

By this point, "choosing my battles" with Ms. Long had become an understatement. I consulted the school's administrators, counselors, and social work representative. I researched the CPS definitions of abuse and neglect and decided to keep my eyes open for obvious concerns for Bryan and his sister's health and welfare, but I also decided that I was only going to make things more difficult by continuing to contact Ms. Long about clothing and toileting concerns. On one instance, Bryan's backpack had developed such an odor that we could not bear to have him carry it to the bus. I was even suspicious that perhaps an animal had urinated on the bag. We wrapped the backpack in a trash bag and sent it home with a note that it needed to be washed. The next day Bryan came to school with a new backpack, which slowly began to develop the same odor.