't begin to think of herself as a bad kid.

Laura Markham:

If you see that happening, I would immediately intervene with the teacher. If your daughter gets on the wrong side of the color chart in the beginning, I would immediately intervene with the teacher. Again, it may be that your daughter actually needs a different kind of school, but I'm betting that won't happen here. I'm betting that the extra year of maturity and the work you're going to do between now and then is going to give her the resources she needs to be able to cope well.

### Question 25:

Laura Markham:

01:17:21

This parent's question is about her son, who's strong-willed and sensitive and spirited. She's worried that the peaceful parenting strategies that work at home may backfire at school because the education system is more traditional. They require compliance. They won't negotiate with students, and they give consequences for misbehavior. So, will her son be truly prepared for the more rigid expectations of kindergarten if he's accustomed to negotiating with his parents at home and never receiving consequences?

Laura Markham:

First, I want to say that I've heard this question a number of times from parents. It's a natural worry. Because we think it's a cold, cruel world out there. They have to get used to that. But that doesn't mean we would make our child sleep without blankets, right? The cold, cruel world thing is that we give them the tools to navigate that world. That's true for school, as well.

Laura Markham: Let's talk about what peaceful parenting actually is. It's not about negotiation, and it's not about not doing consequences. Peaceful parenting is coaching your child to be emotionally intelligent. It's connecting with them, because that's what motivates them. And, of course, it's regulating yourself because that's how you can do this kind of parenting.

Laura Markham: If you're coaching your son to become more emotionally intelligent, he will be able to navigate any human situation he ever encounters, because emotional intelligence gives you the skills to do that. It's not really about negotiation. If you're feeling that your parenting is all about negotiating with your son, then it may be that you do need to set more limits.

Laura Markham: I can't see inside your home, so I don't know, but it's fine for your son to say, "Is this limit firm? Is that limit firm? Hey, can I get this? Can I push harder here? Can I go to bed later? Can I get another cookie?" That's what children do to find out where the boundaries are. At school, they're not invited to push on those boundaries. They see very quickly that they can't do that, and most kids who have a little emotional intelligence, who are able to manage themselves, listen to those boundaries at school, and they try very hard to be a "good boy or girl" at school.

Laura Markham: In fact, many kids who are challenging at home are not challenging at school, because they put all of their emotional energy into performing based on the norms expected at school.

Now, does school require compliance? Yes, it does. When a teacher takes the time to connect with a child, the child is always more compliant. We know that's how connection works, so it's a good idea for every parent to work very hard to make sure their child is connected with the teacher.

Laura Markham: There are ways to do that even if the teacher's not a very connected kind of person. They're on my website. There's an article on helping your child adjust to school. Take a look at that There are many tricks there to strengthen the relationship with the teacher so your child sees the

teacher positively, which pulls for a positive response from the teacher towards your child.

Laura Markham:

Connection increases the chance of compliance, and if your child has emotional intelligence, he'll see this is the way the game is played. "If I want to ace this game, I'm going to need to do what is being asked of me here at school."

Now, if your child is very spirited and has a hard time sitting still, he may not be able to ace the game at school. That is true. But it won't help to not parent peacefully at home. It won't help to punish him at home. That will just make him less emotionally intelligent and less self-regulated.

Laura Markham:

If you want to give a spirited child the tools that he needs to go into a classroom and play that game and be compliant and sit still and manage what might otherwise be an outburst on his part, if you want to give him those tools, the best way to do it is to peacefully parent him at home.

Laura Markham:

I just don't see how parenting children with punishment at home, which gives them less emotional regulation and makes them feel less good about themselves, and gives them less emotional intelligence so they don't read other people as well -- I don't see how punishing a child at home when it has those effects will ever help them cope better at school.

Laura Markham:

Now, of course, you'll have to have a discussion with your son about the fact that, at school, you do what the teacher says. You definitely don't negotiate and argue. That's not allowed at school. At school, you can express what you need if your pencil breaks and you have to sharpen it. That's fine. But the teacher doesn't want backtalk. They don't want you arguing with them, and they can't break the rule for you because they have 27 other children in the class.

