



## Signs a child may need help

Is it “just a phase,” or does a child need the support of a mental health professional? Recognizing these signs may be first step.

### Academic difficulties

- Struggles with reading, spelling, writing, and/or math
- Struggles with peers and social relationships
- A marked decline in academic performance
- Difficulty following directions and staying focused
- Difficulty processing, organizing, or retaining information
- Inability to manage homework or meet deadlines

### Emotional difficulties

- Sadness, hopelessness, or anger for no obvious reason
- Withdrawal from social relationships and activities
- Cries frequently or overreacts to experiences
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or anxiety
- Unable to cope with a loss
- Having unexplained fears
- Excessive concerns about physical appearance
- Frightened that his/her mind is controlled or is out of control
- Worry about being harmed or hurting others

### Behavioral signs

- Difficulty controlling impulses, sitting still, or focusing attention
- Losing interest in things once enjoyed
- Racing thoughts that are nearly too fast to follow
- Unexplained changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- Persistent nightmares
- Suicidal thoughts, cutting, or other self-harm
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Engaging in physical fights
- Severely restricting calories or exercising obsessively
- Engaging in risky, life threatening activities

MCYAF offers family assessments for a variety of situations, including help for youth who persistently experience one or more of the above. Visit [mcyaf.org](http://mcyaf.org) or call (877) 488-6293 to learn more.