



MENTAL HEALTH IN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

**Q4- MIDDLE CHILDHOOD-
SCHOOL RELATED
PROBLEMS**

School related problems

Some of the more common causes of school problems are underlying learning difficulties or learning disabilities – like dyslexia – or behavioural or emotional issues. But there are many other reasons why a young person might not be achieving academically.

Personal factors might include:

- chronic illness
- mental health issues like depression or anxiety
- experiences of trauma
- difficulties with self-esteem, communication skills or social skills
- difficulties with listening, concentrating or sitting still.

School factors might include:

- disliking, or not feeling connected to, the school culture or environment
- disliking school subjects, not liking the choice of subjects, or not feeling challenged by the work

- poor school or academic support, especially in relation to heavy workloads
- not getting along with teachers or other students at school
- skipping school
- having trouble with managing time for things like extracurricular activities
- being bullied.

Common signs of school problems

- Sometimes, school problems will be easy to spot, and your child will want to talk to you about them.
- But sometimes your child might hide school problems from you or from teachers and friends. For example, she might copy homework, pretend to be sick during important tests, or not bring reports home. This can make it very difficult for you to pick up on a problem.

So if you're worried that your child is having school problems, there are some signs you can look out for. You might notice that your child:

- makes excuses not to go to school or even skips school without your knowledge
- doesn't want to talk about school, or seems critical or uncomfortable when talking about school
- doesn't seem engaged with school – for example, he might not be interested in extracurricular activities or might have very few friends
- seems low on confidence or self-esteem – for example, he might say he's 'dumb' or not as smart as his friends
- is getting detentions, or teachers are contacting you about attention or behaviour problems
- refuses to do homework, rarely talks about homework, or seems bored with or unchallenged by schoolwork – he might say he's not learning anything new

- is getting lower marks than usual

WITHDRAWN

Tendency to avoid either unfamiliar persons, locations, or situations. Withdrawal behavior is characterized by the tendency to avoid the unfamiliar, either people, places, or situations. Though withdrawal, or avoidance, can be the result of a temperamental tendency toward inhibition to unfamiliar events, anxiety over the anticipation of a critical evaluation, or a conditioned avoidant response, often called a **phobia**, can produce withdrawal. These are three different mechanisms, each of which can mediate withdrawal behavior. Withdrawal behavior is typically seen in children. The withdrawal or avoidance that is seen in the preschool years is, most of the time, due to a temperamental bias that makes some children uncertain over unfamiliar events. During later **childhood**, withdrawal or avoidance occurs due to very specific events, like lightening, animals, insects, or foods. At this point, withdrawal is usually not the result of a temperamental bias, but more often is due to **conditioning** experiences in which the child had a painful or frightening experience in association with the event he avoids.

Agoraphobia

Agoraphobia is a condition in which crowded or unfamiliar spaces cause anxiety.

Agoraphobia is, essentially, a disorder of withdrawal from any space that does not feel as safe as one's home. While the person is not scared of being around other people per se, they feel afraid to leave the safety of their home in case they are overcome by anxiety during that time. While agoraphobia does not always involve social withdrawal - for

example, people with this disorder may appreciate a companion to accompany them on excursions outside of their house - they often end up withdrawing socially simply because they prefer not to leave the home.

SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL

Social withdrawal can be both a symptom and a cause of anxiety. Social withdrawal can also characterize an anxiety disorder (social anxiety disorder) in and of itself. Some people develop social withdrawal because of other pre-existing anxiety symptoms. Other people's anxiety is reinforced because they continuously opt to withdraw from social situations. Still others experience severe anxiety socially from the start, which then reinforces their tendency to withdraw.

People who suffer from anxiety often have a strong desire to retreat from society, staying home and isolating themselves from the world around them. To outsiders, it may seem as though the person with social anxiety is being disinterested or stuck-up. The truth, however, is that often people with social anxiety are simply withdrawing because it's too unbearably anxiety-provoking for them to be in social situations

1. Hitting
2. Throwing things
3. Refusing to go to bed
4. Slipping away in a crowd

4 years old: Your 4 year old is learning about following rules and paying attention to boundaries. Predictable problems:

1. Stealing
2. Lying
3. Name calling
4. Toilet talk

5 year old: Your 5 year old is learning about controlling desires and taking responsibility for his actions. Predictable problems:

1. Stealing
2. Cheating
3. Teasing
4. Talking back

Causes of indiscipline

There are many causes of indiscipline. Here are a few:

What is discipline?

Discipline is derived from the Latin word "Discipulus" which means to learn. It is the same root from which the word disciple is taken. Literally, discipline is a mode of life in accordance with certain rules and regulations. The term 'discipline' refers to a state of orderly conduct of an individual which is gained through training in self-control and in habits of obedience to socially approved standards of thought and action. It implies a good understanding of right conduct. The formation of desirable habits and attitudes and an adherence to such standards are just and necessary.

