



## Trapped in compulsory school

Submitted by schooldazed on 8 February, 2010 - 01:43

Are there any other parents out there who, due to circumstances outside their control, are forced to send their child to school, despite their very deep misgivings? I am interested in adding to our kit-bag of strategies for mitigating the damage done by the school system, and am wondering what other parents in my position do. Here's a brief summary of our story: My daughter has been brought up by me since she was 4, and has become used to being treated with great respect and trust, and participating fully in her own life. She is a very smart person, and began hating school with a vengeance 3 years ago, at the age of 8. She reacts very strongly to the lack of choice, the authoritarianism, the boredom and what she sees as the hypocrisy of the system. The contrast between home and school is extreme, which I'm sure adds to the problem. I have been told that my daughter's unhappiness stems from my willingness to "indulge" her by validating her complaints. If I just told her to get on with it and stop whining, apparently, she would no longer feel conflicted and would settle to the life of the classroom. We talk a great deal about all this, she is aware of John Holt, John Taylor Gatto, Paulo Freire, Alfie Kohn etc. and she knows she deserves better. I have been blocked from homeschooling her, so am in the difficult position of knowing that homeschooling or unschooling would meet her needs, but being compelled to keep sending her to school. My daughter knows what her limited options are at this stage: try to ignore the bully teachers and align herself with the respectful and inspiring ones; carry out small acts of rebellion when she is required to jump through hoops to prove she is compliant; deliberately veer off in unexpected and strange directions when faced with dull work; or alternatively, submit to the pressure, work hard and be a good girl in order to earn the random and sporadic praise of her elders and betters; or fail spectacularly in the hope she will bring things to a head. Of course there are many subtle variations within these strategies, and I am keen to hear what others choose to do in order to survive!

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### **My first ideas:**

*Submitted by Willow on 12 March, 2010 - 15:38*

Some people gang together to open tiny parent run private schools. That would fulfil the "School" criteria while being much easier for the small school to fit with family life. Just try a different school and see if you happen upon a helpful teacher. Fight the ruling that you have to send your child to school.

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