

psst... from one parent to another

Home from school, *and falling apart*

THREE NOTES FROM THE GROWN-UPS' PAGE OF
"THE ZIPPER AT THE DOOR" · AGES 5–8



1 All these tears over a zipper?

Most likely nothing's wrong with her. She held it together all day: the fish, the empty chair. Next to you she doesn't have to anymore, so it all comes out at once, on the first small thing. Some therapists call it after-school restraint collapse. Kids often fall apart where they feel safest. If it happens every day for weeks, or she starts dreading school, that's worth a closer look. Tonight, the zipper can wait.

2 Why won't she tell me anything?

"How was your day?" on the doorstep is an exam after a day of exams. A tired, hungry child has nothing left to answer with. The real stuff comes later and sideways: in the bath, in the car, after the light goes off. A lot of parents find that a snack and some quiet flopping work better than a question at the door.

3 I snapped at the door. Have I ruined it?

Almost certainly not. Bags, stroller, the baby, and then the zipper: everyone has these minutes. What happens afterward matters more than a perfect reaction. One line in the evening is enough: "I barked at you at the door. That was me being tired, not you being bad." That's how kids learn you can come back together after a bad moment.

Read Nadia's story together — your child decides what she does. →

ifarium.com/stories/the-good-day-that-wasnt · free, no sign-up

Sources: University of Illinois Extension, Family Files 2026; Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley (D. Divecha) 2020.



SCAN TO READ
THE STORY

print · cut · one for the fridge, one for the backpack

The After-School Landing



A lot of parents find that a snack and some quiet flopping work better than a question at the door. Let your child pick how the first minutes home go.

HOME! FIRST, PICK ONE

- ☐ a snack
- ☐ water
- ☐ quiet flop
- ☐ run around

Questions can wait. Name: _____



HOME! FIRST, PICK ONE

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FOR THE GROWN-UP

“How was your day?” *can wait.*

On the doorstep it's an exam after a day of exams. The real stuff comes later and sideways:

in the bath

in the car

after lights-out



From **“The Zipper at the Door”** — read it together at ifarium.com, free, no sign-up. If meltdowns happen every day for weeks, or school starts to feel dreaded, that's worth a closer look.



SCAN TO READ
THE STORY