1. What do you see as the major problems Raul is exhibiting? (If you had to take a guess at a possible diagnosis, what would it be? Anything?)

2. Identify all the risk factors and identify all the protective factors affecting Raul's development.

3. What strengths or resources in Raul and his family would you emphasize as a way to improve his chances of a good developmental outcome?

**Case Study: Raul Salazar -- 10-year-old boy**

Raul Salazar, a 10-year-old boy, has just started the fourth grade. He was referred to the school's multidisciplinary team because of reports of difficulties in school and concerns about his home situation. Teachers are questioning whether he has a learning disability. They are also asking the team to determine whether he is an appropriate candidate for medications. He often does not follow instructions well. However, his current teacher is "surprised by his vocabulary." It is "much better than many of the other Puerto Rican kids in his class." However, his performance in school has steadily deteriorated. He especially has problems with reading and mathematics and on occasion comes to school with dirty clothing and falls asleep in class.

His performance in the third grade was average, but his records indicate that the teachers at the other school considered him to be a very anxious child. These teachers reported that Raul constantly moved in his seat and had problems with writing but did well in other fine-motor tasks.

Another fact that stands out in his school history is that his performance was better when he was attending a smaller parochial school for Grades 1 and 2.

Raul has two other siblings. He has an older brother who is 13, and a younger sister who is 9 years old. Raul's father works for the city of New York as a painter, and is mother is a teaching assistant. She completed two years of college but had to leave her education because she got pregnant with their oldest son.

Raul's mother's family moved to the mainland when she was eight years of age. Her father was a teacher and they were not very pleased when she "had to marry" Raul's father. Raul's father's family came from a poor rural area on the island. His own father had a history of alcoholism and left the family when Mr. Salazar was very young.

Mrs. Salazar reported to the social worker that she had serious problems with her nerves throughout her life and that they become worse whenever she is pregnant. Otherwise she felt her pregnancy with Raul had been normal. However, school staff learned that there had been some fear that she might lose Raul during the pregnancy, and this is why she was prescribed bed rest during the last trimester.

Mrs. Salazar's third child, her daughter Maria, was born prematurely, but Mrs. Salazar did not have any problems with her first pregnancy. She told the social worker that her daughter's premature status really hit the family hard because Maria required so much care when she finally came home.

Unfortunately, Mr. Salazar was released from his job shortly after Maria's birth, and he was out of work for 9 months. The mother reports this was possibly the most stressful period in her life. When Maria was about four months old, Mrs. Salazar had a seizure. Mrs. Salazar's doctor considered placing Mrs. Salazar on medication after she had that seizure; however, testing did not reveal any evidence of the presence of a seizure disorder. She reports a history of fainting and other seizure-like experiences when she was a teenager.

Mrs. Salazar says that she has always had problems with her nerves and has been very sickly throughout her life. She also told the social worker that "she was always the weakest one in her family." When Raul was about eighteen months old, Mrs. Salazar's closest brother was killed in a car accident. She reports not being able to get out of bed for weeks following the news of his death. Raul's medical records indicate that it was approximately around this time that he started banging his head in order to fall asleep.

This habit continued until he was about six years of age. He also developed some other habits that persist to this date. He still bites his fingernails very often. Raul's history also reveals that he was extremely frightened of the dark as a child and has an extreme startled response for which he is often teased by his brother and father.

The family moved to New York City one year ago, in order for Raul's father to take a job as a city-employed painter. The move is why Raul had to switch schools.

Raul's father is a strict disciplinarian. He told workers that he often loses his temper and yells at the children, but he says that he has never physically abused them. He reported to the social worker that he cannot tolerate the kids being noisy. When he comes home from his new job, his wife is often in bed, and things are a mess. Mr. Salazar is under lots of pressure at work. His supervisor does not like Puerto Ricans and gives him all the worst job assignments. The family no longer lives near other family members because they moved for Mr. Salazar to get his city job. Mr. Salazar told the social worker that the family is willing to pay for any services that will help his son do well in school.