

What parents can do when their child is confused and frustrated

First, be supportive. Remind them that learning new material is often frustrating. Students often believe that if they are confused then they are not smart. They think if they don't get something right away they are "dumb". Please remember they are teenagers with a fragile self image. Be supportive. It may be helpful to tell a story about something you learned how to do that was difficult to learn. Tell them you know what it's like to be confused; tell them there are ways to recognize when you are "not getting it".

Signals that Indicate Confusion

1. There should be a voice in their head that has a "conversation" when they are learning. If they just hear a voice like the Charlie Brown cartoon, "Wa wa wa wa wa..." then they are missing information.
2. There should be a "camera" inside their head that makes pictures or movies. If your child can't "see" these when they close their eyes, then confusion is occurring.
3. It's normal for the mind to wander, but when it does you must do something to fix it.
4. An indicator of confusion is not remembering what you have just read. Instead of just re-reading, your child needs to employ a "fix up" strategy (found in Keys to Comprehension).
5. If you ask yourself questions about a lesson or reading, and cannot answer them, that is a signal that they are confused and not learning.

Reassure your child that these things happen to **EVERYBODY**. It is just that good learners have ways to get back on track.