

The Social and Emotional Development of SCHOOL-AGERS

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Recognize “Red Flag Behaviors”

A student’s behavior will usually alert parents and teachers when there is a problem. These behaviors or changes in behaviors are considered “red flags” which indicate a need for further investigation and attention. However, it can be very difficult to differentiate between behaviors that represent a normal phase of development and behaviors that may indicate a more serious concern.

FOUR GENERAL TYPES OF BEHAVIOR TO LOOK FOR

- ACTING OUT BEHAVIORS:** Aggressive behavior toward self or others; destruction of property; repeat disruptive behaviors; cruelty; volatility.
- WITHDRAWN BEHAVIORS:** Minimal or diminished interest in activities, peers or school work; fearful; depressed; anxious; quiet/ refusing to talk; regression to more immature behaviors; and/ or avoidance of others.
- DEFENSIVE BEHAVIORS:** Manipulation of others; lying; cheating; and/ or avoidance of others.
- SOMATIC COMPLAINTS:** Frequent stomachaches and/ or headaches; an inability to rest/ relax; and/ or excessive sleep.

Developmental Look at “RED FLAG” Behaviors

Preschool and Kindergarten (4 – 6 years)

- Anxious or fearful depressed mood, flat affect, total lack of interest in or withdrawal from other people.
- Inability to separate from primary caregivers.
- Lack of confidence that keeps the child from participating in classroom activities.
- Inability to control behaviors.
- Repeat aggressive behaviors/violence.
- Complete refusal to comply with age appropriate rules and expectations.

School Age (7 – 12 years)

- Noticeable loss of interest in daily activities, peers, schoolwork.
- Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, self-doubt.
- Self-harm behaviors.
- Sexually explicit language/ behaviors.
- Inability to concentrate, easily distracted, unable to pay attention.
- Constant refusal to comply with rules/ expectations.
- Repeat aggressive or destructive behaviors.
- Inability to develop values, morals, relationships,

What To Do When You Notice “Red Flag Behaviors”

-] Document your observations in your own words. Look for triggers and patterns.
-] Talk to the student about your concerns and observations. Express interest and desire to help.
-] Talk to the parent about your concerns, observation, and discussion. Be honest, professional, and caring.
-] Devise a plan to address the “red flag behaviors”.
-] Be diligent in following the plan and acknowledge SMALL STEPS with the student and parent.