Laura Markham:

I think preparing your son with the way that school works -- not in a negative way, but simply it's a big job being a teacher, and therefore, the teacher needs everybody to

work together to make the classroom work well. That means everybody has to follow the rules, right? Frame it positively. But I think that worrying that peaceful parenting will make your child misbehave more at school is the opposite of what will actually happen.

### Question 26:

Laura Markham: 01:23:17 Our next question is about a four-year-old who does not have a preschool teacher who understands him or connects with him. First, they said they thought he had impaired hearing, but he talks nonstop at home, and his pediatrician says his hearing is fine. They got his hearing checked, and they say he's fine. The program director says he doesn't follow directions. He keeps playing with his Legos. They send home "problem child" papers saying they should -- the parents -- should follow these procedures at home, that include time out and saying no a lot.

Laura Markham: This is so tragic to hear. I am so sorry to hear a story like this. He was very happy with his previous teacher, though, so he didn't have a problem in that classroom. So, I'm going to say this is about the teacher not connecting with the child, and right, he's not following directions because he's not connected. My advice to you is to try to find another school if you can, for your son to go to. There has to be another school for your four-year-old.

Laura Markham: From the end of your question where you say he quit school now, it sounds like you've actually pulled him out of the school, so that's fine. He's not in that school anymore. But I would move heaven and Earth to get him into a school where he will be understood, where the teacher will connect with him, where they'll be more patient with him. It's fine to take him away from his Legos and have him do some other things, but really not to use punishment to control the child's interests or behavior. I wish you luck.

**Question 27:**

Laura Markham: 01:24:53 Now, we have a question from a teacher who says that she's really enjoyed the course and it's helped her to be much more connected to her children and her husband, but, at school, it's all about consequences and discipline, and the red traffic light. She feels she has to be a different person at work. She's asking if there's a way for teachers to replace the traffic light system.

I would say absolutely, positively, yes, there is, but you will have to experiment with what you can get away with at your unique school.

Laura Markham: Children usually do respond better to not having a traffic light is my own opinion. I don't think there's any research on that, but the larger research that shows that children always comply better if they feel connected should be enough to convince us. So, I think that the ideas that you've been using at home, the ideas you've learned in this course and that you're applying daily also work at school.

Laura Markham: Now, it's true that you have 20-something kids in the class. You can't always be helping kids with their emotions. That's absolutely true, and that's not your job. But all humans respond to respect. Even very young children love to contribute to the group to find solutions to problems, and children follow our lead. When we get anxious and raise our voice, so do they. If we communicate with our calmness that it's not an emergency, but together we can figure things out, then the children learn emotional regulation more quickly from the teacher.

Laura Markham: If we apologize when we raise our voice, when we make mistakes, they'll learn to do the same. If we set limits as we need to, but we do it with an understanding of why the child is acting that way with respect, children are more compliant with our limits, and they're more likely to learn respect and empathy for other people.

Laura Markham: I want to suggest that you read an article on my website called Ten Tips for Peaceful Classroom Teaching, and it gives you ideas about how to do preventative

maintenance, which is about connecting with each child in your classroom. It gives you ideas about how to use empathy. Basically, just understanding where the child is coming from, and it gives you ideas about how to use repair to help children repair an infraction, so they can feel good about themselves rather than using the punishment of the traffic light.

Laura Markham:

Take a look at that article, and I think you'll find it really helpful. If you like those ideas and you want to try to implement them at your school, I encourage you to get your hands on a book by Becky Bailey. Doctor Becky Bailey is in Florida. She's written a number of books. She has an approach very similar to mine. She's very oriented to emotions. The big difference, she works in schools.

Laura Markham:

She has an entire curriculum for schools that is based on this kind of work. I urge you to look her up online to see which book resonates the most with you, to read it, and to watch the videos that she has online that show things about how to work with kids in the classroom. I really can't say enough good things about her. And, who knows? Maybe you'll become such a fan that you'll be able to teach other people at your school to use this approach, and maybe the powers that be at your school will even decide to explore the Becky Bailey curriculum, and all of the children at your school benefit.

