

Helping the ATTENTION- DEFICIT STUDENT PART II

BY CAROL J. SCHOUN

Part I discussed principles relating to an understanding of Attention-deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This article will outline practical suggestions, including some resources for further information and ideas. This should enhance your relationship with ADHD students, and thus help them feel better about themselves and their experiences at school.

Educational Placement

Educational placement depends on the severity of the child's ADHD and co-existing disorders. Testing is imperative and should be administered by a well-informed psychiatrist or psychologist specializing in childhood disorders. Testing should measure the existence and severity of ADHD, the presence of specific learning disabilities (LD), as well as any tendencies toward anxiety, depression, or oppositional behavior. About half of those with ADHD have mild to moderate symptoms and can function in a regular classroom. About 35-40 percent will need resource help only occasionally. The 10-15 percent with severe symptoms (usually also with LD) will need an alternative special-education setting.¹ There are a few such alternative schools or classrooms specifically designed for the ADHD student.* These schools offer specialized pro-

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* See resource list on pages 28-30.

grams designed for ADHD students' behavioral, academic, and social needs. The classes are small and the teachers have expertise in dealing with ADHD and accompanying disorders.

Classroom Management/Curriculum/Environment

For the approximately 60 percent of ADHD students in the regular classroom,² the most successful management approach has thus far proved to be a home-based reward program that coordinates with the teacher's reward program for the student.³ A psychiatrist or psychologist specializing in childhood ADHD supervises both programs and may even visit the school to observe the child. The teacher may be asked to give the child medication according to a physician's instructions.

However, many areas do not have such support services for parents and teachers. This is why Lincoln Learning Lab received a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to develop a home kit for the busy parent and teacher.* The audio-visual materials help educate parents and teachers about the nature of ADHD and its management. Several university centers are also doing major ADHD research.*

Here are some suggestions for teaching the ADHD child that have proved helpful in the regular classroom:

Classroom Environment⁴

1. Include no more than three ADHD students in a classroom of 25 children. The smaller class size in most church schools may help these children exhibit fewer symptoms and allow for more individualized help. A highly motivated parent could be trained as a part-time teacher's aide.

2. Seat ADHD students at the front of the room, near the teacher and away from major traffic throughways. Seat positive student role models nearby. Do not isolate ADHD students, which can damage their self-esteem. Avoid placing them in open classrooms or with multiple teachers. Seat all children separately. Don't assume that ADHD students will work with others successfully in a cooperative learning setting. Carefully match them with a partner and add other students only when the ADHD students' social skills improve through goal setting and rewards.

3. Do not seat ADHD students near noise sources such as hallways, machines, buzzing or flickering fluorescent lights, or air conditioners.

4. Provide learning areas for everyone with carrels, computers, seating, and good lighting. Allow for some motion and talking. Intersperse work at learning areas with tasks requiring restraint.

Classroom Instruction and Curriculum⁵

1. Keep each day's schedule predictable. Try not to change the subject or order unless there is a good reason to do so. Think ahead when changing activities and prompt the ADHD child about any possible consequences. Schedule tedious work for the morning hours if possible.

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2. Provide easy-to-read organizers such as outlines of class lectures, study guides, and a syllabus of topics to be covered. Give everyone assignment sheets with tasks listed sequentially and target dates for completion. Review assignments verbally.

3. Use printed assignment sheets to assist parents in monitoring the child's daily progress. A second set of textbooks kept at home can save everyone's sanity. A notebook with pockets for assignments, completed work, and daily schedule would then be all that ADHD children must remember to take with them. Suggest that they use an organizer pack that fits around the waist to keep needed supplies readily available.

4. Design homework to reinforce school activities. Keep it brief—no more than 30-45 minutes for elementary grades and no more than one hour for older children.⁶ It is more important for ADHD students to learn the process and to practice small amounts daily than to drill large amounts in fewer sittings.

5. Don't require perfect desk orga-

nization daily. A weekly "shovel-out" session and reward for progress is more realistic for ADHD children, who lack internal organizational skills.

