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ADDing Support

For parents and carers of children with ADD/ADHD

Please contact us on 01268 548998 – leave a message and we will call you back

Or email us on info@addingsupport.org



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A D A P T

Accommodations to help students with Attention Deficit Disorders

By Harvey C. Parker, PH.D., Clinical Psychologist

Children and youths with attention deficit disorders (ADD's) often have serious problems in school. Inattention, impulsiveness, hyperactivity, disorganisation, and other difficulties can lead to unfinished assignments, careless errors, and behaviour which is disruptive to oneself and others. Through the implementation of relatively simple and straightforward accommodations to the classroom environment or teaching style, teachers can adapt to the strengths and weaknesses of students with ADD. Small changes in how a teacher approaches the student with ADD or in what the teacher expects can turn a losing year into a winning one for the child.

Examples of accommodations which teachers can make to adapt to the needs of students with ADD are grouped below according to areas of difficulty.

INATTENTION

- Seat student in a quiet area
- Seat student near good role model
- Seat student near 'study buddy'
- Increase distance between desks
- Allow extra time to complete assigned work
- Shorten assignments or work periods to coincide with span of attention; use timer
- Break long assignments into smaller parts so student can see end to work
- Give assignments one at a time to avoid work overload
- Require fewer correct responses for grade
- Reduce amount of homework
- Instruct student in self monitoring using cueing
- Pair written instructions with oral instructions

- Provide peer assistance in note taking
- Give clear, concise instructions
- Seek to involve student in less presentation
- Cue student to stay on task, i.e. private signal

IMPULSIVITY

- Ignore minor, inappropriate behaviour
- Increase immediacy of rewards and consequences
- Use time-out procedure for misbehaviour
- Supervise closely during transition times
- Use 'prudent' reprimands for misbehaviour (i.e. avoid lecturing and criticism)
- Attend to positive behaviour with compliments, etc.

- Acknowledge positive behaviour of nearby students
- Seat student near role model or near teacher
- Set up behaviour contract
- Instruct student in self monitoring of behaviour, i.e. hand-raising, calling out
- Call on only when hand is raised in appropriate manner
- Praise when hand raised to answer question

MOTOR ACTIVITY

- Allow student to stand at times while working
- Provide opportunity for 'seat breaks' i.e. run errands
- Provide short breaks between assignments
- Supervise closely during transition times
- Remind student to check over work if performance is rushed and careless
- Give extra time to complete tasks (especially for students with slow motor tempo)

MOOD

- Provide reassurance and encouragement
- Frequently compliment positive behaviour and work product
- Speak softly in non-threatening manner if student shows nervousness
- Review instructions when giving new assignments to make sure student comprehends directions
- Look for opportunities for student to display leadership role in class
- Conference frequently with parents to learn about student's interests and achievements outside of school
- Send positive notes home
- Make time to talk alone with the student

- Encourage social interactions with classmates if student is withdrawn or excessively shy
- Reinforce frequently when signs of frustration are noticed
- Look for signs of stress build up and provide encouragement or reduced workload to alleviate pressure and avoid temper outburst
- Spend more time talking to students who seem pent up or display anger easily
- Provide brief training in anger control; encourage student to walk away; use calming strategies; tell nearby adult if getting angry

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- If reading is weak: provide additional time; use 'previewing' strategies; select text with less on a page; shorten amount of required reading; avoid oral reading
- If oral expression is weak; accept all oral responses; substitute display for oral report; encourage student to tell about new ideas or experiences; pick topics easy for student to talk about.
- If written language is weak; accept non written forms for reports (i.e. displays, oral, projects); accept use of typewriter, word processor, tape recorder; do not assign large quantities of written work; test with multiple choice or fill in questions
- If maths is weak; allow use of a calculator; use graph paper to space numbers; provide additional maths time; provide immediate correctness feedback and instructions via modelling of the correct computational procedure.

ORGANISATIONAL PLANNING

- Ask for parental help in encouraging organisation
- Provide organisation rules
- Encourage students to have notebook with dividers and folders for work

- Provide student with homework assignment book
- Supervise writing down of homework assignments
- Send daily/weekly progress reports home
- Regularly check desk and notebook for neatness, encourage neatness rather than penalise sloppiness
- Allow student to have extra set of books at home; give assignments one at a time
- Assist student in setting short term goals
- Do not penalise for poor handwriting if visual motor defects are present
- Encourage learning of keyboard skills
- Allow student to tape record assignments or homework

COMPLIANCE

- Praise compliant behaviour
- Provide immediate feedback
- Ignore minor misbehaviour
- Use teacher attention to reinforce positive behaviour

- Use 'prudent' reprimands for misbehaviour (i.e. avoid lecturing or criticism)
- Acknowledge positive behaviour of nearby student
- Supervise student closely during transition times
- Seat student near teacher
- Set up behaviour contract
- Implement classroom behaviour management system
- Instruct student in self monitoring of behaviour

SOCIALISATION

- Praise appropriate behaviour
 - Monitor social interactions
 - Set up social behaviour goals with student and implement a reward program
 - Prompt appropriate social behaviour either verbally or with private signal
 - Encourage co-operative learning tasks with other students
 - Provide small group social skills training
 - Praise student frequently
 - Assign special responsibilities to student in presence of peer group to show student in a positive light.
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RESILIENCE

By Robert Brooks Ph.D.

Director of Psychology Dept, McLean Hospital, Belmont Massachusetts.

Realistic: expectation and goals (for ourselves and our children): Many problems can be avoided and we can become less negative if we struggle to articulate realistic expectations and goals and recognise the unique qualities of each child.

Empathy: so how would others describe you? How would you hope they described you? Do we truly understand the world of individuals with ADD?

Self Esteem: a basic rule in individuals with ADD that must be addressed in any intervention program

Island of Competence: We must not ignore vulnerabilities but we must always focus on courage and strengths – self-esteem cannot be based on false praise but rather on our children experiencing success.

Love: Perhaps it goes without saying but we all need to feel loved and to give love – we must avoid praise deficits and help our children to feel special and appreciated – our children need charismatic adults in their lives and they also need to feel that they are making a positive difference in the lives of others.

Invent new scripts: We often get trapped in negative scripts as we struggle to help our children with ADD. It is important to remember that we are the authors of our own lives and if our children are to change their self-defeating scripts, we must have the courage to change ours.

Environmental Engineering: It is crucial to be proactive and anticipate difficult situations with our children with ADD so that our children may be less critical of themselves.

Choices, Consequences and Discipline: Given the problem children with ADD have with disinhibition and not thinking of consequences, it is important to increase their sense of ownership and self discipline.

Enjoy Life: As difficult as things can be for our children with ADD and ourselves, it is important to maintain a sense of humour and develop our own stress hardiness.

We hope you have found the above helpful and informative, if you have any further questions or would like to discuss any of the above points please contact us by:

email: info@addingsupport.org

or leave a message on our dedicated answer phone and somebody will return your call:

phone: Tel No 01268 548998