

ASK THE EXPERT

March 2020

Query 1

4/1/2020 10:05:43	Male	Age 3 to 5	he does not take interest in studies although he is very active in games and other recreational activities
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Category: Concentration, Attention, and Learning Issues

Query by: Unspecified

Response: Please note that he is very young and in the process of learning self-discipline. Do observe what may be the reasons why he does not take interest in studies? Are the studies taught in a boring, non-interactive manner? Is there a lot of harsh disciplining around studies? See how you can make learning fun for him.

Some children have more challenges in paying attention to tasks, learning and grasping concepts as compared to others. Understanding these would help you and the teachers work together to deal with them. Things that you can generally do to help your son study is to make sure that he does not study in a room with too many distractions such as people talking, television, too many toys around etc. Break his main task into smaller tasks so that he can understand them better and is also not distracted. Let him know what he can do once he finishes his work, which will help as an incentive. You can also assess if he is getting ample sleep, nutrition and is not disturbed by any family issues and stressors. All these things can also affect children's ability to pay attention and learn. Check if your own expectations from how much the child should be able to study are age inappropriate and if you are expecting much more than children his age can do. Good luck!

Query 2

3/31/2020 16:38:19	Female	Age 14 to 18	my daughter is thinking about something very deeply. What should I do?\
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Category: Other

Query by: Parent

Response: The information provided is insufficient to guide you. Please give examples of what you consider as 'thinking deeply' and the kinds of challenges that arise from it. To get a better idea, talk to your child if there is something bothering her in terms of academics or personal life.

Query 3

3/31/2020 14:04:08	Female	Age 6 to 8	How to change negative behaviour of kids.
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Category: Behavioral Issues

Query by: Unspecified

Response: The information provided is insufficient to guide you. Please give examples of the behavior that you consider as 'negative' and the kinds of challenges that arise from it.

There are many reasons for children's misbehavior. It would be important to know if the change in the behavior is a recent occurrence and what are the situations in which she misbehaves? Children can behave this way if they are undergoing a stressful situation at home or school including being put down, abused, etc.

How do you deal with her behavior? It is important to stress that if you resort to force or physical punishment then remember that this would need to stop as use of aggression and force makes children believe that its okay to use force when they are angry. It also makes them more stubborn and less resistant to change. Communication with her would be the key to understanding the issue and then addressing it accordingly. Explore the underlying reasons for her behavior and then help her address these accordingly.

Query 4

3/30/2020 17:04:31	Male	Age 6 to 8	Rude behaviour
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Category: Behavioral Issues

Query by: Unspecified

Response: The information provided is insufficient to guide you. Please give examples of the behavior that you consider as 'rude' and the kinds of challenges that arise from it.

Query 5

3/30/2020 17:02:26	Male	Age 3 to 5	My child is very much exhausted and irresponsible.
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Category: Behavioral Issues

Query by: Parent

Response: The information provided is insufficient to guide you. Please give examples of the behavior that you consider as ‘exhausted & irresponsible’ and the kinds of challenges that arise from it. Is your child exhausted because there’s a lot of physical activities he indulges in, and then gets exhausted; or is he exhausted on days where there is no particular physical exertion involved as well? Also please specify what aspects of his behavior are irresponsible, for us to guide you better.

Query 6

3/28/2020 22:33:37	Female	Age 14 to 18	She often becomes angry on small things.
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Category: Behavioral Issues

Query by: Parent

Response: Since how long has your daughter been acting this way? How are you currently addressing this issue? Are you resorting to physical punishment and hitting to deal with the issue or generally to discipline her? If so, then this behavior would need to stop as hitting does not teach children anything about managing their own anger and frustration and in fact makes them angrier. Do explore if there is some other stressor that is bothering her such as a growing up changes, family issues, problems with a friend or at school etc. that might be making her feel this way. If so, the issue would need to be addressed and the feelings will gradually settle.

Query 7

3/28/2020 22:08:56	Male	Age 6 to 8	He became very naughty n want some change every minute
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Category: Behavioral Issues; Lack of Concentration, Attention & Learning

Query by: Unspecified

Response: Has the child always wanted change every minute or is this a recent occurrence? It would be important to get this background information in order to guide you more accurately. Please mention if he also has difficulties in concentrating on studies because of requiring change frequently.