Meaning of Discipline:

The genesis of the word "Discipline" is supposed from the Latin word "Disciplina" which means management, rule, education, practice, teaching and trained condition. The derivation of English word "Discipline" is supposed from the Latin word "Discipulum" which means pupil. This is expected from the pupils that he should obey his teachers respectfully and according to him, he should develop necessary and required qualities in himself for successful life.

Common problems

The most common problems usually confronted.

3 years old: Your 3 year old is learning about sharing, taking turns, and following rules. Predictable problems.

• Types of Student Disciplinary Problems

Like most teachers, Martin can easily identify **disciplinary problems**. Students act out in a variety of ways, impacting their own ability to learn as well as those around them. Some of the types of disciplinary problems that are most common are:

- Disrespect - students speak and act in a disrespectful way to adults and peers
- Defiance - students openly refuse to listen to adults or follow directions
- Bullying - students consistently intimidate others, often to make themselves feel better
- Aggression - students become physically or verbally violent.

Fear and phobias

Common Childhood Fears

Here are some of the childhood fears by age that children experience.

Fears of Babies and Toddlers

- Sudden loud sounds or extreme movements can cause the baby to be afraid.
- A large object suddenly looming into their view could scare them.
- Any strangers that attempt to converse with them could cause them to be afraid.

Being separated from parents or changes in their room or surroundings could make them feel in an unknown environment, making them scared.

Favoritism:

Indiscipline may be caused by teachers who favor some students in their teaching and classroom management. The other students may see this as a sign that everything is allowed in spite of the rules. Other students may also see this favoritism as an offense against them which leads to rebellion.

- The rules are not enforced;

When a student is not punished for an offense, s/he goes on to commit more offense.

Lack of Communication:

The rules are not clearly communicated

- Teacher-student relationship:

The teacher and students relationship is essential for any learning process. If there is a breakdown in this relationship, indiscipline emerges.

Lack of leadership:

When the teacher doesn't fulfill his role as a leader, there will certainly be students or students who will be glad to take this role. Thus indiscipline appears.

Lack of motivation:

When students are not motivated, they tend to work in an undisciplined manner.

- Bad habits:

Some students may have acquired bad habits from previous teaching experiences. Once a student, for instance, has formed the habit of coming to school late, it will be hard for him or her to change this behavior.

Fears of Preschoolers

- Nearly all fear in kids begins from being afraid of the dark. Some adults tend to get scared of the dark as well.
- Any noises that occur at night could get them scared.
- Scary masks or weird sounds of monsters and ghosts could cause kids at this age to be afraid.
- Most kids like dogs but some of them could get afraid of an overexcited dog.

Fears in Children during School Years

- This is where the child starts getting scared of large insects or reptiles like spiders and snakes.
- A thunderstorm or earthquake can result in them getting extremely scared.
- Being alone at home, especially overnight, could make the child quite afraid.
- When it comes to school, angering the teacher, failing a test, or getting rejected by their childhood crush all manifest within children as fear.
- Scary TV shows or news incidents of extreme danger can make them afraid.
- Seeing injuries or illnesses, doctors and injections, are the usual ones most children are afraid of.

How to Remove Fear from your Child's Mind?

You can help your kids overcome their fears with the following tips.

For Babies and Toddlers

- Parental presence can instantly make your baby feel safe from any strange situation.
- Establishing a routine can make them understand what actions to expect and when.
- In early months, it is important to limit the number of people taking care of the baby so that he has a chance to find a safe place for himself.

For Preschoolers

- Most kids at this age are highly imaginative. Hence, even the smallest fear can become a large one fuelled by their own imaginations.
- If your kid is afraid of a particular place or so, go to that place with them so that they can see it properly without being afraid.
- In case of being afraid of the dark, ask your child to walk towards the other room while counting numbers loudly. You can also count along with him so that he knows he isn't alone.
- If he is afraid of any animal or an overactive dog, make sure the dog is tied down and play with it first. Once the dog is a little calm, you can then bring your child closer and let him play with it.
- Ask your child to draw what he feels afraid of. Once they are done expressing, they can start understanding that monsters and ghosts are all inside their head and are not real.

1. Factors Related To Life Events

Any events that occur in a child's life that have a major impact on him could result in manifesting as a phobia in him. These could be as normal as the beginning of a new grade in school or shifting to a new place, or as unfortunate as a family member's death, extreme illness or parental divorce.

2. Factors Related To Family

In certain cases, phobia of certain aspects can be inherited from one of the parents by the kids. Even though it may not always be genetic, kids are extremely observant. On seeing any family member suffering from a phobia, they could be led to believe that they need to be afraid of it as well.