Laura Markham:

At the very least, the kids in your class will certainly benefit. I'm so glad especially, after hearing from parents about the problems children are having in their classrooms, it's so reassuring for me to hear a teacher who is wanting to use these ideas to figure out a way to make them work in a classroom setting. Thank you, and please don't give up.

### Question 28:

Laura Markham:

01:29:20

This parent says, "Our daughter has started to say she feels funny or sick on the way to nursery." So far, they've taken her home in case she is ill. But it's seeming more likely that nerves are making her feel ill, or maybe even

that she knows that when she says that, she gets to come home. There have been some issues that have been affecting her lately that could be causing her to feel worried. How can we talk with her about her feeling ill?"

Laura Markham:

I would say, first of all, that children do feel ill sometimes when they can't put something into words. When they are upset about something, and they can't talk about it, they actually feel it in their body. Children often, actually, in the same way that we might feel butterflies in our stomach before an important meeting, children often, when they feel worried, get a stomach ache. It's a real stomach ache. It doesn't mean it's not a real stomach ache.

Laura Markham:

But if they can put the feeling into words, they don't have to have a stomach ache. They already have the feeling. They've gotten the message, and it can begin to dissipate. I would say to start to give your daughter a language to describe her worries or anything that's bothering her so that she doesn't have to have a stomach ache to express the worry or the upset feelings.

Laura Markham:

First, I would have a discussion with her, not on the way to school, about how sometimes when she's going to school, she feels ill. And that when that happens, and you bring her home, she feels better, and she doesn't seem to actually be ill. She does need to go to school. She can't just come home. That's the rule, but it might be that sometimes, when she's on her way to school, she feels worried, and that's what's making her feel ill.

Laura Markham:

Play a game with her where you each express a worry, and see if there are things that she's willing to talk about. You mention that she had a traumatic appointment where they took blood from her, a blood test. I would suggest you get her a doctor kit, and you begin to play doctor with her. You might even have a white lab coat, and she takes blood from you and everyone she knows, including her teddy bears.

Laura Markham:

Let her start to express mastery over that. Let her laugh about people getting their blood drawn. Let her start to work through that issue. That will help with that particular worry. I think if she had a trauma of any kind, going to

school means she's away from you. So, if she gets to stay home, she feels better. She feels safer. If anybody comes to get her to take her blood, to do a blood draw, you're there to protect her, right?

Laura Markham:

I do think it's important that she knows that that's not going to happen again, or it won't happen again for a very long time, and that she gets a chance to work on that issue. But I also think that it's important that she go ahead and go to school even if she's feeling a little worried. Maybe what you want to explore with her is if something happens at school and she's scared, who would take care of her. Who could she tell?

Laura Markham:

Because I think that's what fear is, right? Fear is ... This is all anxiety is -- fear. Fear is the feeling, the anxiety, that we won't be able to handle something. That's what fear is. It's the worry that we won't be able to handle that thing we're afraid of, if it happens. So, I would talk with her a lot about the kinds of things that could happen at school that might bother her, and make a game out of it.

Laura Markham:

What would she do? Should she pour water on her head? What about pouring water on another kid's head? No. She should talk to the teacher. Make sure she has a relationship with the teacher, that she feels comfortable going to the teacher. And then I would tell her that even if she feels a little bit worried, that she can tell you and you'll talk about it -- but she still does need to go to school. So that if she's learned that saying she's sick means she gets to stay home, she'll start to learn that oops, that doesn't work anymore and she won't.

Laura Markham:

Now, I realize if she is actually sick, you're going to feel terrible if you take her to school and she gets a fever. Obviously, if she has a fever, you're not going to send her to school, if she has that glazed look on her face when they're getting sick, you're not going to send her to school. But if you think she's actually well, I would go ahead and send her. I would explain to the teacher about this in advance, about this, and say that you think she's just fine, but to please keep an eye on her.

Laura Markham:

If she does seem ill, you'll be happy to come back and get her, but you don't actually think she's ill. I would leave the at that, but I would use the opportunity to help her to begin to put her worries into words instead of somaticizing them.

