

Tough Love

by John Wentworth Chapin

Taped to the front door in an envelope:

Dear Justin,

This morning, you missed your schoolbus for the third time this fall. Dr Pruitt agrees with me that it's time for something called Tough Love. This Tough Love contract will set up expectations for the future so that we may traverse this rocky path speedily.

CONTRACT

TL EXPECTATION: be on time, each and every day. Yes, extenuating circumstances arise, and no, not that frequently.

TL CONSEQUENCE: sitting and waiting, without a snack.

TL GOAL: managing your time and lessening familial inconvenience.

I locked you out of the apartment today because you inconvenience me when you miss the bus. I have to get you to school, and I end up late for work. I hope that you are similarly inconvenienced. Does being hungry feel worse than Mommy felt this morning? Unlikely — disrespect strikes quite deep. If they don't cover consequences in your gifted and talented program, you may care to research it.

For you to ponder: how gifted can one be if one can't manage to catch a bus?

Your Mother,

Ann

PS — We will keep this contract in the sitting room credenza for future reference.

Also, I have a deposition until about 6:30. If nosy Mrs Wong by the elevator asks why you are sitting in the hall, tell her you lost your key.

