

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

ESTABLISHING THE PROPER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

- It is important for ***'s school to recognize him as health-impaired and to provide appropriate accommodations as stipulated under Section 504 of the Special Education Health Act. Accommodations such as breaking assignments down into smaller sections, having additional time to complete assignments, decreasing task demands at the end of the school day, and adjusting his homework demands as necessary are recommended.
- Traditionally closed classrooms are preferred (and should be requested) over an open type of classroom which magnifies all auditory and visual distractions.
- Preferential seating at the front of the class and close to the teacher should be arranged. However, ***'s seat assignment should be part of the regular class seating. Place *** up front with his back to the rest of the class to keep other students out of view. Surround *** with peers who model appropriate on-task behavior and who will not encourage or stimulate inappropriate behaviors. Avoid distracting stimuli. Place *** away from air conditions, high traffic areas, doorways, pencil sharpeners, heaters, or windows. It is also helpful to increase the distance between desks.
- Encourage peer tutoring and cooperative/collaborative learning.
- Children with ADHD tend to have difficulty with change, so give him extra support during transitions, field trips, changes in schedule, and disruptions. Announce the next activity in advance. Provide time warnings close to the end of current activities (e.g., 5, 3, then 1 minute left). Supervise each step of the transition and provide reminders to stay with the process when necessary.
- Set up a stimuli-reduced study area. Let all students have access to this area so *** will not feel different.
- When *** drifts off, a prearranged, unintrusive, nonpunitive signal such as a tap on the shoulder, can be used as a means as bringing him back on task.
- Allow *** to have an extra set of books at home. This will help with organization skills.

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction.

- Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with daily instructions.
- Give directions in clear, well-articulated, and simply constructed sentences. Avoid complex or compound sentences. Simplify complex directions. Avoid multiple commands.
- Be sure *** is attending appropriately before presenting information or giving instructions. Strategies might include saying his name or using a hand gesture or signal.
- Tell him what to listen for prior to delivering directions or information.
- Talking more slowly and frequently restating oral information will aid in comprehension.
- Verbal instruction should be accompanied by visual reference (pictures, diagrams, outlines, models) and demonstration. Use visual aids. Write key words or pictures on the board or overhead projectors when presenting. Use colored pens or chalk to highlight pertinent information.
- Periodic feedback should be required from *** to ensure that he is listening to the speech messages. Make sure *** comprehends the instructions before beginning the task.
- New concepts in vocabulary should be previewed at the beginning of a lesson and highlighted at the end of a lesson.
- Stand near the student when giving directions or presenting lessons.
- Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.
- Help the students feel comfortable with seeking assistance. (Many children with ADHD 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.

CLASS WORK:

- Seatwork and passive listening tasks should be punctuated by breaks or activities which provide opportunity for *** to get up and move around. Allow *** time out of his seat to run errands, help set up the science experiment, etc.
- In order to enhance ***'s attention skills, add novelty to tasks, especially at the end of tasks. If possible, eliminate repetition within task and add activity to task (e.g., working with peers, hands-on work).

- Use of an activity-based approach will be helpful so that ***'s is actively engaged in a series of short activities with frequent feedback.
- Children with attentional difficulties are typically fatigued after a full day in school because of trying to overcome external distractions and auditory confusion. It may be helpful to plan lessons that are more difficult early in the day, or alternate lessons that require greater auditory attention with those that are visual or independent.
- Use graphic organizers, such as semantic maps or outlines to encapsulate the complexity of ideas, concepts for the day, and series of lessons if the student has difficulty maintaining focus through a long lecture. Organizers can be in completed form, partially complete, or blank templates for a student to fill in during instruction. This provides an opportunity for active learning.
- It will be helpful for large assignments to be broken down into a series of smaller units.

