

# Kenneth A. De Luca, PhD. & Associates, Inc.

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**KENNETH A. DE LUCA, PH.D.  
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*Psychological, Counseling & Educational Services*

# What Is Typical Behavior For An Elementary School Child?

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# Important Predicting Factors

- A large predictor of whether or not a child is going to experience emotional or behavioral difficulties based on two key factors:  
**Biological & Environmental**
- **Biological:** Meaning our genetics. Is there a history of anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues in your family? (Blood relatives!)
- **Environment:** Meaning our influences from family, friends, and society. Is the child's environment validating or invalidating? For example, is the child able to manifest his or her emotional state? Are the child's friends and family able to understand or recognize these manifestations?
- Research supports that having a genetic predisposition for having a mental health issue combined with an invalidating environment is a large predictor that emotional/behavioral problem(s) may occur

# A Child's Environment

When referring to the child's environment, it is important to take into consideration:

- **Sleep:**
  - Is your child getting adequate sleep?
  - Structure is key!
    - Does your child have a regular bedtime?
- **What Can YOU Control?**
  - Sometimes in families the parents might be on different routines or have different ideas of parenting
  - For example, having separated parents, living in separate households
  - Remember to keep in mind that only YOU can control what YOU choose to reinforce
- **Communication between family members**
  - Healthy co-parenting is always an excellent model of how family members need to communicate
  - If there is trouble in communication – counseling can include exploration of family dynamics and offer new coping skills

# Other Suggestions For Enhancing A Child's Environment

- Regular Routine! (Structure!)
- Regular Bedtime!
- Limit Screen Time Before Bedtime!
  - Try Music 🎵 or Reading 📖 Instead!
- Have A Family Calendar In Sight!
- Organization!

# A Child's Behaviors

- **Anxiety**

- Research supports that an increase of anxiety/depression is typical during the early childhood stage due to growth and developmental factors:
  - Children begin to face more stressful situations
    - For example, a new encounter
  - Children becoming more conscious of their internal states, which they in turn become more likely to express these internal states

- **Meltdowns/Tantrums**

- What is the child's message that they are trying to get to you?
- Often, children can become so emotionally overwhelmed to the point that they lose control

# A Child's Behavior Cont'd.

- **Impulsiveness**
  - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
  - Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- **Bullying – Evident With Coercive Behaviors**
  - Males:
    - More apparent, not usually about relationships, & typically are more physical/aggressive
  - Females:
    - Exclusionary behaviors most likely, usually about relationships (e.g. exclusionary behaviors), more verbal, & more passive-aggressive

# My Child Wasn't Invited To The Birthday Party – Why & What Should I Do?

- **A Breakdown From Professional Experience**
- **Article: Psychology Today – Successful Play Date**
- **How Do I Structure A Play Date? Some Ideas!**
  - Cooking/Baking
  - Game Night
  - Dance Party
  - Crafts
  - Movie/TV Shows (with good moral lessons, positive behaviors modeled)
  - Any other family activity! (Pinterest always has good suggestions!)

# Thank You For Your Time!!



## Questions?

# Resources

<http://www.kidpointz.com/parenting-articles/elementary-school/> - Kid Pointz

- Free downloadable charts, articles, etc.
- Anxiety, bullying, and much more!

## Other Sources Available On Request

Barker, E. D., & Maughan, B. (2009). Differentiating early-onset persistent versus childhood-limited conduct problem youth. *The American Journal Of Psychiatry*, 166(8), 900-908. doi:10.1176/appi.ajp.2009.08121770

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Eklund, K. (2012). Early identification of behavioral and emotional problems in children and youth. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 72, 7725.