

Tourette Syndrome (TS): Getting Help with School Problems



A child with Tourette syndrome (TS) may struggle in school and need a plan to help. Below are ways you can help you identify and manage issues.

Having your child assessed for problems

A child with TS may often have 1 or more other conditions. Some of these can lead to problems in school. The most common are:

- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Learning disabilities
- Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)
- Sensory processing problems
- Social problems
- Anxiety
- Depression

You child can be tested for some issues, such as OCD or ADHD. They can be tested for a learning disability. The healthcare provider may need to talk with you and your child's teachers. Your child may take assessment tests.

Watching for problems in school

A child with TS and problems related to TS may have trouble with:

- Getting to school on time
- Focusing on schoolwork
- Organizing thoughts and tasks
- Writing by hand
- Remembering things
- Finishing homework
- Developing appropriate interpersonal skills with other children

Getting help with school

Every school-aged child has the right to a public school education by law. Make requests to your child's school in writing. You can ask for assessments of your child's needs, performance, and behavior. Talk with your child's teachers and school principal. You may also want to talk with a special education teacher or a counselor. If your child needs extra help, talk with your child's healthcare team and school district about these choices:

- **504 plan.** This is a requirement by federal law. It's part of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This law applies to your child if they have any disability and needs extra help in school. A 504 Plan is a written plan. It outlines what changes to a regular school routine are needed to help your child learn.
- **Individualized education program (IEP).** This is a requirement by federal law. It's part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This law applies to your child only if they have a specific disability and needs special education resources in school. An IEP is a written document. It's a plan for what special education services your child will get. It assures that they will have these support and services. They may include special classes, tutors, and other support. These services are free.

Some things that may help your child in school include:

- Taking tests without a time limit, or in a different place
- Taking tests verbally instead of writing answers
- Being tutored
- Attending classes that focus on children with learning issues

Keeping communication open

Managing TS, ADHD, OCD, and other problems is stressful. But talking openly with others can help. You can help educate family, friends, teachers, other parents, and your child's friends about TS and other problems that can come along with TS. Explain that TS is a medical condition and has other issues along with it. These issues can be managed with good strategies. Have your child be part of these discussions. Make strategies work at school by talking about them with school staff and your child.

To learn more

Tourette Association of America , [tourette.org](https://www.tourette.org)

U.S. Department of Education , www.ed.gov

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) , [ed.gov/idea](https://www.ed.gov/idea)

American with Disabilities Act , www.ada.gov

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