### Daycare related questions

#### Question 29:

Laura Markham:

01:34:48

This question is about a problem with transitions. The biggest challenge is picking him up from daycare. This is a little guy. He just turned three, and he has a really hard time with transitions. In the morning, he wants to go to daycare, but then he doesn't want to come home. He has a hard time when you pick him up.

It's great that you've done cuddles, that you made a game out of it, and you're saying that it's hard to find a way to get him out of there. I would say that your theory that you wrote to me, that he doesn't get enough of your attention and this is about connection, I bet you're right. I think it is probably partly about the relationship and that you're having a hard time giving him connection time in the middle of the evening routine because you have to move him through the schedule.

I would say just consciously make an effort to create those moments of connection in the evening routine as you're doing, and look at it as the whole **point** of the evening routine -- it is for you to have connection with him. So, that's what the evening routine is. The more you can do connection time, 24-7 empathy, roughhousing with him, and laughter, the more you're going to find that he's easier to pick from daycare.

I do think you need a routine when you pick him up from daycare that you always have. Like there's always a snack waiting for him in the car. He's probably hungry at that

time of day, as you theorized. Have a snack waiting for him in the car.

And, when you get there, use this. This is a Becky Bailey thing that I love. "Hi, Sweetie. I missed you so much all day, and now, I'm picking you up. What have you brought with you? I see your two beautiful blue eyes, and I'm kissing this one, and I'm kissing that one. I see that wonderful laugh of yours, which you're getting when I kiss your neck. I'm seeing your big smile that I love so much."

Now, if he's not laughing or smiling, you can say, "And, I'm missing your big smile that I love so much," but come up with three things like the eyes, the smile or the laugh, and one other thing that is about him. One of them can be what he looks like, like the eyes. One of them can be a trait that he does like smiling. Then, the third one could change every day if you want to have one that changes, but keep only three and keep the same things, at least the first two. But you could surprise him with a third one and say, "I see those little toes that I love to tickle."

Then, say, "And I see you have your backpack. We're going to grab that, and your jacket. You don't even have your shoes on, but we'll bring those with us. I'll throw them in the backpack. You've brought everything, and now you have my hug for you. That's the last thing you have. Let's go!" And, there's a snack in the car.

The reason I suggested it that way is if you do the same exact thing every day, he's going to come to love it because it's so connected and it's a way that you'll find that he is going to ... He's going to relax when you get there. If you've been doing the special time stuff that we've been talking about, you're going to find that he's going to be easier in general, but this ritual will really give you a chance. It will really help, I think.

### Question 30:

Laura Markham: 01:38:02 Another daycare related question is, is there an optimum age for children to spend time with peers and caregivers

away from mom? You've already been doing regular mom and tot classes and a free-form playgroup. That's all great. I think three is fine for kids to spend time away from mom, unless they're super sensitive. I think that since the program director is offering to let you stay, do a transitional program, that's great.

You're worried about sending her to preschool too early. There's no such thing as too late, but I don't think that three is too early either. I think it depends on your child. If your child is just three, then it is a little on the early side unless she's very verbal and is very social. But if she is verbal and social, she might love this.

How does she do in the playgroup when you're there? Is she able to function pretty much without you around? The great news, is you have a way to see. If she's functioning great in the playgroup without really relying on you, then she's ready for this part-time Montessori program in the fall. She'll be four already. Three mornings a week, that sounds fantastic. How great!

But if she's not doing well and really has a hard time and every time another kid gets close to her she gets threatened and she hits them, then obviously, don't do that. I would say, take your cues from your child.

### Question 31:

Laura Markham: 01:39:18 This parent says: At our home, the language is not English at home because we're an immigrant family, but we're forced to send our child to daycare, the morning to noon shift only, so she can learn English, and also because we have to work. The question is, do we start her with a five day a week schedule or the three day a week one?

I would just say, that's a really hard call. A lot of times, five days is too much for kids, but when it's three days, they have a hard time adjusting. I think three-day week schedules are actually difficult, so I'm sort of a fan of five-day week schedules, but only for a couple of hours, as few

hours as possible, like 9:00 to 12:00. Then expect Mondays to be really hard, and then Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday will be easier, and then Monday will be hard again.

