



# Helping Students In Need Of Extra Help

Parents want their kids to be as successful as possible in the classroom. Good grades illustrate a desire to learn and excel, and high marks can make it easier for students to be accepted into top-rated secondary schools later on in their academic careers. But some students still need a little extra help with their classes no matter how hard they work. These children may benefit from tutoring or one-on-one sessions in the classroom.

Learning disabilities vary greatly. Some students have trouble taking tests, while others have difficulty paying attention in the classroom. Because learning disabilities encompass so many different issues, estimates as to the number of children with learning disabilities can be difficult to pinpoint. But according to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, as of the 2009-10 school year, 13 percent of all enrolled children ages three to 21 were classified as having some sort of learning disability. That number has grown from 8 percent in 1976, when records were first kept.

Whether a student has a previously diagnosed learning disability or seems to need some additional guidance, there are steps parents can take to help such youngsters reach their full academic potential.

\* Pay attention to your

child's progress. All children learn at a different pace. However, if your child seems to be falling well behind his or her peers, you may need to explore ways to help the child with his or her studies. Spend time doing homework with your child and figure out where his or her strengths and weaknesses lie. This may help you to determine if the child has a legitimate learning disability or if he or she is simply having difficulty with a particular subject.

\* Schedule an appointment with the teacher. Your child's teacher likely spends six or more hours per day in the classroom with students and will be able to better recognize if your son or daughter is falling behind. He or she also may have a cursory understanding of some learning disability warning signs. The teacher also may refer specialized counselors who can screen students for certain conditions. If the teacher has not reached out to you but your child is lagging behind, take a proactive approach and request a meeting.

\* Analyze the home environment. Has there been a traumatic situation or big changes at home? A move, a death in the family, a divorce, and other incidents can affect how a child performs in the classroom. Your child may not have a learning disability, he or she may



Some children need a little extra assistance with schoolwork.

be experiencing emotional problems that are creating difficulties in and out of the classroom. Rather than help with schoolwork, he or she may need some emotional support or counseling.

\* Develop a tutoring plan. Some parents can tutor their

kids on their own. Others prefer a third party to remove the emotional aspect from the tutoring. The school may be able to suggest tutors for afterschool hours. Your child also may be able to spend some time during school hours with

specialized tutors. For example, some schools break children into guided reading groups depending on their aptitudes. Children who need more instruction sit with a reading tutor, who helps them at the students' own pace.

\* Be supportive. Very often children who have a learning disability or are underperforming in the classroom experience self-esteem issues. This can impair their confidence in other subjects or even outside of the classroom. As a parent you can show support for your child, praising his or her success rather than pointing out any failings.

\* Set reasonable goals. Progress may be slow-going, but no one should get discouraged. Discuss your child's progress with a tutor or teacher and make sure that the goals your child has are attainable so he or she can feel good about academics. Praise and small rewards may provide the inspiration kids need to stick with the program.

Not every student catches on to lessons at the same rate as others. Parents may have to work together with educators to develop personalized tutoring for children who are lagging behind for any number of reasons.

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