Some children have more challenges in paying attention to tasks, learning and grasping concepts as compared to others. Also, please give examples of the behaviour that you consider as ‘naughty’ and the kinds of challenges that arise from it. Specify if he has trouble waiting for their turn (to speak, and/or to play), and if he has trouble playing quietly. These specifications will help us guide you in

a better way. At times due to adult's expectations of how children should act, behaviors that are often age appropriate and normal are considered a problem. Do check your own expectations from the child in this regard.

Query 8

3/28/2020 20:48:14	Female	Age 14 to 18	My daughter has focus /concentration issue...she loses attention on minor points specially due different or variety of people/ class mates ie complexion, individual styles, dialects/ motherly languages,behaviours though its very common that such things are always different from persons to persons n area to area.
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Category: Adolescent Developmental Issues; Lack of Confidence & Shyness

Query by: Parent

Response: Thank you for writing to us. Please specify and elaborate what you mean by 'focus/concentration issue'. Is this a recent change or she has always been this way? It is important to have more information so that you can be guided most appropriately. Does she also not respond or take part in activities that are outside of the school situation? You will have to keep talking to her in order to understand and help her work through the issues she may be experiencing. Talk to her in a calm manner about your concerns and give her the space to share her own views, concerns and thoughts about the matter.

You may also want to keep in mind the fact that your daughter is in the adolescent age (roughly starting around ten years and above), where many children go through a series of normal emotional, physical and social changes. As a result of these changes there may be more interest in peers; constant comparison with others, 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. It might help if you talk to your daughter in an open and friendly manner about these changes. Make sure to do it in a manner that allows her the space to talk rather than it being a lecture. Validate and normalize her feelings and let her know that she can talk to you if there is something bothering her or if she has any questions related to growing up. By communicating openly, you will be giving her an opportunity to discuss and share with you in case she is bothered about something and going through a difficult time.

Listen to the child's needs and explore reasons that maybe making the child feel under confident e.g. bullying in school, inability to attain the grades he is aiming for, stressors at home, a change in life circumstances etc. These days the media's

unrealistic representation of idealized appearances, and styles also become an element of concern in adolescents. Even when these aspects vary from person to person and area to area, it is important to understand that adolescents maybe facing bullying, exclusion, or a sense of inferiority due to these aspects. Talk to your daughter and encourage her to share her issues with you. It is also important for us to remind ourselves how most children learn at their pace and help her work through these feelings and develop skills to deal with the different situations.

Query 9

3/28/2020 18:12:12	Female	Age 14 to 18	I SOMETIMES AM EMOTIONALLY FEELING TEERIBL,SAD,UPSET AND CAN'T TELL WHY I AM SAD
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Category: Mental Health

Query by: Student

Response: Thank you for sharing your concerns. It appears that you are experiencing some stress which is affecting your mood. Can you think of what may be happening at home, school or otherwise that may be contributing 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. Since you are based in Rawalpindi and have a school counselor on board, we will also advise you to speak to her for guidance. She is trained on children's emotional health issues and may be able to link you to a sensitive and understanding counsellor outside of school, if you wish so. Do write and update us. Best of luck!

Query 10

3/26/2020 15:41:00	Female	Age 14 to 18	My daughter is very sensitive.she gets angry when she is not able to learn and starts crying .she takes tension about exams and board exams taking tension to she become freazed and started to forget things that she have already learned she feel that she don,t know anything she can't do any thing what should I do about her.
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Category: Exam Related Anxiety

Query by: Parent

Response: Thank you for writing about your concerns. It must be very concerning to see your daughter get stressed due to academics, and not being able to help her out in anyway.

Help your daughter understand that anxiety 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 catastrophically which in turn affects our decision making and concentration. Help her identify and minimize her unhelpful thoughts such as 'I will be a failure, 'I need to be the best', 'My parents will be so disappointed in me', 'I am so dumb' etc. as they just add to the anxiety. Help her replace these negative thoughts with helpful and calming 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'.

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

It is important to know that it is also perfectly normal for most children to feel a bit of nervousness and stress related to their studies especially when they have to retake exams. Some of the things that you can help her with are:

- 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 last-minute panic and anxiety experienced by many students.
- Make sure she is getting enough rest and sleep and 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.
- Sometimes a monotonous study routine makes one lose concentration and get demotivated. Encourage her to take short, well-timed breaks in between the study routine, for her own pleasurable interest, talking to friends etc.
- Help her in setting goals according to the level of difficulty of subjects, and syllabus. Every time she achieves the set goal for the day or week, you can reward her with something that she enjoys doing. Goal setting is an important strategy to boost motivation in students.
- 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.

