

## An Open Letter to the Parents Worried My Son Is in Their Child's Class

My Parent Journey blog post by Amanda Morin

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To all the parents who are worried that my son is in their child's class:

I heard through our mutual friend that you were asking whether my son is in the same class as your child. I wondered why my phone wasn't blowing up with the "whose class is he in?" messages, as it often has after report cards and class assignments arrive in the mail.

I certainly don't mind my phone being quiet. But I do mind that you were asking other people instead of me.

I seriously doubt it, but maybe you were asking because you want our kids to be better friends next year. That would be great because my son has a hard time making friends and he really admires your child. Or maybe you heard I have a great sense of humor that will make you happy to hang out during playdates.

I have *no* doubt, however, that you've heard about the supports and services and extra help my son receives. I'm pretty sure you know that he sometimes gets loud and has to leave class when he's overexcited. I'm sure other kids have told their parents about his behavior plan and that information has made the rounds, too.

So maybe you're asking about his teacher because you're actually afraid they *will* be in the same class. I know some parents are concerned about the impact of inclusive classrooms. They worry that their child will lose out because the teacher is spending too much time with kids like mine. They also worry that classroom expectations will be lowered or that their child will pick up "behaviors."

I understand why people have those worries. We're scared of what we don't know or understand. But you're not going to understand it if you don't ask the right person. And that person is me.

So, ask me. Text me, message me, call me—whatever your favorite mode of communication is works. But come to me and ask, “Whose class is your son in?”

If you want to know if my son is in the same class as yours because you don’t want him there, well, I’m not going to lie—that hurts. It hurts because he’s a little boy and he’s doing the best he can. It hurts because he has so much to offer the world and so much friendship he’s eager to share with your child.

But it also upsets me because I worry about whether your child hears you asking about my son. Believe me, I’m not perfect, and I’ve said my share of things in front of my kids that I shouldn’t have. That’s why I worry. I know how hard it is to walk it back once you’ve said something you wish you hadn’t.

What if our kids have the same interests and are destined to be best friends? What if you and I have loads in common and could be close friends? What if your child is struggling, too, and I know how to help you get him the help *he* needs?

So, yeah, I got my son’s teacher assignment in the mail today. I don’t know if he’s in your child’s class because I never heard who your child has. I know who my friend’s daughter has because she told me when she shared that you were asking about my son.

I hope we get to talk for real soon because I’d love to tell you more about my son. I hope our kids are in the same class because then your child can see what a great kid my child is. And I’d like to get to know you better, too.

Just text me.

—Amanda

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Read ways to respond when people are insensitive about your child’s learning and attention issues. Find out what to do if you notice signs of learning and attention issues in other people’s kids. And read another open letter, this one from a father to his son on graduation day.

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## About the Blogger



**Amanda Morin** is a parent advocate, a former teacher and the author of *The Everything Parent's Guide to Special Education*.

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