

Experienced teacher says this 1 red flag tells her that a child will be difficult

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Alabama teacher Ashlyn Cooke says she's found one red flag that tells her a student will be trouble.

"Parents, I am begging you to listen to me," Cooke pleaded in a TikTok video. "There is one thing that signals to me that your child is going to be a behavior problem in my class for the entire year."

According to Cooke, it all comes down to the adults — specifically, those who immediately jump to their child's defense and attack the teacher when issues arise.

"You are hurting your child by not making them take any responsibility," Cooke, 30, explained in the clip. "If that goal of creating a good person is not mutual between the teacher and the parent of the child, there's only so much teachers can do."

Cooke says she understands that parents are protective of their kids, and expects that disciplinary action will be met with questions.

"But when you start with, 'Well, my child would never do that,' and you start attacking me — you are doing your child a disservice," Cooke tells TODAY.com. "You are teaching your child to disregard authority."

In an ideal scenario, Cooke says both the teacher and the parent present a united front.

"We meet together with the child to break down our shared expectations," she says. "That's going to have a positive long-term impact."

Parenting and youth development expert [Dr. Deborah Gilboa](#) says she couldn't agree more.

"When we attack people who suggest that (our children) might have done something wrong, we teach them that if they are uncomfortable or unhappy, it's always someone else's fault," Gilboa tells TODAY. "Parents need to model listening to other others' perspectives. If we can't do that, they will never learn do it for themselves, and they'll lose friends and opportunities."



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Rachel Paula Abrahamson is an entertainment journalist-turned-lifestyle reporter living in Boston. She covers parenting, pop culture, and news for [TODAY.com](#) — and fancies herself an expert on all things twin-related! In 2024, Rachel received an NBC Gem Award (Going the Extra Mile) for her contributions to NBC. Rachel lives in the Boston area with her husband, their two daughters, and labrodaughter Asti. Follow her on [Instagram](#).