



A Family Affair: When School Troubles Come Home

Curt Dudley-Marling

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Little is known about the effects of schooling on parents, especially on those with children who struggle in school. As an educator whose work focuses on struggling students and as a parent of a daughter who has herself struggled, Curt Dudley-Marling has special insight into this issue. He has discovered firsthand that relatively minor problems in school can have far-reaching consequences on family life. Now, Dudley-Marling shares his perspective with other educators.

Drawing on a series of interviews with parents, *A Family Affair* provides an insider's view of what happens at home when school goes wrong. Always interesting and sometimes painful, these stories reveal that school troubles threaten the happiness and self-esteem of children; disrupt relationships; and, in general, deny parents and children many of the pleasures of family life. Some of the other topics covered include: homework as a "carrier" for school troubles; the degree to which the burdens of school troubles fall on mothers; what parents think about the issue of labeling; how school troubles shape people's perceptions of children; how school troubles affect parent-school relations; parents' differential access to resources that can support children's schooling; and advice for teachers and parents.

This is a cautionary tale for educators and educational policymakers. It will be of particular interest to teachers who worry about the effects of school troubles on children and their families. It will also comfort parents who have experienced the devastation of living with a struggling learner.

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