

The **Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems (ALSUP)** is a discussion guide created to assist caregivers in identifying a child's lagging skills and unsolved problems. Lagging skills provide caregivers with new lenses. Rather than viewing a child's difficulties as attention-seeking, manipulative, coercive, unmotivated, lazy, or limit testing, lagging skills provide more accurate, productive, actionable lenses.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR IDENTIFYING LAGGING SKILLS:

How hard could it be to check off lagging skills? Not that hard, but here are a few important reminders:

- Go in order...you don't want to miss anything.
- Don't spend time hypothesizing or theorizing about causal factors (why the student is lacking these skills)...you can't establish cause with any level of precision, and your time will be better spent identifying lagging skills and unsolved problems
- Don't spend any time talking about the child's behavior either...the behavior is simply the way children communicate that there are expectations they are having difficulty meeting
- Checking off a lagging skill is not a democratic process and shouldn't take more than 3-5 seconds each. If any caregivers in the meeting think the lagging skill applies to the child, check it off.
- While lagging skills provide you with new lenses -- a worthy goal -- lagging skills are not the primary targets of intervention. The unsolved problems you'll be identifying are the primary targets of intervention. If you solve those problems collaboratively and proactively, the child's skills will be enhanced.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR IDENTIFYING UNSOLVED PROBLEMS:

An unsolved problem is ***an expectation a child is having difficulty meeting***. Writing unsolved problems is harder, because the wording of the unsolved problem on the ALSUP is going to translate directly into the words that you're going to use to introduce the unsolved problem to the child when it comes time to solve the problem together. As such, there are four guidelines for writing unsolved problems:

**They should contain no reference to the child's challenging behaviors.** Since you won't be talking with children about their behavior, there's no need to include the behavior in the wording of the unsolved problem. Instead, almost all unsolved problems begin with the words *Difficulty*, followed by a verb (a variety of verbs are shown in the examples below as well). So you wouldn't write *Screams and swears when having difficulty completing the word problems on the math homework...* instead write *Difficulty completing the word problems on the math homework*.

**They should contain no adult theories.** So you wouldn't write *Difficulty writing the definitions to the spelling words in English... because his parents were recently divorced*.

**They should be split, not clumped** (so you wouldn't write *Difficulty getting along with others* but rather *Difficulty getting along with Trevor on the school bus in the morning*).

**They should be specific.** To make an unsolved problem as specific as possible, there are two strategies:

- Include details related to *who, what, where, and when*
- Ask *What expectation is the child/student having difficulty meeting?*

The above guidelines -- and a variety of sample verbs -- are embodied in the following examples (they're grouped based on setting, but the verbs apply across settings):

### SCHOOL/FACILITY:

- Difficulty getting started on the double-digit division problems in math
- Difficulty completing the map of Europe in geography
- Difficulty participating in the discussions in morning meeting
- Difficulty moving from choice time to math
- Difficulty ending computer time to come to circle time
- Difficulty walking in the hallway between classes
- Difficulty raising hand during Social Studies discussions
- Difficulty keeping hands to self in the lunch line
- Difficulty lining up for the bus at the end of the school day
- Difficulty remaining quiet when a classmate is sharing his or her ideas in English
- Difficulty waiting for his turn during the four-square game at recess
- Difficulty retrieving Geography notebook from locker before Geography class

### HOME/CLINIC:

- Difficulty getting out of bed at 7 am in the morning to get ready for school on weekdays
- Difficulty going to church on Sundays
- Difficulty taking turns when playing chess with brother
- Difficulty sitting next to sister at dinner
- Difficulty putting the dishes into the dishwasher after dinner
- Difficulty taking the trash out on Tuesdays
- Difficulty brushing teeth before going to bed at night
- Difficulty ending Xbox at 8 pm
- Difficulty making bed before school on weekday mornings

There are also a variety of verbs that should be avoided, including *accepting, appreciating, staying calm, asking for help, listening, paying attention, focusing, considering, understanding, persisting, controlling*.