



WHY IS MY CHILD STRUGGLING IN SCHOOL

By Renee Chillcott, LMHC

Trying to figure out why your, smart, loving and caring child is failing, underachieving, or just plain refusing to go to school, can be a frustrating and exhausting endeavor for parents. What is the solution? Teachers suggest testing or medication, doctors suggest testing or medication, your friends and family suggest testing or medication. Can they all be right? Can they all be wrong? The short answer is, no, they are correct. Yes, you read that correctly, testing may be warranted and medication may be helpful but let's not just jump into that, first, let's find out what the problem is.

- Is it Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?
- Is it an Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)?
- Is it Anxiety and/or Depression?
- Is it a Central Processing Disorder?
- Or is it an Auditory/Visual Processing Disorder?
- Could it be a Sensory Processing Disorder?
- Or does my child have a low IQ?
- Are they on the Autism Spectrum?
- Or are they lazy or oppositional and a behavioral problem?

The truth of the matter is, if your child is struggling in school, they may have one, several, all, or none of these. In most cases, children of all ages want to learn. We are programmed as human beings to value education. It's only when what we want is inconsistent or incongruent with how we perform, that an issue will arise. For example, if a child is 5 years old and hasn't developed language, we say that there is a developmental delay and investigate the causes. The same holds true for a child that is struggling to learn. Instead of constantly demanding that the child change their behavior so that they can learn, instead it is more important to look for the reasons why they can't. Detecting the inconsistency is the key to helping them succeed.

HOW DO I KNOW? AND WHAT DO I DO TO FIX IT?

There are different ways that you can determine what is happening with your child to prevent school success. They can be evaluated by teachers; evaluated by school staff; sent for specialized testing; evaluated by a physician; or by a therapist. You may also be able to use Google, search the internet, and read books that will point you to a reason or cause. However, the best, most effective, way of know what is going on inside your child's brain is to look at it. With NEUROFEEDBACK and a QEEG (Quantitative EEG or Brain Map), it becomes possible to see the neural patterns in the brain that help us learn, focus, concentrate, and even follow directions. Once we identify the patterns that are not working properly NEUROFEEDBACK TRAINING (Brain Biofeedback Training) teaches the brain to correct these patterns. We can also point you in the direction of additional modalities that will support your child's learning and help correct the brain patterns.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT TO SEE CHANGE?

Symptom relief with Brain Training can vary from person to person; some common improvements we see in people with learning issues are:

- Increased Focus time
- Less Homework Struggle
- Increased amount of completed assignments
- Improved working memory
- Calmer and less fidgeting
- Improved grades
- More compliance
- Better motivation

WHAT IS NEUROFEEDBACK?

Neurofeedback, also known as EEG biofeedback, has been studied and practiced since the late 60's. Neurofeedback is exercise for your brain. It allows you to see the frequencies produced by different parts of your brain in real-time and then through auditory feedback, teaches the brain to better regulate itself. Neurofeedback can be used to help detect, stimulate, and/or inhibit activity in the brain safely and without medication. It can help restore a wider "range of motion" in brain states, much like physical therapy does for the body.

While the client sits comfortably watching a movie or pictures appear on the screen (a calm and focused state), the EEG equipment measures the frequency or speed at which electrical activity moves in the areas where electrodes have been placed. This information is sent to the therapist's computer. The therapist is then able to determine what frequencies are out of balance. For example, when the EEG shows that you are making too many "slow" or "sleepy" waves (delta/theta) or too many "fast" waves (high beta), the therapist adjusts a reward band to encourage more balanced activity. This encouragement or "reward" happens through the auditory reinforcement of "beeps".

It is important to understand that the neurofeedback approach does not magically "cure" or "fix" anything. We teach and guide your brain to produce frequencies which help it relax and/or focus. We provide the brain with gentle "challenges" and encouragement in a user-friendly, stress-free format so it learns to regulate or shift to healthier states more smoothly on its own at the appropriate time. This new behavior carries over into the classroom and at home.

WHAT IS A QEEG (Quantitative EEG) OR BRAIN MAP?

The QEEG is a quantitative EEG. It's also called a brain map and does just that...it gives us a map of what is going on with the entire brain at one time. We attach electrodes to the entire head, 19 spots, and then record the brain waves with eyes open for 5 minutes and with eyes closed for 10 minutes. This recording is then read and analyzed. We provide a summary of significant findings as well as a full report that shows the results of analyzing the data several different ways. The brain activity is



not only compared by individual locations over the entire head, but we can also look at connections, symmetry, how different parts are communicating and all of this data is compared to a database of peers (same sex, handedness and age). It can help us see what areas need to be addressed more efficiently than just training spot by spot. We don't always need this data to start making changes in symptoms, but we do recommend it in treatment to identify all areas that need improvement. A QEEG can also be helpful information when diagnosing and/or trying to decide the best medication/supplement recommendations.

IS THIS A NEW OR EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT?

Neurofeedback has been researched since the 60's. Here are some resources for research. We have several journal articles, studies and books in our office for you to enjoy, however because of the amount of information out there, we cannot possibly have everything. Here are a few resources.

Look up the work of:

Dr. Joe Kamiya and Dr. Barry Sterman (Credited for earliest development of Neurofeedback).

Look for specific researched conditions:

- <https://www.eeginfo.com>
- <https://www.isnr.org>
- <http://www.eegspectrum.com>

Print Resources:

- Journal of Neurotherapy
- Neuroregulation
- Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback

Books:

- A Symphony in the Brain by Jim Robbins
- Healing Young Brains by Robert Hill & Eduardo Castro
- The Healing Power of Neurofeedback by Stephen Larsen
- Neurofeedback in the Treatment of Developmental Trauma by Sebern Fisher

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Getting started is easy, just give us a call. The Brain and Wellness Center staff will answer all of your questions, and help you get scheduled. If you are wondering what services are best for you? We can help determine that at the time of the intake, in a telephone consultation, or you can schedule a face to face consultation and see our facility. Call, email or message us today! Brain and Wellness Center, 7301 W. Palmetto Park Rd., Suite 102A, Boca Raton, FL 33433. (561) 206-2706, e-mail us at info@bocabraincenter.com, or text us at (561) 206-2706 or visit our website at www.BocaBrainCenter.com.



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Florida and a Master's Degree in Psychology from Nova Southeastern University. She is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and is the owner/operator of The Brain and Wellness Center, located in Boca Raton. At The Brain and Wellness Center, adults, teens, children and families enjoy a variety of services from multiple providers. Neurofeedback, Brain Mapping, Acupuncture, Nutritional Counseling, Learning Programs, and counseling are among a few of the services offered.



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