

ASK THE EXPERT

January 2020

Query 1

1/6/2020 20:25:47	Male	Age 9 to 13	Asslam ao alikom my son is very talented he himself work hard. Sorry to say that the way school teach him and the way APSACS paper is totally different. I myself work very hard he got fist position with 92% but what about those students whoes parents are uneducated and what is the responsibility of school.
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Category: Others (Parent-Teacher Relationship)

Query by: Parent

Response: Thank you for sharing your observations. It is indeed a challenge that APSACs is aware of and tries to address through its teachers training and curriculum design. The concern is always about how to teach children through varied methodologies, cater to individual needs of the children especially those coming from varied and disadvantaged backgrounds. If there is some specific observation or feedback that regarding the school your child goes to, please feel free to share with the Section Head or the Principal. You can also send in your suggestion by filling out the Parental Feedback Form available on the APSACS website.

Query 2

1/11/2020 0:43:17	Female	Age 14 to 18	My daughter is stressed very much these days for her papers she is taking too much tension. She was always like this but now it is increasing. She cried all night due to this and became ill. After paper she is fine. Maybe she is afraid of papers. i want you to counsel her completely. Encourage her. She is very good in studies. I'm afraid you'll lose your golden student. Thank you 😊
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Category: Exam and Studies related Anxiety

Query by: Parent

Response: Thank you for sharing your concerns. It is important to know that it is perfectly normal for most children to feel a bit of nervousness and stress related to their studies especially when they have to take exams. Sometimes anxiety manifests itself in bodily symptoms like headache, nausea, and gastrointestinal problems. Some of the things that you can help her with are:

- Be available to listen and validate her fears and concerns about the upcoming exams. Sometimes all that a student needs is a listening ear and validation by the parents that they will support their child no matter what the challenges may be.
- Make sure she is getting enough rest and sleep and is eating a balanced diet. A recent study has shown that people who sleep for 8 hours before taking a Math's test are three times more likely to understand and solve the math's problems as compared to people who stay awake all night.
- Encourage her to make a study plan in advance of the exams, keeping ample time for preparation of subjects that she finds most difficult. Managing and planning the study time will help her cope with stress and avoid the panic and anxiety experienced by many students.

Since you are based in Lahore and have regional emotional health counselor on board, we will also advise you to speak to her for further guidance.

Query 3

1/21/2020 15:53:19	Female	Age 14 to 18	AOA i am student of apsacs humayun rd rawalpindi recently i have been struggling with my urdu teacher she does not listen to children and always act rude towards the class and if anyone is in the sick room and unable to attend the class, she takes her to the head mistress and get them scolded and she criticizes alot and sometimes slaps the student we have tried talking to a cooperative and understanding teacher but she ant seem to help us in any way and if we want to change our sections, the school won't let us and they don't change our teacher
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Category: Others; Teacher-Student Relationship

Query by: Student

Response: Your concern has been forwarded to the concerned authority for the necessary action.

Query 4

1/23/2020 0:09:48	Male	Age 9 to 13	He dosenot like to study,no matter how hard i try
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Category: Lack of Concentration, Attention & Learning; Adolescent Development Issues

Query by: Unspecified

Response: The information provided is insufficient to guide you. We would need to know if the lack of interest in studies is a recent change or if the student has had these problems since the beginning of his studies? Is he unable to understand concepts, not pay attention, or both?

It would be important to know if he is facing any challenges in grasping the concepts that are being taught or is stressed about anything at home, school, with friends, etc. At times, both things could contribute towards the lack of interest. If the lack of interest in studies is due to difficulties in a subject, you can work in close coordination with him and his teachers so that he can be best helped to overcome the learning challenges. Encourage him to seek help for subjects he does not understand, help him set a daily study routine, break his work tasks into smaller tasks if he loses concentration on longer tasks and make sure he is getting enough sleep and exercise. However, if other non-academic issues are bothering him, support him in better dealing with and communicating his feelings and thoughts. Please also note that the student is passing through the adolescent age. During this time (roughly starting around ten years and above), many children go through a series of normal emotional, physical and social changes. As a result of these changes there is more interest in peers, less interest in studies, spending time with family and adults, frequent arguments and need to exert their own individuality and identity etc. The adolescent period can be overwhelming for adolescents, especially if they lack correct information about the changes that they are experiencing or/and if they feel that there is no one that they can communicate with. Validate and normalize his feelings and let him know that he can talk to you if there is something bothering him or if he has any questions related to growing up. By communicating openly, you will be giving him an opportunity to discuss and share with you in case he is bothered about something and going through a difficult time.

