

ATTENTION DEFICIT (HYPERACTIVITY) DISORDER

Medication: The Teacher's Role

The teacher's role includes four functions.

- 1) First, the teacher must recognize and count the number of behavior problems.
- 2) The teacher must document nondrug interventions that were attempted to alleviate the problem.
- 3) Next, the teacher must monitor the effects of the drug intervention.
- 4) Finally, the teacher must continue other interventions.

Establishing the Proper Learning Environment

- Seat students with ADD near the teacher's desk, but include them as part of the regular class seating.
- Place these students up front with their backs to the rest of the class to keep other students out of view.
- Surround students with ADD with good role models, preferably students who they view as significant others.
- Encourage peer tutoring and cooperative/ collaborative learning.
- Avoid distracting stimuli. Try not to place students with ADD near air conditioners, high traffic areas, heaters, doors or windows.
- Children with ADD do not handle change well, so avoid transitions, physical relocation (monitor them closely on field trips), changes in schedule, and disruptions.
- Be creative! Produce a stimuli-reduced study area. Let all students have access to this area so the student with ADD will not feel different.
- Encourage parents to set up appropriate study space at home, with set times and routines established for study, parental review of completed homework, and periodic notebook and/ or book bag organization.

- **Giving Instruction to Students with ADD**

- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction.
- Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with daily instructions.
- Simplify complex directions. Avoid multiple commands.
- Make sure students comprehend the instruction before beginning the task.
- Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.
- Help the students feel comfortable with seeking assistance (most children with ADD will not ask for help).
- Gradually reduce the amount of assistance, but keep in mind that these children will need more help for a longer period of time than the average child.
- Teach the students “learning strategies” so they can independently work through academic concerns.

- **Giving Assignments**

- Give out only one task at a time.
- Monitor frequently. Maintain a supportive attitude.
- Modify assignments as needed. Consult with special education personnel to determine specific strengths and weaknesses of each student. Develop an individualized education progress.
- Make sure you are testing knowledge and not attention span.
- Give extra time for certain tasks. Students with ADD may work slowly. Don not penalize them for needed extra time.
- Shorten some assignments so that the students feel they are making progress.
- Keep in mind that children with ADD are easily frustrated. Stress, pressure, and fatigue can break down their self-control and lead to poor behavior.

Require a Daily Assignment Notebook if Necessary:

- Make sure each student correctly writes down all assignment each day. If a student is not capable of this, the teacher should help him or her.
- Sign the notebook daily to signify completion of homework assignments. (Parents should also sign.)
- Use the notebook for daily communication with parents.

Other Educational Recommendations

- Educational, psychological, and/or neurological testing to determine learning style and cognitive ability and to rule out any learning disabilities (common in about 30% of students with ADD).
- A private tutor and/or peer tutoring at school.
- A class that has a low student-teacher ratio.
- Social skills training and organizational skills training.
- Training in cognitive restructuring (positive “self-talk”, e.g.,: “I did that well”).
- Use of a word processor or computer for schoolwork.
- Individualized activities that are mildly competitive or noncompetitive such as bowling, walking, swimming, jogging, biking, or karate. (Note: Children with ADD may do less well than peers in team sports.)
- Involvement in social activities such as scouting, church groups, or other youth organizations that help develop social skills and self-esteem.
- Allowing children with ADD to play with younger children if that is where they fit in. Many children with ADD have more in common with younger children than with their age-peers. They can still develop valuable social skills from interaction with younger children.

Behavior Change Methods

How to increase a behavior:

- Reinforcement
- Shaping
- Modeling
- Token economies
- Contingency contracts

How to decrease a behavior:

- Punishment
- Extinction
- Time Out
- Overcorrection
- Self Monitoring

Modifying Behavior

Providing Supervision and Discipline:

- Remain calm, state the infraction of the rule, and avoid debating or arguing with the student.
- Have pre-established consequence for misbehavior.
- Administer consequence immediately, and monitor proper behavior frequently.
- Enforce classroom rule consistently.
- Make sure the discipline fits the “crime” without harshness.
- Avoid ridicule and criticism. Remember, children with ADD have difficulty staying in control.
- Avoid publicly reminding student on medication to “take their medicine.”

Compliance Variables

- Question Format
- Distance
- Eye Contact
- Two Requests
- Loudness
- Time
- Positive
- Nonemotional
- Descriptive
- Reinforce
- **Cautions**
- Inconsistency
- Vague target behavior
- Progress not monitored
- Ineffective reinforcers
- Inadequate reinforcer schedule
- Inadequate preparation
- Lack of generalization
- Failure to fade out reinforcers
- Failure to pair with intrinsic
- Giving up too soon

Enhancing Self-Esteem

Providing Encouragement:

- Reward more than you punish, in order to build self-esteem.
- Praise immediately any and all good behavior and performance.
- Change rewards if they are not effective in motivating behavioral change.
- Find ways to encourage the child.
- Teach the child to reward himself or herself. Encourage positive self talk (e.g., “You did very well remaining in your seat today. How do you feel about that?”). This encourages the child to think positively about himself or herself.