



My child seems to be having a difficult time what should I do?

Sometimes kids, like adults, can benefit from therapy. Therapy can help kids develop problem-solving skills and also teach them the value of seeking help. Therapists can help kids and families cope with stress and a variety of emotional and behavioral issues.

Many kids need help dealing with school stress, such as homework, test anxiety, bullying, or peer pressure. Others need help to discuss their feelings about family issues, particularly if there's a major transition, such as a divorce, move, or serious illness.

Should My Child See a Therapist?

Significant life events — such as the death of a family member, friend, or pet; divorce or a move; abuse; trauma; a parent leaving on military deployment; or a major illness in the family — can cause stress that might lead to problems with behavior, mood, sleep, appetite, and academic or social functioning.

In some cases, it's not as clear what's caused a child to suddenly seem withdrawn, worried, stressed, sulky, or tearful. But if you feel your child might have an emotional or behavioral problem or needs help coping with a difficult life event, trust your instincts.



Signs that a child may benefit from seeing a psychologist or licensed therapist include:

- developmental delay in speech, language, or toilet training
- learning or attention problems (such as ADHD)
- behavioral problems (such as excessive anger, acting out, bedwetting or eating disorders)
- a significant drop in grades, particularly if your child normally maintains high grades
- episodes of sadness, tearfulness, or depression
- social withdrawal or isolation
- being the victim of bullying or bullying other children
- decreased interest in previously enjoyed activities
- overly aggressive behavior (such as biting, kicking, or hitting)
- sudden changes in appetite (particularly in adolescents)
- insomnia or increased sleepiness
- excessive school absenteeism or tardiness
- mood swings (e.g., happy one minute, upset the next)
- development of or an increase in physical complaints (such as headache, stomachache, or not feeling well) despite a normal physical exam by your doctor
- management of a serious, acute, or chronic illness
- signs of alcohol, drug, or other substance use (such as solvents or prescription drug abuse)
- problems in transitions (following separation, divorce, or relocation)
- bereavement issues
- custody evaluations
- therapy following sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or other traumatic events

Kids who aren't yet school-age could benefit from seeing a developmental or clinical psychologist if there's a significant delay in achieving developmental milestones such as walking, talking, and potty training, and if there are concerns regarding autism or other developmental disorders.