Query 5

1/30/2020 11:58:04	Female	Age 6 to 8	My daughter is now 6.5 years old. She is very intelligent and talented but since we moved to another city recently, we experience a sudden extreme change in her behavior. She has become stubborn; she demands for things which usually kids of her age don't. e.g. she wants a doll from America. If we don't fulfill her demand immediately, she would cry with screaming alongside and would keep on doing that for hours if we don't say yes we will do what you want. we both are educated parents but don't know how to handle this situation. Because of this sudden hyper change in her behavior, her two-year older brother's attitude has changed drastically. He would not focus on
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		<p>studies because his little sister plays with a tab. We tried to hide the tabs they have and it back fired. I am a teacher so as my wife, even though we apply various strategies in our classrooms with other kids, we are unable to get anywhere in our own confines. This is affecting the overall environment of the household which includes my mother and sister. The most worrisome situation for us is that it has affected their academics a lot. They used to be the best amongst their classmates academically but are now struggling. It may be because the place is new, the school is new, the experience is new and they are resisting change but no; because it has been 4 months and by now one should get adjusted. Kindly give us some concrete tips please.</p> <p>Parents of XYZ Lahore.</p>
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Category: Behavioral Issues

Query by: Parent

Response: Thank you for sharing your concerns. A change can sometimes be daunting and takes time to adjust with, especially for young children as they try to make sense of the changes around them. Please note that children as young as yours are still in the process of experiencing new emotions and learning how to verbalize their concerns. Your daughter acting out may be her way of pointing out her adjustment issues to the new environment.

In such situations the most important way forward is to first figure out what exactly it is about the change that may be bothering your daughter and if its only that change or some other factors also contributing towards the behavior. Through the use of stories, puppets, favorite toy characters try to elicit her views. For example, tell her a story of a bird who has to move to a new nest with her family. Ask her what would the bird be feeling? Draw different feelings to help her identify hers. Ask her questions about what could be the fears the bird may have? Will the bird be excited about something? How can the bird look after herself? Such open-ended questions will allow you to understand her actual worries which you can then address accordingly.

Other things to look into are how she is finding the school, is she able to make friends, etc.?

To address the other general disciplining issues, identify which issues are not worth struggling with your child especially as she grows older. For example, give choices about things such as clothes she wants to wear, what she wants to play

with during her play time while keep some norms more consistent such as eating her meal on time, TV viewing timings etc. Making a routine and some rules in house, are useful ways to avoid the daily struggles about how much TV the children can watch, when they need to get ready for bed, cleaning up their mess etc.

If your child argues unnecessarily, diffuse this unnecessary power struggle by remaining silent at that time. You can express how you are feeling through facial expressions and body language, by stepping away from the situation and talking later. For example, you can say to the child, ‘I think you are angry and upset and I can only speak to you when your talk to me calmly’.

Help her understand and see how her behavior may be causing others to react negatively and how she can change her reaction from being aggressive to assertive. The important thing is not to discourage her from sharing her point of view but to do it in a way that is respectful. You and your spouse can keep a check on your own behavior while dealing with conflict situations as children tend to learn most effectively from patterns of communication of the adults around them.

Whenever you feel that she is managing her emotions better, praise her, as that can be the most powerful way of reinforcing the positive behavior. Good luck!

Query 6

1/31/2020 20:03:22	Female	Age 14 to 18	hi! I am a student of grade 8th and I am quite often depressed at home , usually fine at school, thanks to my friends , but whenever i get home , i get sad and stressed out which doesn't get me concentrated in studies and i often have homework of weeks pending, it really isn't convenient and i sometimes lack behind , overall , i get good grades but i sometimes feel demotivated , any help?
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Category: Mental Health – Depression

Query by: Student

Response: Thank you for sharing your concerns. It appears that you are experiencing some stress which is affecting your mood and concentration and motivation especially towards the studies. Can you think of what may be happening at home that may contribute towards your low mood? How long have you been feeling this way? Please note that persistent low mood can contribute towards lack of concentration and demotivation to carry out tasks.

I encourage you to seek in person support. Talk to your parents about how you are feeling or an elder sibling, cousin or a teacher so that they can guide you and take

you to a counsellor. Some of the teachers in your school have also been trained on children's emotional health issues and they may be able to link you to a sensitive and understanding counsellor. Do write and update us. Best of luck!

Query 7

2/4/2020 10:13:37	Male	Age 9 to 13	I am a teacher at APS&C senior section. I have four kids. One of my son is 11 years old he is very intelligent but very careless. He does not try to put his maximum effort in his studies. His grades are gradually dropping from 98% to 60+.i try to persuade and motivate him but most of the time in vain. He keeps on sitting for long keeping book in front of him but not studying a single word. He is in class 8 so please guide me how to make him a hard-working student.
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Category: Concentration, Attention and Learning issues

Query by: Parent

Response: Thank you for sharing your concerns. Was focusing on studies always a challenge for your son or has this problem started recently? Are there any specific subjects that he has more difficulty in, compared to others? It is better to narrow down the issue, and identify the problem areas.

