

What if a child is bullying others?

If you know or suspect that your child is bullying other kids, we recommend that you take the following steps.

Make it clear to your child that you take bullying seriously and that you will not tolerate this behavior.

Develop clear and consistent rules within your family for your children's behavior. Praise and reinforce your children for following rules and use non-physical, non hostile consequences for rule violations.

Spend more time with your child and carefully supervise and monitor



his or her activities. Find out who your child's friends are and how and where they spend free time. Build on your child's talents by encouraging him or her to get

involved in prosocial activities (such as clubs, music lessons, nonviolent sports). Share your concerns with your child's teacher, counselor, or principal. Work

together to send clear messages to your child that his or her bullying must stop. If you or your child needs additional help, talk with a school counselor

When a child shows dislike towards going to school

While some kids are terrified of setting foot inside the school door, your child may be one of those who's been there for a while, but announces one day, out of the blue, that she hates school. Here are some possible reasons for this outburst, along with strategies to help you and your child move forward in a positive way:

• Learning Issues – When your child declares a hatred for school, it could be that she is having trouble learning. It's also possible that she is bored at school, because she is underchallenged, or underachieving.

• A Teacher Problem – Perhaps your child hates school because of bad chemistry with his teacher. There may be a simple solution: "Having the teacher and child sit down for lunch together can often improve the relationship."

• Bullying – A sudden reluctance to go to school or ride the bus,



along with a declaration of hating school, could indicate that your child is being bullied. If you suspect this, find a private opportunity to talk to your child about it. And if your child is so upset that she refuses to go into much detail, try talking to her friends, their parents or your child's teacher. Contact school officials immediately if you discover that your instincts are accurate. Most schools now have a zero-tolerance policy on bullying and will act quickly to try to resolve the problem.

• Loneliness – It may be that your child hates school because he feels he has no friends.

Teachers should talk to students who sit at the edge of the playground at recess and sitting alone in the school cafeteria at lunch. "There are a lot of things teachers can do."

Parents can help too by encouraging their child to participate in school clubs or activities and by inviting over peers with whom the child feels comfortable.

*** Keep Talking**

Ultimately, parents and teachers are in the best position to help a child who doesn't like school. Talk with your child about why school has become unpleasant, and keep talking. Meet with the teacher and work together to try to change the child's attitude, to make both learning and the classroom an exciting place to be.

Identifying Learning Disabilities

Some common behaviors that may indicate a learning disability include problems with reading, speech, writing or reasoning; hyperactivity; inability to focus and coordination problems. Kids with a learning disorder may display impulsiveness, frequent frustration, difficulties with interpersonal interactions and erratic test performance.

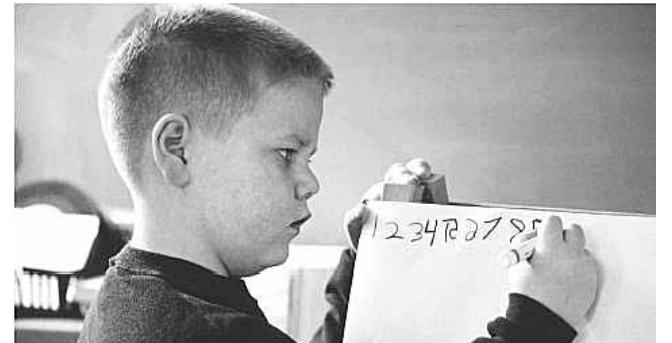
Identifying Problems at Different Ages Children with learning disabilities often possess above-average intelligence. They just process information differently. With intervention, the majority of these children succeed academically, socially and personally.

The following is a breakdown of general warning signs that are often associated with learning disabilities at different stages of a child's development.



The warning signs for ADD or ADHD include

- Making careless mistakes in schoolwork
- Problems playing quietly
- Not listening to what is being said in class and at home
- Losing and misplacing belongings
- Having difficulty paying attention to tasks
- Inability to organize or prioritize tasks
- Difficulty sitting still
- Interrupting and talking excessively



Preschoolers

- Difficulty mastering language – The child begins to talk late, has trouble pronouncing words, is slow to use new vocabulary words and is often unable to find the right words.
- Trouble with simple rhymes, numbers, letters and the days of the week.
- Restlessness – The child is very active, restless and unable to focus on craft activities, games or a simple task.
- Difficulty interacting appropriately with peers – The child becomes angry, over-excited or withdrawn around other children.

