

Mental Health Checklist for Parents and Educators

Art

- If a child is visually oriented, what about an art program after school for your children or private lessons?
- Have you looked into professional art therapy?
- Do you have art books available at home for your child?
- Can you spend some time teaching your children to enjoy art?

Diet?

- Does my child have breakfast every day?
- If my child has breakfast at school, do I know that he or she actually eats breakfast every day?
- What is he or she eating for breakfast at home or school?
- Can improvements be made in diet and nutrition?
- Does my child consume a lot of sugar in different forms?
- Caffeine through soda or coffee/tea?

Green Therapy

- Have I included “green time” in my child’s daily or weekly schedule?
Parks, walking, hiking?
- Does my child get exercise at least several times a week at other times besides school? Is it something that is lacking?

Environmental Contaminants

- Is lead poisoning a possibility?
- Other environmental contaminants?
- Can I contact the local lead poisoning agency for testing if my home or apartment might lead to susceptibility to lead or other poisoning?
- Is my child very sensitive to additives in food?
- If so (a small percentage of children), can adjustments be made in a balanced way for a more healthful diet?

Education

- Am I satisfied that my child is receiving the individualized attention he needs within the school system?
- Do I take an active interest in his or her school work, sitting down and helping with homework after school?
- Do I communicate regularly with the teacher?
- Does the school have an after-school program to help with homework or reading?
- Is there a program for free tutoring with the school or school district?

- Does the local or county library have any special programs in tutoring or reading that can be of help?
- Are there provisions within the school system for a personal assistant for my child?
- Is there a special summer program or camp that my child could benefit from?
- Are there academies within the school district where there may be less children in the classroom or the atmosphere of which might better facilitate my child's special needs?

Social, educational, spiritual and support team

- Have I made any efforts for him to have wholesome association with other children in the community, congregation, or school or is he or she largely isolated?
- Have I looked into music lessons for my child after school or on the weekends?
- Have I looked into mentoring programs especially if the child's father is absent?
- How much time do I spend with my child giving him/her undivided attention ?
- If my child is a preteenager, do I spend time every day or night reading with him or her?
- If the child has supportive grandparents, does he spend time with them regularly?
- Have I instilled in my child a value system and am I providing spiritual training?
- Would a regular Bible study give a child needed support or mentoring?
- What about seeking the assistance of a professional coach?
- If my child needs the help of a psychologist or therapist, do I realize that medicine is an option, not a requirement?

Sexuality

- In the case of a teenager or even some pre-teens, is he or she sexually active?
- Might your teenager (or child) be dabbling in or be exposed to pornography on the Internet or television, with friends, elsewhere?
(Exposure to pornography can make it difficult to concentrate in school and can contribute to symptoms related to some mental health difficulties.)

Discipline

- Am I consistent?
- Do I give any discipline and firm but reasonable limits? Is the discipline administered with love, with firmness?

Music

- What music does my children or teenager listen to? For some teenagers (and children) music can be a strong force.
- How much time does he or she spend daily or weekly with music?
Ipods _____ TV _____ Internet _____ Concerts _____
Nightclubs _____ Dance parties _____ Combined _____

Electronics

- How many hours of television does my child watch every day? _____
- How many hours of video games does my child watch every day? _____
- How many of hours of movies does my child view each week? _____
- What types of movies does he watch? _____
- Is my child exposed to violence on any of these forms of the media? _____
- Cartoon violence?
- Has he developed a fondness for fantasy creatures, or violent fantasies?
(suggestion from Dr. Armstrong's Book-The Myth of the A.D.D. Child-50 Ways of to Improve Your Child's Behavior and Attention Span Without Drugs, Labels or Coercion. A good reference book.)
- How many hours a day does my child spend on online communities such as MySpace?
- If a child stays late daily after school, how is he using his time, how does he use the computer system at school after _____ hours?
- What adjustments can be made?
- Do you have parental control filtering software installed on your computer?

Emotional and Support

- If a child has deep rooted emotional wounds from the present or past, has he or she opened up and talked to you, to a counselor?
- Is there professional support for talk therapy available in school? (Talk therapy – Interpersonal therapy- is sometimes especially helpful for teens).
- Would you or your family benefit from family therapy, family counseling, or a support group?