6. Make supplementary texts available that match ADHD students' intellect and yet are concise and fast moving (see resources for sample of publishers). These can be used as resources for all children.

7. At the beginning of each year, "walk" all students through study skills geared to their grade.* Point out the organization of each textbook, etc.

8. Computers are tremendously helpful for ADHD children, capturing their fleeting attention well (see resources for software). Use should involve more than a few minutes' reward for "being good." Several computers could be in use constantly. Keeping children with poor handwriting or spelling skills from using a word processor is like prohibiting blind children from using braille texts!

9. Besides the computer, offer other ways for students to communicate ideas such as slides, models, speeches, mime, murals, and video productions. Encourage all children to find a variety of information sources such as interviews, photographs, pictorial histories, films, lectures, and experiments.

10. De-emphasize the lecture method. When lectures are appropriate, try giving all students a fill-in-the-blanks outline of your presentation to provide a visual structure for your talk. Remember that ADHD children attend better to more-stimulating and concise presentations.

11. Provide individual sports as an alternative to team sports that usually expose and humiliate children with poor coordination. When they must participate with a team, have ADHD students serve as your errand or equipment assistants.

Classroom Management⁷

1. Provide only brief rules and instructions. Give one step of instructions at a time. Post charts with visual reminders of rules and procedures. Don't expect ADHD children to remember rules you've given only verbally. Have younger children repeat rules displayed prominently throughout the classroom (e.g., stop signs, big eyes, big ears for "stop, look, and listen"). Write out the

rules for older children.

2. Recognize and reward positive behavior instead of only punishing negative behavior. Tell and remind ADHD students what you want them to do, rather than what you want them to stop doing. Ask yourself, "What do I want this child to do instead?" Find ways to help these students to succeed, rather than simply keeping track of their failings. In your reward/punishment system, have children lose fewer points for poor behavior and gain more for good behavior.

Remember, ADHD children believe that they will never earn any rewards and therefore are not motivated as are other children. Emphasize social rewards, such as privileges.

3. Use "time outs" as punishment only for non-compliance, not for incompetence. ADHD children cannot automatically track and modify their behavior. Give them a chance to save face and "undo" a negative behavior. Ask, "Mark, would you go back and show me how quietly you can close the door?" "Positives before negatives" is imperative for ADHD children.

4. Set realistic goals. For example, do not expect the ADHD child to stay seated for one hour as the first goal. Say instead, "Julie, see if you can get up only four times the next half hour and three times the following half hour," and so on.

5. Teach your students simple problem-solving techniques. First, help them to define the problem and determine its importance. Next, teach them to brainstorm solutions and choose the best ones. Then, help them outline the steps they must follow. Finally, teach them to check whether their solutions work. This method can be incorporated in the entire curriculum and in all activities, including recess. (See "Kit" in resources.)

6. Begin the school year by communicating with parents daily, using a brief check sheet (perhaps combined with the assignment sheet) or telephoning to give a brief progress report (see samples). The frequency of reporting can be reduced gradually or increased as needed.

7. Several self-monitoring attention

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Don't expect ADHD children to remember rules you've given only verbally.

and training devices can be used. Allow ADHD students to earn points when on task. They can do this by pacing themselves against a kitchen timer to complete a portion of an assignment, or by placing marks on a paper if they are on task when a random beep sounds through headphones from a cassette tape. One device reminds with a gentle vibration at intervals. These lessen the teacher's involvement and prevent the ADHD child from having to be singled out. (See "Kit" and "A.D.D. Catalog" in resources.)

8. Maintain structure in the lunch room, on the playground, in the bathrooms, in the hallways, and on the bus. Many ADHD children probably should not ride the bus. The noise and confusion of these areas can make them more aggressive and out of control. A supervisor can provide the positive structure these children so desperately need. Running around stimulates them and sets them up for trouble with authority.

