



Warning Signs Your Child Might Need Special Education Services

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For some parents, they know their child will need extra support in school from the day they are born. For others, it isn't always so easy. Students born with what we refer to as "hidden disabilities" are often the most difficult to get evaluated and often get left behind and written off as lazy and unmotivated. As a parent of two of these "hidden disabilities" humans, I can attest, there is nothing more frustrating than watching your child struggle in school and feeling helpless.

Below are some warning signs that your child might need to be evaluated for special education services:

Preschool Age Children

- Slow development in speaking
- Pronunciation problems
- Difficulty learning new words
- Difficulty following simple directions
- Difficulty understanding questions
- Difficulty expressing wants and desires
- Difficulty rhyming words
- Lack of interest in story telling
- Clumsiness
- Poor Balance
- Difficulty manipulating small objects
- Awkwardness with running, jumping or climbing
- Trouble learning to tie shoes, button shirts and other self help skills
- Avoidance of drawing
- Trouble memorizing the alphabet, numbers or days of the week
- Poor memory of daily routine
- Difficulty with sequencing and counting
- Difficulty with basic concepts such as size, shape and color
- High distractibility
- Impulsive behavior
- Unusual restlessness
- Difficulty staying on task
- Difficulty changing activities
- Lack of Social Behavior
- Prone to sudden and extreme mood changes
- Easily frustrated
- Hard to manage, temper tantrums

Elementary School Age Children

- Slow learning letter sounds
- Consistent errors in reading and/or spelling
- Difficulty remembering basic sight words
- Inability to retell a story in sequence
- Trouble learning to tell time or count money
- Confusion of math signs
- Transposition of number sequences
- Trouble memorizing math facts
- Trouble with place value
- Trouble with math operational steps, like long division
- Poor coordination
- Difficulty copying from board
- Difficulty aligning columns
- Poor handwriting
- Difficulty concentrating or focusing on a task
- Difficulty finishing work on time
- Inability to follow multiple directions

Elementary School Age Children - Continued

- Unusual sloppiness, carelessness
- Poor concept of direction
- Rejection of new concepts, or changes in routine
- Difficulty understanding social situations
- Experiencing discipline problems
- Difficulty understanding facial expressions or gestures
- Tendency to misinterpret behavior of peers and/or adults
- Apparent lack of “common sense”

Secondary School Age Children

- Avoidance of reading and writing
- Tendency to misread information
- Difficult summarizing
- Poor reading comprehension
- Difficulty understanding subject area textbooks
- Trouble with open-ended questions
- Continued poor spelling
- Poor grasp of abstract concepts
- Poor skills in writing essays
- Difficulty learning foreign language
- Poor ability to apply math skills
- Difficulty staying organized
- Trouble with test formats such as multiple choice
- Slow work pace in class
- Poor note taking skills
- Poor ability to proofread or double check work
- Difficulty understanding another person’s perspective
- Difficulty resisting peer pressure
- Difficulty seeking or giving feedback
- Problems negotiating or advocating for one-self

These lists are not meant to be inclusive of every warning sign, but as a good starting point if you have concerns. If you feel your child exhibits some of the warning signs listed above, you have the right to request a formal evaluation. I always recommend that this request be put in writing and hand delivered when possible.

Research has shown that the sooner a disability is detected, the better the chances are of lifelong success.

To learn more about this process, Families Helping Families is offering a free webinar on Wednesday, November 12, 2014 from 10 - 11 am. To register go to <http://www.fhjjefferson.org/Events/EventsDisplay.asp?p1=7948&p2=Y>.



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