ORGANIZATION SKILLS:

- *** showed difficulty with regard to organization and planning skills. It would be helpful for him to receive instruction in study skills. Explicit instruction should focus on helping *** to organize his approach to tasks and develop a functional problem-solving process that will help him follow them through to completion. The types of skills to be targeted may include breaking down tasks into smaller units, prioritizing which things need to be done first, arranging his work space, using outlining skills, color coded folders and/or highlighting, and using an assignment notebook and/or calendar to keep track of tasks and activities.
- Given that *** will enter middle school next year, it is likely that this environment will prove more challenging to his organizational abilities. It is recommended that ***'s teachers meet with his parents after the first couple of weeks of school to problem solve around ***'s particular difficulties in this new educational environment, such as, how to organize his work, time constraints for homework, etc.
- As much as possible, *** should preview assignments so that he can familiarize himself/herself with the material ahead of time. Additionally, a discussion beforehand about the goal of a given assignment will help him understand the ultimate purpose. Providing *** some type of outline that clarifies these steps will provide external structure.
- In all subjects, *** would benefit from having external structure in the form of visual models or outlines to follow and fill in when reading material and determining salient points, marking off each step as it is completed.

- Critical Thinking Press and Software, P.O. Box 448, Pacific Grove, CA 93950-0448 (Phone: 800-458-4849; website: www.criticalthinking.com) provides a variety of materials to develop critical thinking and organizational skills. Consider the text, Organizing Thinking: Graphic Organizers by Sandra Parks and Howard Black. It supplies a wealth of organizational strategies for all subject areas. Also, the website <http://muskingum.edu/~cal/database/database.html> provides information on a variety of learning strategies. The section on organization strategies may be particularly helpful.
- Encourage *** to have a notebook with dividers and folders for his work. This will help with organization.
- Regularly check ***'s desk and notebook for neatness. Encourage neatness rather penalize sloppiness.
- Supervise *** to make sure he has written down homework assignments. Provide *** with a homework assignment book.

TEST TAKING:

- Use more objective items (fewer essay responses).
- Give frequent short quizzes, not long exams.

PROVIDING SUPERVISION AND DISCIPLINE:

- *** will benefit from having a consistent behavior management program in place, both at home and at school, to help with decreasing impulsive acting out and increasing task completion. A reinforcement program with tangible rewards is often effective for children with behavioral difficulties similar to ***'s. Reinforcers such as time playing a special game may be used as rewards for showing appropriate behavior (e.g., task completion, staying in his seat for a specified length of time). It may be helpful to consult with a behavior specialist for developing such a plan. Alternatively, if *** is seen for individual therapy, this therapist could develop such a plan with ***'s parents and teacher.
- When disciplining ***, remain calm, state the infraction of the rule, and avoid debating or arguing.
- Have pre-established consequences for misbehavior.

- Enforce rules consistently and administer consequences immediately. Small punishments are often more effective than larger punishments because parents are more able and willing to apply small punishments every time their child misbehaves.
- Avoid ridicule and criticism. Remember that children with ADHD have difficulty staying in control.
- Avoid publicly reminding students on medication to "take their medicine."
- ***'s school should send daily/weekly progress reports home.
- Ignore minor, inappropriate behavior.
- Supervise closely during unstructured transition times.
- Acknowledge positive behavior of nearby student.
- Remind student to check over work product if performance is rushed and careless.

PROVIDING ENCOURAGEMENT:

- Reward more than you punish, in order to build self-esteem.
- Praise immediately any and all good behaviors and performances. Use labeled, rather than unlabeled, praise in order to encourage *** to use particular behaviors. For example, say, "I like the way you are working quietly in your seat" rather than "Good job."
- Teach the child to reward himself/herself. Encourage positive self-talk (e.g., "You did very well remaining in your seat today. You should feel proud of yourself.") This encourages the child to think positively about himself/herself.
- Those working with *** will find it helpful to provide concrete or verbal reinforcement for his self-control for staying on tasks for longer periods of time.
- Encourage *** to ask questions when he is confused and praise him when he takes the initiative. Establishing a positive feeling when asking questions or asking for repetition is essential and will be irreplaceable as he progresses through school.
- It is recommended that *** be consistently rewarded for on-task behavior. Initially, positive

reinforcement should occur after the completion of each activity. When his ability to attend to task improves, reinforcement can be provided at the end of the class period.

- It will be important to identify areas of strength in *** and to provide encouragement in these areas. For example, *** showed an interest in drawing during this assessment. Special attention in this area may help *** to develop positive self-esteem.
- Look for opportunities for *** to display a positive leadership role in class.
- Send positive notes home.