3. Factors Related To Biology

Neurotransmitters within the brain are responsible for communicating with each other, which also results in forming emotions and feelings. Two major entities here are serotonin and dopamine, which are responsible for making a human feel happy and at peace. If they go out of balance, your child can suddenly start feeling afraid of anything at all.

Common Types of Phobias in Children

Here are some of the common types of phobias

For Children in School Years

- Talk to your child about his fears since he would be able to communicate them well.
- Ask him what the worst he thinks that could happen is. Then let him know of a real-life incident which wasn't as bad as he thinks it would be.
- When it comes to natural disasters, let your child read books on the precautionary measures they need to take. This will make them feel prepared and not be caught off-guard.
- Any other fears can be best overcome by supervised action. If they constantly keep feeling afraid, getting them relaxed or taking a nap can alleviate it to quite an extent.

What is a Phobia?

When fear gets out of hand, becomes excessive, unreasonable, and permanent, and even the slightest situation or possibility of a situation can manifest a feeling of extreme anxiety that is debilitating, this is termed as a phobia. Most of the time such fears stay for multiple months to over a year before becoming a phobia.

What Causes a Phobia in Children?

Common causes of phobias in kids are:

1. Specific Phobia

In specific phobia, the child starts feeling afraid of an extremely specific entity, mostly without reason. This could be a particular place such as a closet, or a particular person such as their teacher, or a type of people like taxi drivers, and so on.

Signs And Symptoms

The child may attempt to avoid the entity of phobia or start anticipating that something bad is going to happen without reason. At times, when the object of fear is present, the actions of the child will be completely out of sync and disrupted.

2. Panic Disorder

In such a disorder, a particular event or object could suddenly trigger panic within the child. The cause or the trigger may not be apparent immediately, but the consequence of the panic can be seen in the child's behaviour. This is majorly present in adolescents and young adults.

Signs And Symptoms

When in panic, the heart rate starts increasing rapidly and your child may start sweating or trembling. Breathing reduces and there might even be discomfort in the chest. In certain situations, the panic can get too strong to handle making them feel dizzy or call out saying that they are going crazy or they are going to cry. On the other spectrum, they can even freeze completely on the spot and go numb.

Learning disability

Signs and symptoms of learning disabilities: Preschool age

- Problems pronouncing words
- Trouble finding the right word
- Difficulty rhyming
- Trouble learning the alphabet, numbers, colors, shapes, days of the week
- Difficulty following directions or learning routines
- Difficulty controlling crayons, pencils, and scissors, or coloring within the lines
- Trouble with buttons, zippers, snaps, learning to tie shoes

Signs and symptoms of learning disabilities: Ages 5-9

- Trouble learning the connection between letters and sounds
- Unable to blend sounds to make words
- Confuses basic words when reading
- Slow to learn new skills
- Consistently misspells words and makes frequent errors
- Trouble learning basic math concepts
- Difficulty telling time and remembering sequences

Signs and symptoms of learning disabilities: Ages 10-13

- Difficulty with reading comprehension or math skills
- Trouble with open-ended test questions and word problems
- Dislikes reading and writing; avoids reading aloud
- Poor handwriting
- Poor organizational skills (bedroom, homework, desk is messy and disorganized)
- Trouble following classroom discussions and expressing thoughts aloud
- Spells the same word differently in a single document

3. Agoraphobia

This is the same fear of stepping outside your comfort zone but multiplied to gargantuan proportions. The child starts feeling afraid of the outside world and unknown people completely. Any place unknown to them or any stranger can cause them to be triggered and go into a state of panic.

Signs And Symptoms

Children will refuse to leave their homes under any condition or refuse to meet or talk to any stranger or guest in the house. If forced to do so, they may panic or scream out in refusal.

4. Social Phobia

Social anxiety disorder is yet another name for this and is quite rare. This is majorly termed as a fear of interacting with people in a crowd or even fear of children in certain cases.

Signs And Symptoms

Children are filled with mortal fear when it comes to introducing themselves to other people or asking questions in a classroom, going on the stage, or even peeing in a public washroom with other people present. They will also go to extreme measures to avoid being in a situation, lying or even falsely falling ill to skip a particular event or so.

Learning disabilities in writing (dysgraphia)

Learning disabilities in writing can involve the physical act of writing or the mental activity of comprehending and synthesizing information. Basic writing disorder refers to physical difficulty forming words and letters. Expressive writing disability indicates a struggle to organize thoughts on paper.

Symptoms of a written language learning disability revolve around the act of writing. They include problems with:

- neatness and consistency of writing
- accurately copying letters and words
- spelling consistency
- writing organization and coherence

Other types of learning disabilities and disorders

Reading, writing, and math aren't the only skills impacted by learning disorders. Other types of learning disabilities involve difficulties with motor skills (movement and coordination), understanding spoken language, distinguishing between sounds, and interpreting visual information.

