

## Does Your Child Have SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder)?

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SAD is a disorder that happens only in certain seasons of the year and it can affect children as well as adults. SAD occurs mostly in winter months, where people are being exposed to less daylight. SAD is similar to depression, but can be distinguished because it only happens in winter months and then the child's symptoms get better during the summer. How can you know if your child has SAD?

Symptoms of SAD, according to Carskadon and Acebo(1993), are:

Irritability

Fatigue

School problems

Sleep problems (usually sleeping too much)

Headaches

Increased appetite (cravings of carbohydrates usually increase)

Decreased Activity

Withdrawal

Temper Tantrums

If you suspect that your child is suffering from SAD, make an appointment with a therapist to confirm your suspicions. There are some ways that you can help your child combat SAD at home; according to [www.healthcentral.com](http://www.healthcentral.com) you can help combat SAD by making sure that your child is eating a balanced diet and that they are being exposed to daylight as much as possible. As with any mental illness, it is important to seek professional help if things are not getting better. If you would like more information or linkages to services, you can call the Mental Health Board at (815) 455-2828 or Family Care at (815) 788-4360. To make an appointment with a therapist, you can call Youth

1. Carskadon, M., & Acebo, C. (1993). Parental Reports of Seasonal Mood and Behavior Changes in Children. *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 32*(2), 264-269. Retrieved October 5, 2009, from <http://www.sleepforscience.org/stuff>

2. Gray, D. (n.d.). *Seasonal Affective Disorder in Children*. Retrieved October 5, 2009, from <http://www.healthcentral.com/depression/understanding-seasonal-affective-disorder-201179-5.html>

Service Bureau's intake at (815) 338-7360. For crisis situations, call McHenry County  
Crisis Line at 1 800-892-8900

1. Carskadon, M., & Acebo, C. (1993). Parental Reports of Seasonal Mood and Behavior Changes in Children. *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 32(2), 264-269. Retrieved October 5, 2009, from <http://www.sleepforscience.org/stuff>

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