HOME ENVIRONMENT:

- To assist with managing ***'s behavior at home and to help him to remember important skills and tasks, it may be helpful to create visual reminders of tasks he is expected to do during the morning or evening. It may also be helpful to give only single instructions at a time rather than multi-step commands.
- It would be helpful if *** had a regular routine for completing schoolwork at home. This might include a regular time and space for working, a system of recording assignments and bringing them home, a place to keep his schoolwork, and a predetermined system for receiving help with his homework as needed. A designated study space should be organized with specific spaces and labels for items such as an assignment list, a place for completed work, etc. ***'s parents should also help *** with organizing his notebook and backpack.
- When *** first gets home from school, check for notes from teachers.
- ***'s parents may want to use a reward chart for good behavior. It usually works best to choose just one or two target behaviors to work on at a time. For ***, a target behavior might be, complying with an instruction the first time he is asked or following through on an instruction.

SELF-MONITORING:

- It is also recommended that *** learn to increase his self-monitoring skills. For example, he can be encouraged to use his finger or an index card to keep his place while reading. It will also be helpful for *** to learn to "check in" with himself/herself frequently to see if he is on task. He might learn to ask himself/herself a simple question. (e.g., "What should I be doing?") and then use some simple steps to get back on task if he has become distracted.

- Encourage *** to use mid-task self-questioning, for example, stopping to summarize after each paragraph or page during reading, stopping to check calculations after each line during math, etc.
- Have *** graphically record and monitor times when a "wake-up call" was needed or a "free-time" was cancelled. *** should work toward self-monitoring his own mind wandering, calling himself/herself back to the task at hand when necessary.

SELF-REGULATION:

- To help *** to cope better with frustration, it is recommended that he learn some specific strategies to use in situations that he finds very stressful. Basically, these strategies should include a plan to stop and calm down (sometimes it is helpful to use a symbolic tool such as thinking of one's self at a traffic light that has turned red), labeling his feelings, stating the nature of the problem, and developing solutions to try. Also included might be learning to ask for help when appropriate.
- *** may benefit from having a quiet and simple space that is not cut off from others to take time out for self-regulation. This should be a space that is available for all the children in the classroom to use. He should be encouraged to learn to recognize when he is overwhelmed and needs to regroup, and taking time out should be presented to him as a means to success rather than a punishment or indication of failure his part.

SOCIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

- It is recommended that *** continue to work on skills that provide the foundation for learning in a structured setting such as sitting, paying attention, remaining on task, following directions, and taking turns. These skills can be encouraged in the context of fun activities such as games, as well as in more structured learning situations. As *** is being introduced to these skills, he should be presented with tasks that provide him with opportunities for success (e.g., paying attention and/or remaining on task for brief periods, taking turns during a brief game, etc.). As he begins to gain confidence, tasks can be made more challenging.
- In order to aid the improvement of ***'s social interaction skills, it is recommended that some social skill goals be included on his next IEP.
- To further develop ***'s social interaction skills, it may be helpful to arrange play dates for *** with one or two same-aged peers. The play date should be time-limited, perhaps 1-2 hours, and involve a preplanned, highly structured activity (e.g., baking cookies, an art project, constructing and running through an obstacle course, going skating, etc.) with adult supervision. The goal

would be to provide an arena for *** to practice social interaction skills and provide reinforcement and modeling.

- *** may benefit from participation in a social skills group. These groups provide instruction in social skills and opportunities to practice these skills with same age peers. These groups are offered at the Children's Health Council and may also be available through ***'s school.
- Individualized activities that are mildly competitive or noncompetitive such as swimming, jogging, biking, karate, bowling, walking (NOTE: children with ADHD may do less well than their peers in team sports.)
- *** may benefit from involvement in social activities such as scouting, church groups or other youth organizations that help develop social skills and self-esteem.
- Allow *** to play with younger children if that is where he fits in. Many children with ADHD have more in common with younger children than with their same-aged peers. They can still develop valuable social skills from interaction with younger children.

