

The Next Damien: Spotting Behavioral Problems In Young Children

The physical well-being of a newborn baby or child is relatively easy to determine. Simple examinations and observations are often enough to tell if there's something physically wrong with a young child. However, that same ease of identification does not extend to the arena of mental health. Due to the nature of a child's mind and the way human minds mature, it can often be difficult to determine if someone has some sort of anxiety problem or personality disorder at an early age. These problems can be identified later on in life, but in a few cases, by the time this is done, the problem is already deeply-rooted into the psyche of the patient in question.

Most of the time, things like behavioral disorders are easily skimmed over by doctors whenever children are the patient. This is because a number of mental health disorders have symptoms that coincide with what are seen to be typical childhood behaviors. These can include things such as temper tantrums, fits of uncontrolled anger, and poor impulse control, which are also common facets of childhood. Most doctors would simply brush off these signs as ordinary aspects of development, things that the child will eventually grow out of. This could easily be the truth in a number of cases, but that does not mean that there isn't a percentage of these instances that cannot be linked to things like anxiety disorders and other potentially serious mental health issues.

One of the core problems of spotting problems such as behavioral disorders is the symptoms. Aside from symptoms that can easily be identified as typical childhood responses, some of the clearer signs are only manifest in older patients. Things such as stealing, conduct disorder, vigilantism, and vandalism are all signs that can only definitively be identified in older children. In younger ones, vandalism may be little more than the natural curiosity some children have towards taking their toys apart, an outcrop of their natural curiosity. This reliance on signs that can either be mistaken or do not immediately manifest are the main issues that bottleneck attempts to establish a system for diagnosing children with mental health disorders.

The need here is for a way to spot children with these problems early on, hopefully before such problems escalate into juvenile delinquency. The previously stated problem makes this a difficult task, with even the most obvious sign, antisocial behavior, being perfectly normal for a child. There are currently no established signs that help professionals determine whether the behavior is stemming from some sort of problem, or if it is still within the definition of "normal." For the time being, there are a few warning signs that people should be made aware of when attempting to see if a child has a problem.

The first stems from the temper tantrums that children throw. Children are quick to anger, but are also just as quick to revert back to normal. If a child requires adult support in recovering from a fit, this can be a sign of some deeper problem. Continued defiance is also taken as a possible sign of a behavioral disorder, since most children will back away after being reprimanded once, while problem children will continue to defy authority figures.

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