9. Provide non-academic tasks that ADHD children can accomplish to boost their self-esteem, especially when they begin to lose control of their behavior in a restrained setting. Running an errand or doing a task that you "sud-

denly remembered must be done now" will be seen as a privilege rather than a punishment. Thus, you help to prevent the child from progressing to unacceptable behavior.

10. Administer medication according to the physician's order and without embarrassing the child in front of his or her peers. Notify parents immediately if the child cannot concentrate, seems groggy, or develops involuntary movements known as "tics." You may be asked to fill out a behavior rating scale for the clinician supervising the child's care. Dr. Goldstein emphasizes that "pills will not substitute for skills."⁸ You must be responsible for teaching skills to the child.

In summary, seek to anticipate and avoid potential discipline and academic problems by structuring the child's environment, curriculum, and social interactions for success. Emphasize a "spirit of options" and a tolerance for differences.

Responsibility for Implementation

Conference Education Department

Carrying out this flexible but structured environment begins with educational leadership's setting the philosophy and mission statement. Conference supervisors should help teachers keep up to date on current and practical information by subscribing to the CH.A.D.D. newsletter and reprinting⁹ selected articles in the conference newsletter. Offer in-service training on ADHD/LD, using guest speakers or videos available through local organizations.* The conference also can suggest policies and provide funds for schools to help these students.

Principal¹⁰

The principal, along with the school board, should establish criteria for accepting ADHD students, rating scales for early detection, policies for parental involvement, educational planning meetings, and financial/curriculum accommodations. Some students may participate in church school only part-time and use private tutoring for the rest of their schooling. The principal's most important role is to encourage and back up the teacher who must carry out the

recommendations.

Teacher

More important than a special-education degree is a positive attitude and willingness to adjust one's teaching style. Teachers must spend some time studying ADHD and LD to understand the needed accommodations and to use them meaningfully and successfully in the classroom. Making these accommodations gracefully without ostracizing the student also rests on an understanding of ADHD. Without this understanding, plus patience, a love for students and a sense of responsibility for their success, school professionals are "clanging gongs and cymbals" at these students' overwhelmed central nervous systems. As a result, teachers may contribute to the students' anxiety, depression, and rage and cause subsequent acting-out behavior that can progress to delinquency or suicide.

Knowledge is also vital in order to identify possible ADHD/LD students, refer them to appropriate centers for testing, and evaluate the effectiveness of the medication and remedial programs. Establishing communication and rapport will enable the teacher to enlist outside sources of help such as parents, clinicians, or tutors.

Parent

Parental involvement is required for the success of ADHD students. In fact, many private schools will not accept these students unless parents agree to the following stipulations:

1. Arrange a comprehensive psychoeducational assessment of the child to identify his or her strengths and weaknesses and:

a. arrange for the professional to meet with the principal, teacher(s), and parents to develop reasonable accommodations;

b. arrange and pay for extra remedial help, especially when learning disabilities are present;

c. provide medication and schedule to the teacher.

2. Monitor the child's completion of assignments on a daily basis.

3. Agree to periodic conferences with the teacher using check sheets, telephone calls, and meetings.

4. Increase their knowledge of behavior management and carry out a

structured program at home coordinated with the teacher's behavior management program. (An excellent tool designed for the busy parent and teacher is the Lincoln Home Learning Lab listed in the resources.)

5. Make sure the student is not fatigued or hungry at school, and become knowledgeable regarding any food allergies that may worsen the child's behavior or attention. A breakfast that combines protein and carbohydrates seems to enhance morning concentration.

School personnel need to understand that the parents of an ADHD child have been living with this disorder for years and may be burned out. They may even be suffering from memories of their own painful school experience, since ADHD/LD can be inherited. Many lack the same skills as their children and find it difficult to communicate effectively. Other parents, though more effective communicators, become depressed as they daily watch the pain of their ADHD/LD child's struggle to survive.

All too often school is a negative experience for ADHD children and their parents. However, by developing policies ahead of time, assuring ongoing communication, and welcoming parents' advocacy, school personnel can make the

experience more positive. This keeps parents from "staying out" until the last minute for fear of interfering but exploding when they can't tolerate a problem any longer. Just knowing they will be "touching bases" with the teacher in a few days can calm their fear that their child will never be helped because no one really wants to deal with the problem.

