

# Academic Underachievement

## Symptoms

1. Repeated failure to complete school or homework assignments on time
2. Academic performance is below the student's intelligence
3. Heightened anxiety that interferes with student's performance during tests
4. Depression and low self-esteem that contribute to academic underachievement
5. Poor organization or study skills that contribute to academic performance

## Possible Causes

1. Lack of self-discipline. Depression or low self-esteem.
2. Power struggle/Passive aggressive
3. Exposed to chaotic environment
4. Has become lazy. Has repeated school failures. Poor study skills

## Goals

1. Demonstrate interest and motivation in academics to bring performance up
2. Remove emotional impediments or environmental stressors in order to improve academic performance
3. Parents implement intervention strategies to help student keep up with school work
4. Complete school assignments on a consistent basis
5. Reduce anxiety related to taking tests

## How to Help

1. Refer the student for a hearing, vision and medical examination
2. Encourage parents to maintain regular (at least weekly) communication with teachers to help the student remain organized and keep up with assignments.
3. Set short and long term goals.
4. Discuss student's negative attitude toward school. Focus on changing that attitude.
5. Ensure the student has the skills required to complete schoolwork. If not, try to assist in changing the level of the student's work or help parents to get a tutor.
6. Direct the student to write the assignment for the day and have the teacher initialize it. Parents expect to see the notebook everyday even if there is no assignment. The student should write no assignment and the teacher still initializes it.
7. Teach test-taking skills.
8. Teach the student effective study skills (study in quiet places, develop outlines, highlight important details, etc.).
9. Monitor academic progress. Discuss accomplishments and setbacks.
10. Direct student to use planners to record school assignments and plan ahead for long-term projects.
11. Encourage parents to give praise and positive reinforcements for academic success