Usually, I think five days end up being easier. Unless your daughter has a really hard time adjusting, in which case, try three and see. But honestly, I don't think that usually helps with the adjustment.

### Question 32:

Laura Markham: 01:40:18

This parent asks: "Should she put her child in daycare? Is she getting enough connection given that they've moved to Switzerland and doesn't have anyone to play with, because she doesn't speak French?"

Well, I think her main connection that she needs since she's not even three yet is with you, but you said you don't think she's getting all the love and connection she needs. If you're seeing that she's getting bored at home, that's normal for two-year-olds. They want to tear your house apart because their job is to explore. They need to go out every day, and they also are usually very curious about other people.

They can't really play so much with other people at the age of two. It's usually more what we call parallel play. But that doesn't mean it's not of great value. It is. So, I would say take her to the playground every day. Even though she doesn't speak French, that's a perfect opportunity to interact with other kids, and she would start to learn French very quickly, I imagine. It would give her connection with other kids, and that's the kind she needs.

As far as daycare goes, there's no problem starting daycare at this age if she's the kind of kid who would enjoy that. She might be more independent. She might be excited about that, and that would be great. It will be more challenging to her adjustment if the daycare is in French, and she doesn't speak it. That can make kids feel pretty alone. So, I think a bilingual program is better. I think it's

great for her to speak French, but I think a bilingual program would be better for her than just feeling sort of thrown into the sea where she can't swim figuratively speaking.

Maybe you can find a bilingual program, or a program where, indeed, she will learn French, and French is mostly what's spoken, but where a teacher also speaks English or something so that she, at least, has a teacher she can ask for help with when she doesn't know a word.

### Question 33:

Laura Markham: 01:42:01 This parent is asking about her daughter, who's 21 months, and how to help her start daycare next year. First of all, how great that they let you stay at first. Sit in your chair, let her stand next to you. Don't get up. She'll eventually start venturing away from you, and stay in the chair, so she has a home base. Stay in the same place.

The most important thing you can do to support your daughter in this transition is to help her bond with the teacher. There are many ways you can do that. There's lots of info on the Aha! Parenting website about this. Specifically, I recommend you check out the article, [Helping Your Toddler With Separation Anxiety](#). I think that will give you ideas about how to set this transition up so your daughter will have the easiest time possible.

That doesn't mean there won't be transition. Your daughter still has to get used to letting you go all day, which is a big deal, and not easy for a child. She will bond with the teacher, but that teacher's not ever going to be you. You can minimize the pain and maximize the good stuff so she can actually enjoy daycare. Good for you for thinking about this in advance.

### Question 34:

Laura Markham: 01:43:15.5 This parent says their two and a half year old started full-time daycare about five weeks ago. She's not great with sharing. She grabs toys, and has, on occasion, gotten physical with the other kids. Previously, she was not a whiny child, but now she wants to nap on her mom's chest. Is this clinginess related to this school?

I would say yes. This was only five weeks ago. It's full-time daycare. She's only two and a half. It's a big transition for her, and grabbing toys and getting physical with the other kids is about feeling worried and threatened. This is not a permanent condition. There will be an adjustment period. Be sure to use the tools that you have from this course.

Daily laughter is so important for her, and she also is going to need to cry. Be sure the teachers are watching her, running interference, and giving her words to stick up for herself, which will help her to not have to actually use her hands to stick up for herself. Mostly, be sure she's developing a relationship with the teachers, which that's what's going to give her a secure base in the classroom so that she doesn't have to fight so hard to hold her own space.

It's only been five weeks. This really takes a while for the adjustment, so don't worry. She is going to be fine. Just give her the support she needs at home, laughing, crying, and reassuring. Yes, absolutely, let her nap on your chest if that's what's going to make her feel more secure hearing your heartbeat.

Laura Markham: 01:44:46 That's all our questions for today. Thank you for listening, and I hope this was helpful. If you still have a burning question that wasn't answered on this audio, please submit it for possible inclusion on my podcast. Just go to [ahaparenting.com/podcast](http://ahaparenting.com/podcast), so A-H-A parenting.com/podcast, and leave your question as a voice memo. This is Dr. Laura Markham wishing you less drama and more love. Goodbye for now.