

ADHD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)

Quotes

Yet more and more evidence suggests that ADHD is a biological, brain-based condition that typically, especially if untreated, can lead to poor performance in school; failed friendships; plunging self-esteem; and continued social, emotional, and performance difficulties through adolescence and into adulthood.

—The American Academy of Pediatrics, 2004

As many as two thirds of children with ADHD have one or more additional or coexisting conditions. The most frequent coexisting conditions include other behavior problems, depression, anxiety, learning disabilities, and language disorders.

—The American Academy of Pediatrics, 2004

Notes

Quite often parents ask teachers and counselors, “Does my child have ADHD?” These professionals can not really answer that question. Only a child’s psychiatrist or other qualified professional can diagnose ADHD. But teachers do encourage parents who have concerns with their child’s attention, focusing and impulsivity problems to talk with their doctors. ADHD is one of the most common childhood disorders. It is a developmental disorder that causes problems in the ability to regulate one’s behavior. Children with this disorder have “underactivity” in the area of the brain that provides them with behavioral inhibition, self-organization, self-regulation, and foresight. Symptoms can occur in three areas: attention span, impulse control, and hyperactivity. About 3-5% of children have ADHD and boys are five times more likely than girls to have hyperactivity. As many as 50% of ADHD kids can have learning disabilities.

Pediatricians are able to diagnose the disorder by having parents and teachers fill out behavioral checklists. The doctor will also refer to a book called, The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders to help in the diagnosis. Once a child is diagnosed, the doctor may prescribe a medication. He will also encourage the child to get counseling for social and behavioral skills, advise the parents to learn new parenting strategies to help the child at home, and he may also suggest further testing to see if the child has any learning problems.

On the positive side, it is important to note that children with ADHD tend to be average to above average in intelligence. Many of these “very active” kids are creative and can become successful adults. When I think of these kids I think of this quote by Plutarch, “The wildest colts make the best horses.” Also, it is important to note that this disorder is highly genetic; it runs in the family. Not all of these kids are a handful because of bad parenting!

Recommended Resources

- 102 Practical Resources for “Reducing the Deficit.”
- Hunter and His Amazing Remote Control
- ADHD in the schools



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Strategies

1. Keep the child on a regular routine. This includes bedtime, homework time, eating, bathing, and so on. ADHD kids need structure and consistency.
2. At home parents need to eliminate as many distractions as possible. When it is homework time, turn off the television and encourage other family members to speak quietly.
3. Organization is crucial. The child needs his own homework area, shelves to store toys and other belongings, hooks on the wall to hang jackets or ball glove, and dresser drawers in order.
4. Parents need to make charts and checklists so the child knows what tasks need to be completed and when. The child is to be responsible for using the charts and parents may wish to consider providing a few incentives for the child if he follows through.
5. ADHD kids have a difficult time making selections so don't give them too many choices. Limit options to two or three.
6. Do not draw up long term goals. Use short term goals. With ADHD children you may have to set daily, or sometimes, hourly goals.
7. These children need to be involved in extracurricular activities. Get them involved in sports, clubs, music, art, church, and other activities that will get them engaged with positive peers.
8. When giving orders, have the child repeat what you said. For example, if you say, "Jimmy, I want you to feed the cat and get the mail," follow up with, "Jimmy, what did I just ask you to do?"
9. These children can take up a lot of the parent's time and energy. That is why it is important for parents to take care of themselves, get exercise, find time to be alone, have a hobby, or join a social group.
10. Parents must act as the child's case worker and keep in close contact with his teacher to make sure he is getting good help at school.
11. In school the student needs to be sitting near the teacher's desk and up front with his back to the rest of the class to cut down on distractions.
12. The student should be seated near students who are good role models.
13. Too many posters, drawings, sound machines, bells, and bright lights and colors can be distracting.
14. Teachers have found that when talking to the ADHD child it helps to vary their tone of voice. It helps keeping the child's attention.
15. Allow the child to move to a quiet, less distracting area in the classroom when he desires.
16. Just like his parents at home, the child needs teachers who are very consistent and structured. But he also needs teachers who give a lot of positive reinforcement.
17. Several times throughout the school day the child needs time to move around, exercise, or go out and play.
18. Cue the student before transitions. "Jill, we will be going to lunch in five minutes, so start getting ready by clearing off your desk and washing your hands."
19. Teacher needs to make directions clear and concise.
20. Make sure the child feels comfortable when seeking assistance. Most ADHD children won't ask for help.
21. Provide the child with a "study buddy" who will help him write assignments for homework and to make sure he takes home needed books.
22. A daily notebook should go home in which both parents and teachers sign to check on completed assignments.
23. Have a sense of humor! Many of these children are clever, witty, and very creative.
24. Parents may suggest that the child be part of a social skills group lead by a trained counselor or social worker.
25. Some ADHD children benefit from be allowed to use a computer or word processor at school.