





A colorful autumn-themed illustration. On the left, a red brick barn with a yellow bell in a small tower sits on a green hill. A yellow school bus is driving on a winding road that curves across the landscape. The road is marked with a dashed yellow line. In the foreground, there are several stylized trees with orange and yellow foliage. In the bottom right corner, there are several pumpkins. The sky is light blue with a few falling leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and green.

# Are You Equipped to Address Student Mental Health Needs in the Classroom?





# TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- Impact of mental health on school-age children
  - What is my role as an educator?
  - Resources for educators and school staff
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# Factors Surrounding Mental Health in Students

- According to the CDC, mental health includes children's mental, emotional, and behavioral well-being. It affects how children think, feel, and act. It also plays a role in how children handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.
  - What does this look like for a student as part of the instructional day?
  - Commonly diagnosed mental health disorders in children include ADD/ADHD, anxiety, behavior problems, and depression.
  - How do these manifest themselves?
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# How Are Academic Success and Mental Health Related?

Learning disabilities do not operate in a vacuum. Often, there are co-occurring mental health concerns or other neurodevelopmental disorders present. For example:

- We know 20-40% of students with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) also have reading disabilities and visa-versa.
- Children with specific learning disabilities exhibit mental health challenges at a disproportionately higher rate than their same-age peers without learning challenges.
- 70% of students with learning disabilities experience higher anxiety symptoms than students without learning disabilities, with anxiety and reading disorders co-occurring in approximately 1 in 4 students.
- A similar picture exists for depressive symptoms, as adolescents with depression are more likely to struggle academically, and children with learning disabilities can be 3x more likely to report depressed symptoms.

# What is Your Preparedness in Addressing Mental Health?



## Case Study #1

**Chuck lived with his parents and younger brother in a small rural community in Oregon. Shortly after his fifth birthday, Chuck's parents enrolled him in a general education kindergarten class at a nearby elementary school. Chuck had several behavioral challenges in kindergarten. His teacher reported that Chuck frequently had difficulty following directions and would sometimes throw a tantrum when he did not "get his way." He also had problems getting along with his peers. Chuck did not like to "wait for his turn" or "stand in line" with his class. Chuck's mother reported that he displayed similar behaviors at home. For example, his mother was concerned that Chuck often "did not listen" to her or her husband. He often tried to "be the boss" with his brother—both at home and during family outings in the community. Chuck's problem behaviors continued and escalated in first grade. He is also now exhibiting difficulty academically in all areas, specifically, reading comprehension and math computation.**

## Case Study #2

Juanita lived with her father, mother, and five siblings in a large city in Arizona. She was enrolled in a general education first grade class at her local neighborhood school. Juanita qualified for Title 1 supports, including the free and reduced-price lunch program, but did not receive special education. Juanita's first grade teacher reported that she was an average student academically. The teacher reported that Juanita generally paid attention and tried hard to complete her seatwork and other academic assignments each day. Juanita's reading and math skills were near grade level and similar to those of most of the other students in her class. However, her teacher also reported that Juanita had several behavioral challenges at the beginning of first grade. Her teacher indicated that Juanita shy and timid, often refusing to "stand up for herself" when interacting with her peers. She rarely volunteered to participate in group activities in class or on the playground. Instead, Juanita would often avoid or withdraw from social situations, especially those requiring her to work together with other students.

# Supporting Student Mental Health

## Identification

- Recognizing changes
- Take action

## Classroom Environment

- Peer interaction
- Safe space
- Student tools

## Other Resources



- Where do I go next?





# Resources

## Professional Support





- School counselor
  - Intervention Assistance Team
  - Referral for 504/Special Education
  - Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
  - Other Examples
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# Resources

## In the Classroom

- Behavior Logs/Charts
  - Goal Setting By Student
  - Digital Resources
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# References

- [Data and Statistics on Children's Mental Health | CDC](#)
- [Microsoft Word - Handout 2 Case Studies.docx \(ufl.edu\)](#)
- [NIMH » Digital Shareables on Child and Adolescent Mental Health \(nih.gov\)](#)
- [Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs \(PDF\)](#)
- [The Connection Between Mental Health and Academic Success \(groveslearning.org\)](#)



# EDU PrepSpace

**Angelica Medrano, Owner/Dyslexia Tutor/Educational Advocate**  
**Emma McMorris, Educational Advocate**

**Contact Us:**

[EDU PrepSpace](http://EDUPrepspace.com) - Website

[info@eduprepspace.com](mailto:info@eduprepspace.com) - Email

**712 E 14<sup>th</sup> St**  
**Houston, TX 77008**