# **If Your Child Is Lagging Behind In Studies This Is What You Can Do**

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Academic success has always been considered as a predictor of future job and life success. With the technological advances, the educational scenario has also been changing at a fast pace. Children as young as 3 years are expected to write words leave alone learn to recognize the alphabet! Our Indian schools, place a heavy emphasis on writing and the[child’s writing ability](https://www.kidsstoppress.com/details/tracing-activities-to-start-your-preschooler-on-writing/15145)is nowadays considered to be a reflector of his/her potential. Hence with amounting pressure from the schools and family to perform well academically, the ‘common child’ is caught staring at the headlights. There are thus a growing number of children presenting at child guidance clinics with difficulties related to deteriorating academic performance.

**There are several factors that contribute to difficulties coping with academics. Here are a few outlined:**

* **Lack of interest**: This could arise due to non-interactive, rote based teaching methodologies used by teachers.
* **Mental block**: Sometimes children develop the mind set that a particular subject is difficult and one cannot do well in it. This has been most often observed in the case of mathematics. This block is such that several children are being diagnosed with a condition called [Math Anxiety](https://www.kidsstoppress.com/article-individual/13766)these days!
* **Neuro-developmental concerns**: Some children tend to have other underlying issues causing them to find it difficult to understand concepts. A large percentage tend to have concentration issues which makes it difficult for them to learn concepts. They are observed to be easily distracted. The average attention span for most children when they are engaged in interesting and novel activities is 30 minutes. However, some children are unable to focus for even 10 minutes. They are restless and distracted, show poor sitting tolerance which is usually seen by the kind of excuses they make in order to escape from studies- “Amma, I need to go to drink water”; “Amma, I need to go sharpen my pencil.”

Some children have difficulties that go beyond concentration issues. Educational assessments generally reveal a profile of learning disability (LD) in these children. Three types of LD exist:

* [Dyslexia](https://www.kidsstoppress.com/details/understanding-dyslexia-how-parents-can-support-their-kids/17960): The child has significant difficulties with reading/word decoding and/or reading comprehension.
* Dysgraphia: The child has difficulties with written expression and/or handwriting.
* Dyscalculia: The child has difficulties with mastering arithmetic facts.

These above difficulties occur despite the child having average or above average in Intelligence. A child with any of the above learning problems usually performs two or more grades below his/her current grade. There is help for these children and identifying the difficulties early on would help in planning and providing them with extra educational inputs. This also prevents associated emotional problems as most children with learning disabilities also suffer from socio-emotional issues like low self-esteem, social withdrawal and behavioural difficulties.

**Emotional difficulties:**

Some children have anxiety related to school work arising out of a deep-rooted fear of failure and being unable to meet expectations of self/others with regard to performing well in school. This usually leads to the common phenomena of ‘exam-anxiety’ which affects their performance. Other emotional factors can distract a child from academics. Relationship difficulties with peers, loss of a parent or a loved one, interpersonal problems between parents, being overweight or coping with a medical illness, all can serve to bring down the potential of the child.

**How to help these children?**

* Irrespective of the source of academic difficulties, these children require support to sail through what is considered as the ‘wonderful years of one’s life’.
* Reaching out to a counsellor or clinical psychologist trained in helping children with academic difficulties arising out of the above-mentioned reasons.
* For children with motivational, anxiety, and other emotional concerns, the psychologist would help them master techniques to handle their emotions better as well as change their unrealistic expectations.
* The focus of the sessions would be on building resilience in children thereby making them cope better with their academic and other difficulties.
* For children with neuro-developmental concerns, psycho-educational assessments by psychologists would help in planning for remedial help as well as providing guidance in the form of study skill strategies to cope better.

As a first step towards helping children cope better academically, parents need to recognize as to which of the above-mentioned factors are likely to be impacting their children and accordingly seek help from specialists.

**Every child deserves a happy childhood.**