

Chapter Three: Solutions for difficulties . . .

Tony Dungy via his **ALL PRO Dad** blog shared the following insights which is good to consider if you have kids struggling in their learning. And FYI: I've paraphrased some aspects that were shared and added my comments and yes Bill's comics help to give us a chuckle as we sort through, process the insight shared and then decide if action is needed.

Consider this . . .

[10 Solutions to Difficulties Kids Have with Learning](#)

Report card times come all too soon and sometimes parents are frustrated, because their child or kids seem to have difficulty learning and in consideration, Tony shared these 10 most common difficulties kids have with learning.



So – are you interested in taking a look at these 10 difficulties and to see if your kid(s) have any of these challenges? I hope you continue on.

1. Preparedness

This is everything from homework not done to pencil not sharp to brain

not tuned in to
body not rested.



Solution: Be as in-tune with school as you expect your child to be, teach your child to take responsibility in all elements of life, and make sure you know what your child needs to know (and it goes beyond just school work).

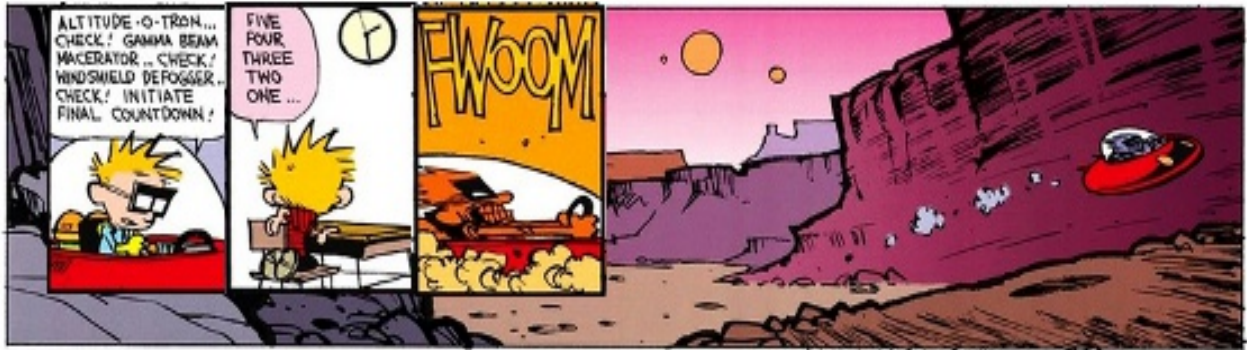
Remember, every kid is different. You need to

figure out what helps them to be prepared and foster that as best you can (create routines, set schedules, check before they go off to school, etc).

And don't forget those broader aspects to share and teach – if there is an emergency or a fire, being careful with strangers, understanding what is right and wrong with out with friends, etc. For if our kids have the best awareness possible for what to do when needed, the better they will do.

2. Distraction

For your kid(s), something is more interesting or more compelling than the lessons they should be focused on. It could be the student up front, or the big game your kid is thinking about, or the fight he or she witnessed before class, or the text he or she wants to send. Remember - learning requires concentration and some times – distractions are the problem.



Solution: Collaborate with your child’s teacher, identify distractions, identify potential reinforcements, and design a short-term reinforcement schedule to help encourage concentration.



And don't forget – sometimes it may just need to having that talk with your kids to understand what is distracting them and why.



3. Anxiety

Is your kid worried about grades? Did something happen on the bus? Is he or she being bullied? Is there trouble or illness at home?

It all comes down to being able to see a change in your kids and don't forget, if you are not watching their

actions, are you even seeing if they have some anxiety issues?

Solution: Make sure you listen to your kids, ask open-ended questions, reassure as to deal with challenges, nervousness or frustrations, and if needed - take steps to intervene when there are circumstances that are overwhelming or significantly distressing your kids.

And as an added FYI . . . please don't underestimate the stress on your kids from peer pressure or what they believe society expects of them. Sadly, kids pick on each other and they can be cruel. So keep an eye and an ear out for how your kids are doing (aka be engaged).

4. Behavior

There may be a dozen reasons a child acts out, is defiant, or disrupts the class. Regardless, behavioral issues have



a real impact on learning. **Solution:** Learn the “A-B-C’s” of your child’s acting out. A is for Antecedent (what comes immediately before the

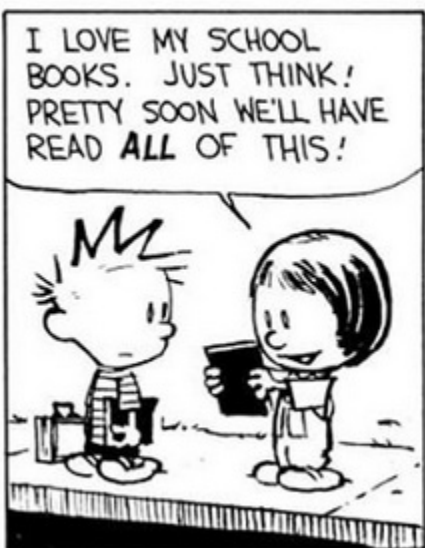


behavior?), B is for Behavior (as in what behavior is the issue?), and C is for Consequence (as in what happens as a result of the behavior?).

