

Frequently Asked Questions



Below are some frequently asked counseling related questions. Please feel free to contact me if your question or concern is not adequately addressed below.

How can the elementary school counselor help my child?

School counselors at the elementary school level support students in five key developmental areas: academic, personal, interpersonal, career, and health. School counselors address how student concerns and needs impact a student's ability to access education and to succeed in the learning environment. If you are uncertain as to whether or not your child's school counselor can work with the concern that your child is having, contact the school counselor and set up a meeting to discuss the concern. If it is not an area in which the counselor has expertise he or she may be able to offer you some additional resources to explore

Is the behavior that my child is exhibiting "normal?"

Many parents wonder if their child's behavior is "normal," especially if the child in question is their first child, or behaves differently from their previous children. During the younger years a child's development is often very individual. Therefore what constitutes "normal" may be very different for different children. Instead of asking yourself if your child's behavior is normal, consider these other questions. Is my child progressing in his or her interests and abilities? Has my child lost the ability to do something he/she could do before? Does my child engage in activities and thoughts that are harmful/hurtful to him/herself? Is my child's ability to interact with others progressing? Answering these questions should give you a better understanding of whether or not your child's development is continuing at an appropriate pace.

Where can I get help if I have an academic or behavioral concern about my child?

In the elementary school years behavioral and academic difficulties in children are often linked. Therefore, whether the concern that you have is primarily academic or behavioral it is a good idea to investigate all possible avenues of information to best understand what may be going on with your child. Several individuals can assist you in this investigation, including your child's classroom teacher, his/her school counselor, your pediatrician, other teachers who work with your child, and coaches or other adults who

see your child on a regular basis outside of the school setting.

How can I help my child make improvements on his/her report card?

A report card is a means of communication. It is a tool to help parents and students understand how students are functioning across certain areas, and where improvement is needed. It is also important to remember that it is only one measure of student progress. The first step in helping children to improve their report card performance is to look at other measures. Consider your child's daily progress in the area you are examining. Look at reports from teachers, comments on assignments, the quality and correctness of completed tasks, daily school interactions, attitudes towards school, tardiness, attendance, and any discipline concerns that have been mentioned previously. Examining these areas will help to broaden and deepen the picture of your child's achievement. Then, talk to people who have first hand knowledge of your child's performance, beginning with your child, and including your child's classroom teacher, and his/her school counselor. After gathering this information take some time to consider whether you need more information to fill out the picture or whether you have enough information to develop a plan of action.

How can I help my child to make friends?

The first step in helping your child with friendships to talk to your child. Children, like adults, vary greatly in their opinions regarding friendships. Explore the following, and other similar questions with your child: What is your idea of a good friend? What kind of friends do you like to spend time with? What makes you a good friend? How do kids make friends? How do you know when someone is a friend? The answers your child provides during this conversation can guide you as you and your child work together to develop a plan to improve their satisfaction with their friendship. Keep in mind that your child's ideas regarding friendships may not match your own. A child who enjoys having one good friend at a time may have parents who like to be social and maintain many friendships or vice versa. It is important to explore your own thoughts about social relationships as you help your child identify his/her own preferences. It is also important that your child help to determine any steps that are taken on his/her behalf, either by him/herself, or by another person. Involving your child in a meaningful way empowers self-advocacy and demonstrates that you have confidence in his/her abilities.

What do I do if my child is being bullied or teased?

The first step in resolving any relationship conflict should always be honest discussion and open lines of communication. First talk to your child and *listen* to their concerns and experiences. Remind your child that you are there to support them. Second, *empower* your child. In school we learn about the DeBug model:



After encouraging your child to follow those steps, follow up with your concerns. Talk to your child and communicate with those involved in their life. Teaching your child to be resourceful and independent is a great life skill. However after talking to your child you should also communicate with the teacher, counselor, and administration as needed. If the problem continues and you've tried all of those steps then you always have the option of filling out a bully report form. The bullying report form can be found here:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/forms/230-35.shtm>

I've heard about a 504, what is that?

Section 504 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a law. A 504 stipulates possible methods or materials to support students with medical needs or other special considerations. Please see MCPS' website to find info about their definition of a 504:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/student services/504/index.shtm>

What is an EMT? How about the CPS team?

EMT stands for Educational Management Team. This is a team of professionals from the MCPS school system which often includes the counselor, administration, the special ed resource team, the classroom teacher and the student's family. The CPS or Collaborative Problem Solving team is another term for the same group of individuals. The team's goal is to work collaboratively to find the most accurate and appropriate plan to meet all of a student's needs.