

HEALTH

Medical problems often source of misbehavior

By Vivian Owens

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You shake your head in frustration.

First you punish Eddie for flying paper airplanes in school while the rest of the class reads a funny story. Then, you take the opposite stance, offering him a reward for reading along with the others.

Unfortunately, his teacher says Eddie's behavior is still getting worse.

All this is hard for you to understand, because your Eddie has always been obedient and attentive. At home, he's still good, little Eddie. Is it possible that your son's undesirable classroom behavior has roots in other problems — problems he doesn't know how to solve?

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activities as basic training for child care providers, linking individual child care providers to centers for education and support, assisting child care providers in meeting accreditation and licensing requirements, supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities in child care and linking child care providers with health care professionals. The president is also requesting funding to expand Head Start over the next five years to serve one million children by 2002, and he wants to double to 80,000 the number of infants and toddlers in Early Head Start.

How will my child's day care environment be improved?

The president has encouraged states to build on the successful child care model the military uses. This would encompass more support for states to step up enforcement of their health and safety standards, including unannounced inspections; background checks on providers; establishment of a Child Care Provider Scholarship Fund for some 50,000 students each year who are working toward a child care credential; and initiating a research fund that would broaden what we know about child care. There would also be a hotline that parents can dial up to find out about their local child care resource and referral.

What's in store for older children?

Older children will benefit from an expansion of after-school care programs. This would be done through providing more money to expand or add before- and after-school programs for children through school-community partnerships. In addition, a pilot program involving several federal agencies collaborating on after-school funding will be tested in five cities.

Where can I go to learn more about this proposal?

Information is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/press/980107.htm>.

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Medical problems can sometimes interfere with a child's learning or school performance. But often parents ignore them.

A child complaining of headaches, squinting, rubbing his eyes and getting close up on words, may have vision problems.

Inner ear problems may cause imbalance, causing the child to topple over occasionally.

Recurrent sore throats, breathing through the mouth and recurrent ear infections often indicate tonsil or adenoid problems.

Your bed-wetter may not be as lazy as you think. He may have a bladder or kidney infection or a defect in the anatomical development of the urinary system.

Has the teacher inquired about your

daughter's tiredness? This, though she goes to bed at eight o'clock and gets a full 11 hours of sleep? Consider a checkup if this continues. Extreme fatigue can be a sign of a more serious problem.

The above are only a sampling of medical disturbances that may be at the root of a child's learning problems or poor performance.

You should become a detective when it comes to investigating your child's learning problems and remember, medical conditions can interfere with his or her's performance at school.

Vivian Owens is the author of "Parenting For Education" (\$6) and "Create A Math Environment."

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