

What I Wish My Daughter's Teachers Knew About Her and TRISOMY X

One mother shares what she wishes all teachers knew about the TRISOMY X students in their classroom. Read and share with the educator in your life.

BY [JENNIFER KAMPFE](#)

To all the teachers reading this, thank you for teaching our children. It is my hope that they will offer insight into the world of a student diagnosed with TRISOMY X.

Dear Teachers,

I wish you knew that **my daughter doesn't want to misbehave**. What seems like misbehavior could be because she is overwhelmed, frustrated or embarrassed. If she is feeling any of these emotions, her brain responds by fighting, fleeing or freezing. It's a natural stress response. I wish you knew how stressful school is for my child.

I wish you knew that **my daughter doesn't mean to blurt out**. The frontal lobe of her brain, which controls impulsive behavior, is under developed compared to her peers.

I wish you knew that she can't transition from joking around to getting down to business like you or her classmates can. **Transitions are very difficult for her.**

I wish you knew that her joke making and comments in class to gain attention are her way of trying desperately to fit in with her peers. She doesn't get invited to friends' homes, she doesn't play on sports teams with her classmates, and she doesn't receive texts from close buddies. She is probably seen as immature and annoying by many of her peers. **No matter how confident she may appear, don't be fooled.** That is her natural defense mechanism kicking in to convince herself that she is cool.

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I wish you knew that **my daughter needs encouragement** more than other students. She is so used to hearing, "Susan, be quiet," "Susan, you're not trying hard enough," that the majority of the time she feels like a failure.

I wish you knew that when you **acknowledge her doing something right**, whether she shows it or not, it makes her day.

I wish you knew **when she says, "I forgot," nine times out of 10 she really did forget**. It isn't an excuse. Her brain doesn't hold on to things the way your other students' brains do.

I wish you knew how difficult it is for her to walk into the classroom and get right to work. She has just come from chatting in the hallways with her friends, after sitting still and trying to be quiet for 50 minutes in another class. Her brain is like, "No! Not again! I've gotta do something fun!"

I wish you knew how long it takes my daughter to complete homework. What might take a neurotypical student 15 minutes to complete takes my daughter an hour. **When the parents of a student with TRISOMY X ask for a reduced homework load for their child, we aren't trying to get her out of work.**

We want her to know the material, but we want our child to feel confident about her ability to complete the work instead of feeling like there is no way she will ever get it finished.

I wish you knew that **large tasks or projects overwhelm her**. The more you can break down projects into small tasks with due dates, the more successful she will be.

I wish you knew that **my daughter is a poor self-observer**. Many times she has no idea that she is coming across as disrespectful, or that she is acting or saying something inappropriate. Ask her questions that help her learn to self-observe, but please do it in private.

I wish you knew that **she doesn't read social cues well and therefore comes across as selfish or indifferent**. The more people I have serving as her "social coach" in a loving and respectful manner, the more likely she is to develop these skills.

I wish you knew that **my daughter doesn't do well with unstructured class time the way other students do**. If there will be unstructured time in your class, talk privately with her before class starts and let her know she will have "quiet study time," for example, toward the end of class.

I wish you knew that her **having TRISOMY X doesn't embarrass her**. She knows it is part of what makes her who she is and her parents choose to highlight the strengths that come with her diagnosis. She also knows that TRISOMY X is not an excuse, it is an explanation.

I wish you knew that **getting her full attention, even by saying her name, before you start giving instructions makes the difference between her hearing all or part of what you say**.

I wish you knew that, as a parent of a child with TRISOMY X, **frequent communication is important**. I know that you are going the extra mile for my child when you do this. If she has a problem in class that day, let me know. If you've assigned a project, let me know. Any and all communication is appreciated. I really do want to partner with you for my child's success.

I wish you knew that she will go through cycles of doing well and then cycles of not doing well. She may turn in her homework for two weeks in a row, and then have a week where she struggles. **Motivation waxes and wanes for kids with TRISOMY X**.

I wish you knew how difficult it is for her brain to focus, especially if she finds the subject boring. The TRISOMY X brain is actually under-stimulated, meaning it requires more stimulation than the brains of neurotypical students.

I wish you knew that when she draws in class, it doesn't mean that she isn't listening. **Moving helps her brain stay focused**.

I wish you would be more open to offering her different ways to show you that she knows the material. She often has a hard time putting her knowledge into words, but she can express it well in a drawing.

I wish you knew how sensitive my daughter is. I know that one day she can be a delight to have in class and, the next day, she can be a disruption. The more even keeled you can be with her, the better. When you are frustrated and disappointed with her, she will sense it strongly. She doesn't want to disappoint you and, when she does, she takes it hard. **Her inner voice tells her that she is a failure and not good enough**.

I wish you knew that her brain cannot filter out everything she sees and hears. **She can't determine what is important and what is not important right away.** Everything she sees and hears is of equal importance to her brain. I encourage you to visit [understood.org](https://www.understood.org) (<https://www.understood.org>) and watch a video called "Through Your Child's Eyes." You will be blown away by what [TRISOMY X students](#) live with every day.

Finally, **I wish you knew how grateful I am that you teach my daughter.** Your job is not an easy one, nor is it for the weak of heart. If anyone understands how hard it is, I do. Your compassion and understanding toward my child will be something I will never forget. Neither will my daughter.