It is often possible to modify B when we understand (and change) A and/or C. We need to work with our kid's teacher to establish consistent interventions that reinforce appropriate alternatives.

5. Reading Below Grade Level

For kids, reading difficulties with both decoding and comprehension can compromise learning in every subject area, including math. Reading



I LIKE TO READ AHEAD AND SEE WHAT WE'RE GOING TO LEARN NEXT. IT'S SO EXCITING TO KNOW STUFF.



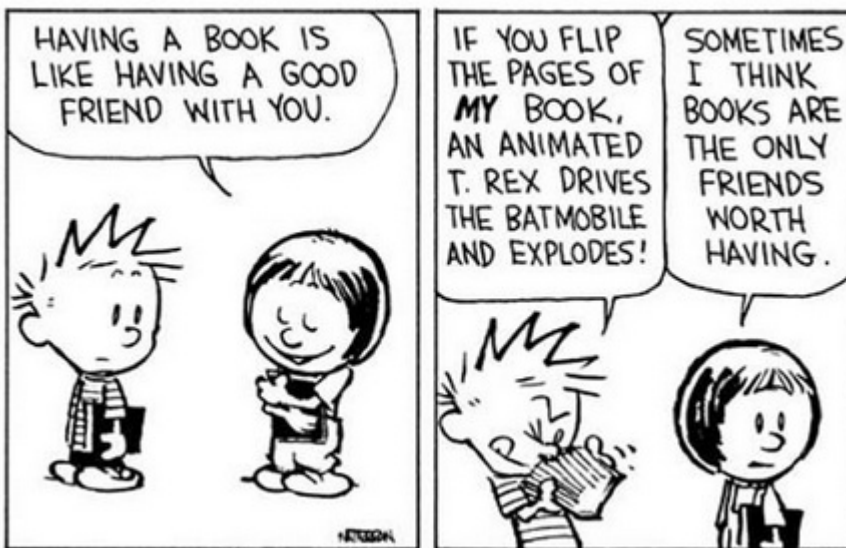
deficits compound over time if not addressed quickly.

Conversely, progress in reading can quickly right the ship and lead to improvement across the board.

Solution: Read to and with your child every day, and if that does not seem to help as it should, then engage a tutor, and talk with the school about a reading specialist.

It all comes down to this . . . reading is such a critical skill.

Don't ignore this in your kid's preschool age and as they learn. Help them learn to read and find ways to keep them excited about reading (and yes it is true, books are always better than the shows or movies that try to convey them).



6. Lack of Motivation/Laziness

This is even common in children who are otherwise good-natured and cooperative.

Finding the right motivation and addressing the tendency to avoid hard work will impact the quality of learning.

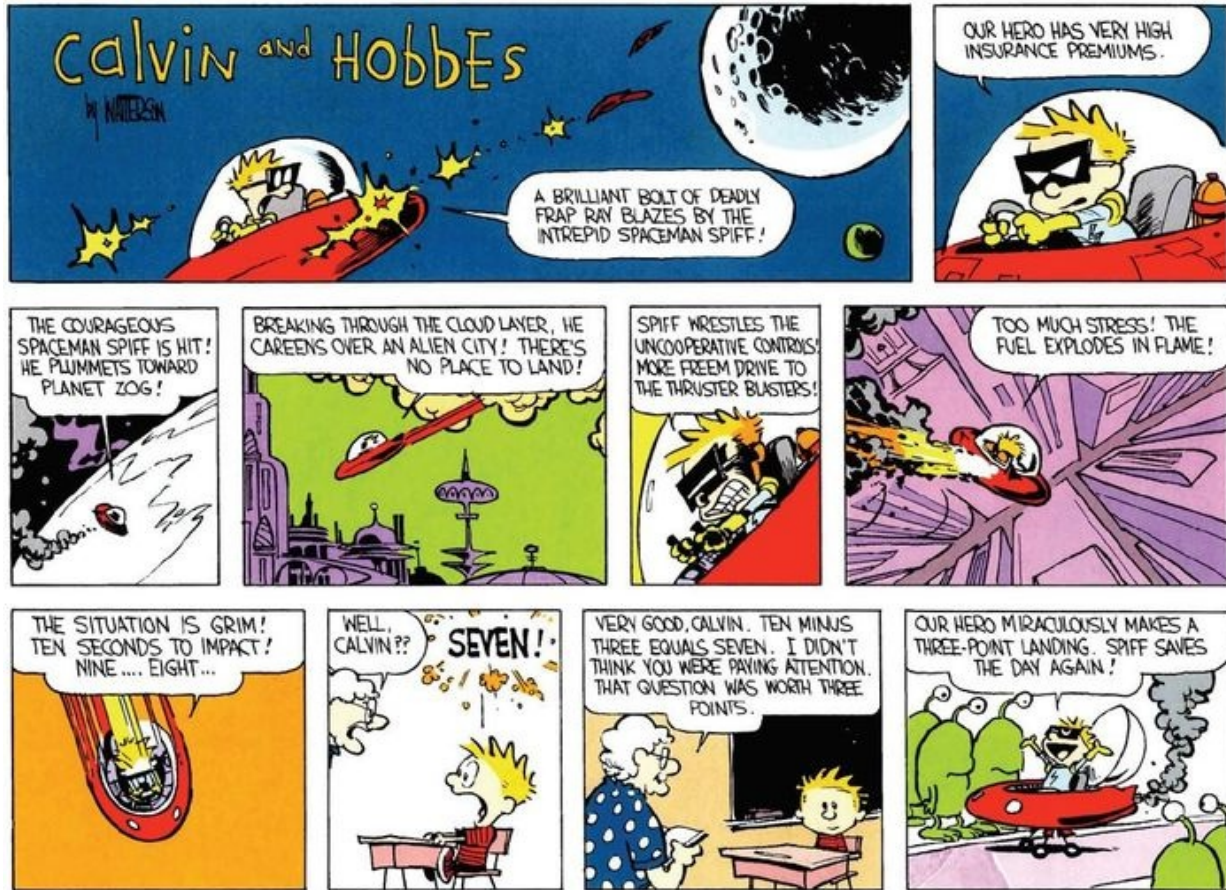
Solution: Take steps to demonstrate that learning is fun; reward effort, not just results; and be a motivated learner yourself. *For this challenge is one we all deal with from time to time so we should not be surprised when our kids have it flare up in their lives as well. Watch for this, deal with it and if you can, find a way to be a good role model (as in: if your wife is having to get after you about projects or actions you're not doing and you should,*