Query 11 & 12

3/28/2020 15:56:10	Male	Age 9 to 13	Not interested in academics
3/25/2020 21:28:43	Male	Age 9 to 13	He doesn't have any interest in study

Category: Concentration, Attention and Learning & Adolescent Development

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, both or any other issue with the learning?

It would be important to know if he is facing any challenges in grasping the concepts that are being taught or is stressed about any thing at home, school, with friends. 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 13

3/20/2020 22:27:37	Female	Age 14 to 18	i am a student of 1st year premedical. i am having a lot of anxiety and stress due the never ending chapters of the books. every day every night the thing that gives me tension is the expectations of my family. i always have the fear of not achieving what my family wants me to do. i have got 95% marks in matric but now in fsc i am getting low grades that increases my fear and stresses my mind a lot. whenever i try to study i only have the thought of losing my grades and biggest fear my family's expecations. i know that i am able to achieve my goal but don't know why i am not trying!!!
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Category: Exam 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 parents, teachers 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. 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.

All the best!

Query 14

3/19/2020 12:02:19	Male	Age 6 to 8	My son in class 2, we have facing problem related to his behaviour, he react in home in normal although extraordinary but in school mostly he seen confused in class and even in school area. We try to convince and motivate but no feel progress. * He start APS from class PG. * My two daughter also student of APS. * I give them Pick and Drop in own car.
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Category: Behavioral Issues

Query by: Parent

Response: The information provided is insufficient to guide you. Please give examples of the behaviour that you consider as ‘confused’ and the kinds of challenges that arise from it. Also mention if this behavior is a sudden change or has he been acting this way since he got admitted to the school. Please check with your child if he’s facing any problem in the school with respect to concentrating on studies, teacher’s behavior, and bullying. These can be a few factors resulting into your child’s demotivation to go to school suddenly.

Query 15

3/5/2020 6:21:50	Female	Age 14 to 18	Aoa my daughter suffering from depression can I meet you
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Category: Mental Health

Query by: Parent

Response: Thank you for sharing your concerns. Please specify what do you mean by ‘depression’ with examples, to better understand to how her behavior has been affected. It appears that your daughter is experiencing some stress. Can you think of what may be happening in life that may contribute towards her stress?

Since you are based in Rawalpindi and the school your daughter is studying in has a school counselor on board, we will also advise you to speak to her for guidance. She is trained on children's emotional health issues and may be able to link you to a sensitive and understanding counsellor for your daughter outside of school, if you wish so. Do write and update us. Best of luck!

Query 17

3/2/2020 22:34:01	Female	Age 14 to 18	My daughter don't like this school and not showing good results in her academics and not participating in other activities as well.
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Category: Other

Query by: Parent

Response: Is this a recent change or she has always been this way? It is important to have more information so that you can be guided most appropriately. Does she also not respond or take part in activities that are outside of the school? You will

have to keep talking to her in order to understand and help her work through the issues she may be experiencing. Talk to her in a calm manner about your concerns and give her the space to share her own views, concerns and thoughts about the matter.

It would be important to know if she is facing any challenges in grasping the concepts that are being taught or is stressed about anything at home, school, with friends etc. If the lack of interest in studies is due to difficulties in a subject, you can work in close coordination with her and his teachers so that she can be best helped to overcome her learning challenges. Encourage her to seek help for subjects she does not understand, help her set a daily study routine, break her work tasks into smaller tasks if she loses her concentration on longer tasks and make sure she is getting enough sleep and exercise.

You may also want to keep in mind the fact that your daughter is in the adolescent age (roughly starting around ten years and above), where many children go through a series of normal emotional, physical and social changes. As a result of these changes there may be 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. It might help if you talk to your daughter in an open and friendly manner about these changes. Make sure to do it in a manner that allows her the space to talk rather than it being a lecture. Validate and normalize her feelings and let her know that she can talk to you if there is something bothering her or if she has any questions related to growing up. By communicating openly, you will be giving her an opportunity to discuss and share with you in case she is bothered about something and going through a difficult time.