INDIVIDUAL THERAPY:

- Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are at risk for depression, particularly if they have not found effective ways for the release of negative emotions. Projective testing suggested that *** does not seem to have effective strategies for coping with feelings of sadness or anger. He may benefit from some work with an individual therapist on identifying feelings and developing strategies to cope with negative feelings. This individual therapist could also help *** learn to increase his self-monitoring skills, a skill often useful for children with ADHD.
- To help *** to cope better with frustration, it is recommended that he learn some specific strategies to use in situations that he finds very stressful. Basically, these strategies should include a plan to stop and calm down (sometimes it is helpful to use a symbolic tool, such as thinking of oneself at a traffic light that has turned red), labeling his feelings, stating the nature of the problem, and developing solutions to try. It is also important to learn to ask for help when appropriate.

FURTHER EVALUATION:

- *** may benefit from the use of psychostimulant medications. This type of medication can help to increase on task behavior and decrease impulsive responding. If a medication trial is initiated, we recommend that the trial be conducted in a double-blind fashion. ***'s parents

should consult with ***'s pediatrician on this matter. Alternatively, a psychiatrist at the Children's Health Council would also be available to prescribe this medication.

- We do not recommend a trial of psychostimulant medication at this time. It is unclear how much of ***'s problems with inattention and hyperactivity are the result of his struggle to adjust to his parent's divorce. Behavioral methods, such as those described above, should be tried first. If these behaviors persist when ***'s family situation has become more stable, and behavioral interventions have not been effective, then a medication trial should be considered. It would also be important to have ***'s current teacher provide a recent rating of his classroom behavior before a medication trial is considered. If a medication trial were to be initiated at some point, we recommend that such a trial be conducted in a double blind fashion. ***'s parents should consult with ***'s pediatrician on this matter. Alternatively, a psychiatrist at the Children's Health Council would also be available to prescribe this medication.
- *** was noted to have some difficulties with motor control during this evaluation. *** should receive an occupational therapy evaluation to determine his areas of strengths and weaknesses in this area, and to see if occupational therapy is indicated. This evaluation could be done through ***'s school or at the Children's Health Council.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- ***'s parents were given several handouts related to ADHD and the use of medication to treat ADHD during the feedback session. In addition to those materials, we recommend the following books on children with ADHD: Slam Dunk, A Young Boy's Struggle with ADD, by Roberta N. Parker (1993) and, Putting on the Brakes: Young People's Guide to Understanding ADHD by Patricia Quinn and Judith Stern (1991). These books are available through a variety of sources including the ADD warehouse which has a catalog describing resource materials for use with children with ADHD (1-800 233-9273). The following websites may also provide useful information: Parents Helping Parents: www.php.com Children and Adults with ADHD (CHADD): www.CHADD.org and the National ADD Association: www.ADD.org.
 - *** may benefit from instruction on the use of memory and organizational strategies. Handouts with specific instructions have been provided to ***'s parents.
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Individual therapy:

- Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Learning Disabilities are at risk for depression, particularly if they do not experience success and are not rewarded for their efforts.

Miles would benefit from continued individual therapy to help identify feelings and develop strategies to cope with these negative feelings.

Further evaluation:

- We do not recommend a trial of psychostimulant medication at this time. It is unclear how much of Miles' problems with inattention and hyperactivity are the result of his processing speed and organizational disability, and issues surrounding his parent's divorce. Behavioral methods, such as those described above, should be implemented first. If these behaviors persist and behavioral interventions are not sufficient, then a medication evaluation may be considered. The Children's Health Council has psychiatry services available.

Additional resources:

- We recommend the following books on children with ADHD:
 - Slam Dunk, A Young Boy's Struggle with ADD, by Roberta N. Parker (1993),
 - Putting on the Brakes: Young People's Guide to Understanding ADHD by Patricia Quinn and Judith Stern (1991).
 - Taking Charge of ADHD: The Complete, Authoritative Guide for Parents (Revised Edition) by Russell A. Barkley (2000).
 - Learning To Slow Down & Pay Attention: A Book for Kids About Adhd by Kathleen G. Nadeau
- These books are available through a variety of sources including the ADD warehouse, which has a catalog describing resource materials for use with children with ADHD (1-800 233-9273).
- The following websites may also provide useful information:
 - Parents Helping Parents: www.php.com
 - Children and Adults with ADHD (CHADD): www.CHADD.org
 - National ADD Association: www.ADD.org