

### Catching Up with the Counselor

*Dear Mrs. Fitzsimmons,  
Recently, my child got her first interim report for a poor grade in Math. I was stunned! My stomach is in knots about the report card! Can you help me?*

*-Bewildered in Baldwin*

Dear Bewildered,  
First of all, don't panic. Report cards are not judging your parenting skills, or the worth of your child. They are to update you on your child's academic progress. Keeping a clear head will help you manage the situation appropriately. Secondly, ask to speak to your child's teacher for a better idea of what's going on. He or she will be able to pin-point your child's weakness, and give you strategies for improvement. Third, make a plan. Decide what needs to happen to improve the situation, and how you will know if the plan is working. Does there need to be more study time at home? Do materials need to be more organized? Make a plan with your child's teacher about how you will communicate throughout the next quarter if you don't want to wait for that nasty interim report! Fourth, take time to evaluate your plan. Wait a few weeks, then ask: Are your strategies and ideas working? Miracles don't happen overnight. Lastly, remember to praise your child for all the positive aspects of his or her report card. Don't just focus on the negative! Your child is doing a lot of things well. Ironing out the trouble spots early will help the rest of the year go much more smoothly!