



September 2011

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Advantage EAP expands hours in the New River Valley!!!

Advantage EAP has additional hours in Radford at 22 Montgomery Street. Call 1-800-699-9396

Online Resources may be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

## Back to School



It's that time of year again! Labor Day is here and its time to send the kids back to school. While getting back into the swing of things and going back to the classroom are usually pleasant experiences, some children may face stress and anxiety. Bullying, school anxiety, and separation anxiety from parents can greatly affect children of all ages. This newsletter will explore the various issues a child can experience.

### Bullying

**Bullying**- knowingly causing pain to others -a pattern of repeated aggressive behaviors with negative intent from one child to another where there is a power difference.

- Aggression can be physical- pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, punching
- Aggression can be verbal- name-calling, taunts, threats, ridicule, insults

#### **If You Suspect A Child Is Being Bullied:**

- Investigate as much as possible.
- Take a look at your options.
- Never tell a child to stand up to a bully by himself/herself because the balance of power is too great and puts a child in a lose-lose situation.
- You may need to notify school authorities and become a "squeaky wheel" to stop the bully.
- Once the authorities are notified, be very aware as to what is happening so that you can help, support and protect the child.
- Assess strengths of the child and find an area for excelling as this increases self-esteem.
- Create social options such as clubs, teams and church groups.
- Seek professional help if necessary and/or file legal charges if necessary.

## Locations:

2727 Electric Road, Ste 100  
Roanoke, VA 24018

200 Professional Park Drive  
Unit 1  
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Alleghany Regional Hospital  
1 ARH Lane, Room 529  
Low Moor, VA 24457

22 Montgomery Street  
Radford, VA 24141

## Contact Us:

Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30-5:00pm. Evening hours are available on a limited basis.

(540) 989-6605 or 800-699-9396

Nights and weekends call  
RESPOND:

(540) 776-1100 or 800-541-9992

Advantage EAP does not necessarily endorse any products or services mentioned

## If A Child Is A Bully:

- Take the problem seriously as bullying when young can continue with serious consequences later in life in relationships and criminal acts.
- Look for underlying problems as to why anger, inferiority and frustration are present. Is this a chain reaction from how the child is treated?
- Do not allow behaviors that are abusive to others.
- Teach respect, kindness and sensitivity.
- Be the role model for these positive behaviors yourself.
- Discourage media (TV, movies, computer games) that teach violence in the home.
- Seek professional help if necessary;
- File legal charges if you are being bullied physically by your child.

## School Anxiety

For some children, school can be an overwhelming and scary place. Children may be fearful of the uncertainty that the new school year brings, some may fear awkward social situations or trying to “fit in” to a particular peer group, or they may find the new school workload confusing or overwhelming. Parents might find the following tips helpful.

- **Acknowledge the problem.** Does hearing, "Don't worry!" help when you're anxious about something? It probably doesn't comfort your child much, either. The most important thing you can do for a child experiencing school anxiety is to acknowledge that her fears are real *to her*. If nothing else, you'll ensure that she won't be afraid to talk to you about them.
- **Ask, "What three things are you most worried about?"** Making your request specific can help your child start to sort through a bewildering array of fears and feelings. If he's unable to name the things that are *most* worrisome, have him tell you any three things, or the most recent three things.
- **Ask, "What three things are you most excited about?"** Most kids can think of *something* good, even if it's just going home at the end of the day. But chances are your child does have things she really enjoys about school that just get drowned out by all the scary stuff. Bring those good things out into the light.
- **Do some role-playing.** Once you have some concrete examples of anxiety-provoking events, help your child figure out an alternate way to deal with them. Discuss possible scenarios and play the part of your child in some role-playing exercises, letting him play the part of the demanding teacher or bullying classmate. Model appropriate and realistic responses and coping techniques for your child.
- **Keep the lines of communication open.** Let your child know that he/she can always talk to you, no matter what. It's not always necessary even to have solutions to his/her problems. Sometimes just talking about things out loud with a trusted adult makes them seem less threatening. And if the situation does become overwhelming for your child, you want to be the first to know about it.

- **Understand the value of tears.** Crying can be a great stress reliever. It flushes out bad feelings and eases tension. It's hard to see your child crying, and your first instinct may be to help him stop as soon as possible. But after the tears have all come out, your child may be in a particularly open and receptive mood for talking and sharing. Provide a soothing and sympathetic presence, but let the crying run its course.
- **Resist the urge to fix everything.** There are some instances in which parents do have to take action. If your child is in a class that's too challenging, or is having trouble because an IEP isn't being followed, there are steps you can take. If a teacher or a classmate is truly harrasing your child, you will want to follow up with that. But you'll also want to teach her that some things in life just have to be dealt with, even though they stink. Fix only what's really badly broken.



## Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is a developmental stage during which the child experiences anxiety when separated from the primary caregiver (usually the mother).

### Symptoms

- Excessive distress when separated from the primary caregiver
- Nightmares
- Reluctance to go to school or other places because of fear of separation
- Reluctance to go to sleep without the primary caregiver nearby
- Repeated physical complaints
- Worry about losing or harm coming to the primary caregiver

For older children who have not outgrown separation anxiety within the normal developmental timetable or who have regressed to it under stress, effective treatments may include:

- Anti-anxiety medications
- Changes in parenting techniques
- Counseling for the parents and child

Treatment for severe cases may include:

- Family education
- Family therapy
- Individual psychotherapy



**Advantage EAP is a benefit provided by your employer. There are counselors with Advantage EAP who have the training and experience to help with these issues.**

**Please contact your Advantage EAP at:**

**(540) 989-6605 or 800-699-9396**

**Or visit our website at: [www.psychhealthroanoke.com](http://www.psychhealthroanoke.com)**

**Or our Blog at: <http://psychhealthroanoke.blogspot.com/>**

**Resources from this newsletter:**

- 1. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0002509/>**
- 2. [http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/sep\\_anxiety.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/sep_anxiety.html)**
- 3. <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>**
- 4. [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/problems/bullies.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/problems/bullies.html)**
- 5. <http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/features/school-stress-anxiety-children>**

