Characteristics of Possible Emotional Disturbance Checklist

Some of the characteristics and behaviors seen in children who have emotional disturbances include:

- hyperactivity (short attention span, impulsiveness);
- aggression/self-injurious behavior (acting out, fighting);
- withdrawal (failure to initiate interaction with others; retreat from exchanges of social interaction, excessive fear or anxiety);
- immaturity (inappropriate crying, temper tantrums, poor coping skills); and
- learning difficulties (academically performing below grade level).
- distorted thinking
- excessive anxiety
- bizarre motor acts
- abnormal mood swings
- an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances;
- a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
- a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- low self-esteem and poor social skills.
- individual strengths and areas of challenge with academic tasks.
- few satisfactory relationships with parents, teachers, siblings, or peers (Hardman, 1990).
- difficulty adapting to home, school, and community environments.
- often use inappropriate ways to get attention, such as talking back to adults, refusing to do work, or making jokes.
difficulty trusting adults and peers. These students require consistent and fair rules and consequences.

repeated academic and social failure

difficulty attending to a task or may seem anxious about work.

may experience intense feelings such as anger, humiliation

Academic Symptoms Exhibited in the Classroom

Disruptive to classroom activity.

Impulsive.

Inattentive, distractible.

Appears pre-occupied.

Disregards all classroom rules.

Poor concentration.

Extreme resistance to change and transitions.

Speaks out, repeatedly.

Verbally or Physically Aggressive.

Bullies and intimidates others.

Regular truancy from school.

Dishonest, consistently blames others.

Unable to work in groups.

Engages in self injurious behavior.

Has no regard for personal space and belongings.

Persistently tries to manipulate situations.

NOTE: Many children who do not have emotional disturbances may display some of these same behaviors at various times during their development.

However, when children have serious emotional disturbances, these behaviors continue over long periods of time. Their behavior thus signals that they are not coping with their environment or peers. If you observe such behaviors contact the school psychologist immediately to discuss your concerns and observations. Never make a diagnosis of emotional disturbance or give an opinion since this is something that is only allowed by a psychologist, psychiatrist or mental health clinic.