



IS MY CHILD AT RISK?

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Children, at every age, show signs of physical, emotional, and intellectual growth. There are behaviors, however, at major stages in life, when warning signs are apparent which should signal parents that children may be at risk in their educational life. In my years of experience in the field of education, I have seen warning signals at every stage in life. Many parents I consult with are surprised when they find out that these signs may appear as early as the preschool years. Although many children may from time to time evidence one or more of the following behaviors in isolation, parents need to look for multiple behaviors, which should then lead them to ask for an in-depth assessment of their child's learning skills. Parents need to be continually monitoring their children's learning and the following is a sampling of behaviors, which should only be used as a guideline for parental awareness of possible educational gaps.

Primary Grades (Pre K-2)

Language

- Pronunciation problems
- Limited vocabulary
- Difficulty rhyming words

Memory

- Trouble remembering numbers, letters, and words, the alphabet, and difficulty following directions
- Difficulty memorizing phone number or address

Fine Motor Skills

- Difficulty tying shoes
- Not interested in pencil/paper tasks

Other Skills

- Unable to sound out words (phonics)
- Not able to complete tasks

Lower Grades (3-5)

Language

- Poor spelling
- Delayed decoding for reading
- When speaking, finds it difficult to come up with the correct word

Memory

- Poor organizational skills
- Slow recall of facts

Fine Motor Skills

- Difficulty with letter formation
- Inappropriate pencil grip

Other Skills

- Unable to do homework independently
- Poor understanding of math concepts

Middle Grades (6-8)

Language

- Poor reading comprehension
- Little class participation

Memory

- Difficulty writing a story
- Difficulty remembering math facts

Fine Motor Skills

- Tight pencil grip
- Slow or illegible writing

Other Skills

- Lack of peer involvement
- Inability to organize space or time

Upper Grades (9-12)

Language

- Trouble with foreign languages
- Difficulty summarizing thoughts or stories
- Limited vocabulary

Memory

- Works at a slow pace
- Unorganized when studying for tests

Fine Motor Skills

- Doesn't like to write
- Difficulty with keyboarding

Other Skills

- Experiences mental fatigue
- Difficulty remembering assignments or directions
- Grades are poor in most classes

When parents and educators observe many of these warning signals and are able to get help, most children are very successful in matching their performance to their potential. Please be involved in and aware of your child's learning. Your child will thank you for it.

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