then yes . . . you are not being a good role model for your kids as you should). And please don't forget – if you have more than one kid, there is a good chance what motivates each of them is different. Change gears as needed and as best you can – mix in the fun so your kids appreciate 'you getting after them' and are not frustrated by you.

7. Testing

It's important to remember that 'making grades' and 'learning' are not always the same thing. There is much debate around "teaching to the test."



What remains clear is the fact that too much testing can interrupt the joy of natural inquisitiveness and introduce pressure that is incompatible with learning. It's important to remember that "making grades" and "learning" are not always the same thing.

Solution: Expose your child to the arts and or sports, don't pile on the pressure, and make sure you have a good rapport with your kid's teachers (and for a bonus, join your PTA, and get involved in the conversation and as best you can - lobby for a well-rounded education for all.

8. Lack of Sleep

A child who routinely gets less than an appropriate night's rest will not and cannot learn.

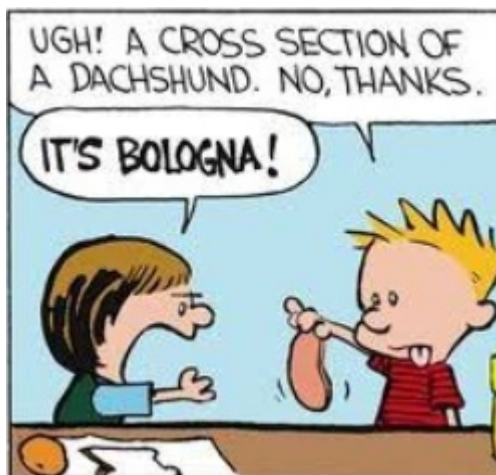
Sleep deprivation negatively impacts physical health, mental health and adequate learning.

Solution: Talk to your pediatrician about what is right for your child, establish a predictable evening routine, restrict screen time in the evenings, restructure bedtime rituals.

Now, is this easy to make changes for the

evening routines – getting kids to settle down and ensuring good nights sleep? Possibly not but it is easier if you start when your kids are younger. Come up with a 'school time routine', one for weekends if you think there is a slight adjustment there and then have a 'school is out routine'. And then, most important – if what you are trying is not working, then make some adjustments and once working – be consistent.





9. Poor Nutrition

There is a growing conversation around the impact of “Food Deserts” (areas, especially low-income, that have limited access to affordable nutritious food) in the US. What we discuss less is how many children in homes where good food could be accessible still have low-nutrition diets.

Solution: **Become educated when it comes to diet,**

approach better nutrition as a family, ask for help if necessary, do not assume “full” means “satisfied.”



Now Dads . . . I'll admit that this one is probably more of the challenge that falls on your wife than on you because they

may do more of the meal preparation that you do. So, be appreciative if that is true and be helpful. Teamwork here is most beneficial!



10. Absenteeism

Continuity is key to good learning. Children who routinely miss school



for any reason will have difficulty learning regardless of other mitigating factors.



Solution: Get to know your child's teacher(s).

The key to solving this problem is to know what the reasons or factors are behind what you have identified in your children and what solutions have worked? Also, take your child's school attendance seriously - be a school cheerleader in your



own home, become directly involved via PTA and other volunteer opportunities where and when you can (because it never hurts when your kids see and know that you are focused on them and the success or challenges that they are having in school.

And now for the added dose of reality. In today's world, there is a good chance that both you and your wife are buried in your own jobs and then juggling things at home. Don't let you work life blind you to what is happening in your home life. Your family is too precious to let problems derail it.