Learning disabilities in motor skills (dyspraxia)

Motor difficulty refers to problems with movement and coordination whether it is with fine motor skills (cutting, writing) or gross motor skills (running, jumping). A motor disability is sometimes referred to as an "output" activity meaning that it relates to the output of information from the brain. In order to run, jump, write or cut something, the brain must be able to communicate with the necessary limbs to complete the action.

Signs that your child might have a motor coordination disability include problems with physical abilities that require hand-eye coordination, like holding a pencil or buttoning a shirt.

Problems with reading, writing, and math

Learning disabilities are often grouped by school-area skill set. If your child is in school, the types of learning disorders that are most conspicuous usually revolve around reading, writing, or math.

Learning disabilities in reading (dyslexia)

There are two types of learning disabilities in reading. Basic reading problems occur when there is difficulty understanding the relationship between sounds, letters and words. Reading comprehension problems occur when there is an inability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases, and paragraphs.

Signs of reading difficulty include problems with:

- letter and word recognition
- understanding words and ideas
- reading speed and fluency
- general vocabulary skills

Learning disabilities in math (dyscalculia)

Learning disabilities in math vary greatly depending on the child's other strengths and weaknesses. A child's ability to do math will be affected differently by a language learning disability, or a visual disorder or a difficulty with sequencing, memory or organization.

A child with a math-based learning disorder may struggle with memorization and organization of numbers, operation signs, and number "facts" (like $5+5=10$ or $5 \times 5=25$). Children with math learning disorders might also have trouble with counting principles (such as counting by twos or counting by fives) or have difficulty telling time.

Learning disabilities in language (aphasia/dysphasia)

Language and communication learning disabilities involve the ability to understand or produce spoken language. Language is also considered an output activity because it requires organizing thoughts in the brain and calling upon the right words to verbally explain something or communicate with someone else.

Signs of a language-based learning disorder involve problems with verbal language skills, such as the ability to retell a story and the fluency of speech, as well as the ability to understand the meaning of words, parts of speech, directions, etc.

Auditory and visual processing problems: the importance of the ears and eyes

The eyes and the ears are the primary means of delivering information to the brain, a process sometimes called "input." If either the eyes or the ears aren't working properly, learning can suffer.

Auditory processing disorder – Professionals may refer to the ability to hear well as "auditory processing skills" or "receptive language." The ability to hear things correctly greatly impacts the ability to read, write and spell. An inability to distinguish subtle differences in sound, or hearing sounds at the wrong speed make it difficult to sound out words and understand the basic concepts of reading and writing.

Visual processing disorder – Problems in visual perception include missing subtle differences in shapes, reversing letters or numbers, skipping words, skipping lines, misperceiving depth or distance, or having problems with eye-hand coordination. Professionals may refer to the work of the eyes as "visual processing." Visual perception can affect gross and fine motor skills, reading comprehension, and math.

Common types of learning disabilities

Dyslexia – Difficulty with reading

- Problems reading, writing, spelling, speaking

Dyscalculia – Difficulty with math

- Problems doing math problems, understanding time, using money

Dysgraphia – Difficulty with writing

- Problems with handwriting, spelling, organizing ideas

Dyspraxia (Sensory Integration Disorder) – Difficulty with fine motor skills

- Problems with hand-eye coordination, balance, manual dexterity

Dysphasia/Aphasia – Difficulty with language

- Problems understanding spoken language, poor reading comprehension

Auditory Processing Disorder – Difficulty hearing differences between sounds

- Problems with reading, comprehension, language

Visual Processing Disorder – Difficulty interpreting visual information

- Problems with reading, math, maps, charts, symbols, pictures.

Truancy

Truancy is any intentional, unjustified, unauthorized, or illegal absence from compulsory education. It is absence caused by students of their own free will, and usually does not refer to legitimate excused absences, such as ones related to medical conditions. Truancy, also called skipping school, is defined by all states as unexcused absences from school without the knowledge of a parent or guardian.

CAUSES OF TRUANCY

- Truancy has evolved from Mark Twain's description in *Huckleberry Finn*: "a joyous rebellion against authority and responsibility." Today, truancy of youth under 14 is viewed less as failure by youth to do well in school, and more as a failure by a school to meet a student's needs.
- Common causes include:
 - Undiagnosed or mistreated learning disabilities
 - Victimization by school bullies, teachers, or school staff
 - Fear of school
 - Family issues, like abuse and neglect, or obligations to care for parents or younger siblings
 - Mental health issues, like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which are sometimes punished instead of treated, and can force youth to leave school
- Failure of schools to tell parents of students' absences: some school systems tell parents after one absence, others wait 30 to 40 days