School-age Children

- Difficulty making the connection between letters and their sounds – The child repeatedly makes the same reading, spelling and pronunciation errors.
- Often transposes letters, numbers and whole words
- Baffled by the concept of time
- Finds new skills hard to learn.
- Covers up lack of knowledge with elaborate memorization
- Poor planning and organizational skills.
- Exhibits lack of coordination and disregard for physical surroundings.



Common Learning Disabilities

• Dyslexia – a language-based disability in which a person has trouble understanding words, sentences, or paragraphs.

• Dyscalculia – a mathematical disability in which a person has a very difficult time solving arithmetic problems and grasping math concepts.

• Dysgraphia – a writing disability in which a person finds it hard to form letters correctly or write within a defined space.

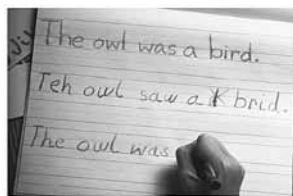
• Auditory and Visual Processing Disabilities – a sensory disability in which a person has difficulty understanding language despite normal hearing and vision.

• Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – While these two attention disorders are now well known, their widespread recognition also

makes it more likely that a child may be misdiagnosed or receive inappropriate treatment.

According to the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, parents who think that their child might have ADD or ADHD should carefully evaluate information, products and their choice of health-care practitioners. Increasingly, both children and adults are being diagnosed with ADD or ADHD. In fact, it's estimated that nearly 2 million people have this disorder.



Make Summer the Season for Reading

Motivating children to read throughout the summer is essential to building lifelong readers. Reading is the doorway to all other learning." With that in mind, how do you convince your kids to build reading time into their summer plans?

- Combine activities with books. Going to a baseball game? Head to the library and check out a biography about your child's favorite player. Is summer camp on the agenda? See if the camp has a blog you can follow.
- Lead by example. Show kids that you love to read by picking up the newspaper each morning or sharing about something you've read, and they'll understand that reading is important to everyone.
- Relax the rules. Summer is a time when children can read what, when, and how they please.



Don't set any requirements, and don't force kids to read something they're not interested in.

• Visit the library. It's got thousands of books and audiobooks to borrow, computers to use, and magazines to leaf through. Make the library your "go-to" destination for the summer.

• Think outside the box. Recognize that reading can happen in many formats, from eBooks to magazines to online read-along stories. Check out www.rif.org/kids for great read-alongs and other fun games and activities designed to keep kids reading.

At the end of the day, it all boils down to this: read. Read together, read separately, read anywhere, read everywhere. It's the surest way to make certain that your kids will start the school year off right. Make Reading a Family Affair This Summer.

Helping Your Child Handle School Stress

School-related stress is taking its toll on children more than ever before. While most children handle the demands of school fairly well, some experience more stress than others. You can determine if your child is suffering school-related stress by watching for the following signs:

- decreased pleasure in everyday activities
- grouching
- fatigue and
- acute sensitivity to criticism and adversity.

When stress develops, it is usually the result of the interaction of three factors: the demands of a situation, the abilities and resources that the child brings to the experience, and the support available to the child. Taken



together, these three factors help explain why a child may feel stressed, and how much. The child who faces reasonable demands, who is confident and flexible and who has relaxed and supportive parents will have

a better learning experience. Here are some ways you can help your child:

- Listen to your child's concerns.
- Help your child master school tasks.
- Encourage your child to welcome change,

not fear it.

- Stand back as your child tries to resolve problems - even if you think of a better solution.
- Make sure your child has enough free time. This is essential for emotional growth and good mental health.

Podcast: When a Student Struggles

- Applaud success in all areas - not just in one particular subject or in sports. Praise the ability to make friends, express feelings, do chores, etc.
- Set goals within a child's reach. This will help the child develop a feeling of competence. A child is not a miniature adult; don't demand perfection or compare one child to another.
- Love your child unconditionally.
- Inform your child's teacher if he or she is showing signs of stress. Then, you can work together to support your child. This may not resolve all the stress your child feels, but it is a good beginning.