You also mentioned a lack of motivation. At times multiple factors like the pressure to achieve more marks than before, fear of failure, in addition to parent's approval; do not allow students to concentrate on their studies. Preoccupation with other disturbing life circumstances or stress at home or school can also affect our ability to study. See if this may be contributing to your son's situation. Some of the things that you can help him with are:

- Help him maintain a balanced routine that includes some breaks for fun and relaxing activities. Sometimes a monotonous study routine makes one lose concentration and get demotivated. Encourage him to take short, well-timed breaks in between the study routine
- Help him in setting goals according to the level of difficulty of subjects, and syllabus. Every time he achieves the set goal for the day or week, you can reward him with something that he enjoys doing. Goal setting is an important strategy to boost motivation in students.
- Help him identify his aim from life and see the link between what he does now to what he wants to achieve in the future. It will help him feel encouraged and motivated.

- Teach him skills to manage his stress or any unhealthy expectations he may have from himself. He may also have certain views about how he maybe disappointing his parents. Listen, validate and offer support.

Query 8

2/9/2020 0:06:38	Male	Age 14 to 18	Student not concentrating on his studies.
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Category: Lack of Concentration, Attention & Learning; Adolescent Development Issues

Query by: Unspecified

Response:

The information provided is insufficient to guide you. We would need to know if the lack of interest in studies is a recent change or if the student has had these problems since the beginning of his studies? Is he unable to understand concepts, not pay attention or both?

It would be important to know if he is facing any challenges in grasping the concepts that are being taught or is stressed about anything at home, school, with friends, etc. At times, both things could contribute towards the lack of interest. If the lack of interest in studies is due to difficulties in a subject, you can work in close coordination with him and his teachers so that he can be best helped to overcome the learning challenges. Encourage him to seek help for subjects he does not understand, help him set a daily study routine, break his work tasks into smaller tasks if he loses concentration on longer tasks and make sure he is getting enough sleep and exercise. However, if other non-academic issues are bothering him, support him in better dealing with and communicating his feelings and thoughts. Please also note that the student is passing through the adolescent age. During this time, many children go through a series of normal emotional, physical and social changes. As a result of these changes there is more interest in peers, less interest in studies, spending time with family and adults, frequent arguments and need to exert their own individuality and identity etc. The adolescent period can be overwhelming for adolescents, especially if they lack correct information about the changes that they are experiencing or/and if they feel that there is no one that they can communicate with. Validate and normalize his feelings and let him know that he can talk to you if there is something bothering him or if he has any questions related to growing up. By communicating openly, you will be giving him an

opportunity to discuss and share with you in case he is bothered about something and going through a difficult time.

Query 9

2/9/2020 20:15:56	Female	Age 9 to 13	AOA! I'm a student studying in grade 8th. I'm mostly 9th or 10th in my class and I'm really good at my studies. But due to expectation from my teacher, section head and surrounding peers, I am quite stressed. This stress can make it really hard for me to focus on my studies, daily activities and I also have a hard time sleeping. How can I reduce stress??
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Category: Exam and Studies related Anxiety

Query by: Student

Response: I want to appreciate you for writing about your concerns which goes to show the effort you are putting to become your better self. It must be very frustrating to keep up with the expectations of so many people. Naturally having to meet the expectations of so many people can get one anxious.

It would be important to assess and manage anxiety that is part of daily life and can become especially pronounced before an exam, meeting new people, a doctor's check-up. Anxiety can make us think negatively which in turn affects our decision making and concentration on tasks. Identify and minimize your unhelpful thoughts such as 'I will be a failure', 'I need to be the best', 'My teacher, section head and peers will be so disappointed in me', 'I am so dumb' etc. as they just add to the anxiety. Replace these with helpful thoughts such as 'I am going to try my best', 'I may not know a few things but will work to improve them', 'I don't have to be perfect in everything'. If it helps write down the helpful thoughts and say these out loud while standing in front of the mirror and looking at yourself.

Try to identify physical and other activities that help you calm down and make them part of your daily routine. Anxiety often produces bodily symptoms such as sweating, erratic breathing, fast heartbeat etc. and deep breathing and calming activities reduce these bodily symptoms. Other than that, pursuing a pleasurable interest, talking to friends etc. can also help deal with the stress.

As far as your sleep is concerned try the following:

- Make sure that you are not getting into bed at different timings every night. Try to maintain a regular sleep routine.
- Make sure you are not having caffeine or a heavy meal before bed time
- Make your physical environment comfortable and use your bed only to sleep

- Avoid using too many electronic gadgets while trying to sleep
- If you can't sleep for 30 minutes, instead of waiting for sleep, get out of bed distract yourself with something and then get back to bed
- If thoughts about studies or other worries keep you preoccupied at night, try writing these down in a diary before getting into bed

All the best!