Student

ADHD children play an important part in ensuring their scholastic success. They, too, need to understand the nature of their problem. Providing age-appropriate books* and conferences with professionals will help. ADHD children should attend planning meetings at school and be encouraged to speak up. Since these children do not outgrow their symptoms, they will eventually have to take over their own advocacy and learn to compensate by using their strengths.

Meeting the needs of ADHD children can enhance the education of every child in the classroom. Respecting individual differences and providing appropriate options will result in optimal learning by any child.

Although I have had no experience with these centers, you could write for

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ADHD RESOURCES FOR THE TEACHER

Local School District

First check with your local public school district's special-education department to find out what materials are available for your ADHD/LD students. See if the school district publishes a newsletter advertising continuing-education workshops and other resources.

Yellow Pages

Check the yellow pages of your telephone book for learning centers, alternative schools, a university center, or psychologists' programs/centers.

A.D.D. Catalog

Call 1-800-233-9273 and request the free *A.D.D. Warehouse* catalog, which specializes in products for ADHD. It provides photos and written descriptions of books for teachers, parents, and students. Also listed are teacher rating scales, attention devices, audio-visual materials, and workbooks. Topics include discipline, nutrition, and organization.

The following can be ordered from this catalog:

• Books for general background reading: *The Misunderstood Child* by Larry Silver on LD/ADHD, and *Why Johnny Can't Concentrate* on ADHD by Robert Moss. *It's Just Attention Disorder—A Video Guide for Kids* by Goldstein.

• Books for school library by Melvin Levine: *All Kinds of Minds* (lower elementary) and *Keeping a Head in School* (grades 6-12).

• Teacher helps: *The A.D.D. Hyperactivity Handbook for Schools* and accompanying *ADAPT* planbook by Harvey Parker. Includes an excellent graphic overview of the accommodations needed for ADHD students. ▶▶

ADHD RESOURCES FOR THE TEACHER

- *Thinking Smarter* for grades 7-12 by Carla Crutsinger. Includes teacher manual and student black-line masters. A well-designed and easy-to-follow format that teaches students how to assimilate, process, and retain information more efficiently.

- *Beyond Maladies and Remedies* by R. Hunt Riegel (a proven valuable and handy resource). Barkley, Goldstein, Gordon, and Phelan also produce other publications for schools (see catalog list).

Special Education Catalogs

Catalogs from these companies offer materials and supplementary texts with high content, lower reading levels, and consistent organization:

Janus Book Publishers, Inc.
2501 Industrial Parkway West
Hayward, CA 94545

Media Materials
Department 860310
2936 Remington Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21211-2891
1-800-638-1010

Holy Bible in Kwikscan (KJV only)
Micro-Books, Inc.
P.O. Box 457
Windermere, FL 32786
(407) 877-0240

Study Skills/Strategies Workbooks for Different Grade Levels

Jamestown Publishers
P. O. Box 9168
Providence, RI 02940

Educators Publishing Service, Inc.
75 Moulton St.
Cambridge, MA 02138-1104
1-800-225-5750

Includes *Writing Skills* and *Reading Comprehension* workbooks

Barnell Loft Instructional Programs
P. O. Box 5380
Chicago, IL 60606-5380
1-800-621-0476

Special Ed Computer Software Catalogs

Special Times
Cambridge Development Laboratory, Inc.
214 Third Ave.
Waltham, MA 02154
1-800-637-0047

Includes the newest software for LD Students: *Write This Way/LD* (Apple/Mac for grades 4-12). Provides ongoing or immediate spelling and grammar feedback, can be individualized, and includes an extensive teacher's guide. About \$200.

Hartley Courseware, Inc.
Box 419
Dimondale, MI 48821
1-800-247-1380

Provides LD/ADHD software programs designed specifically for schools. Many have internal record-keeping systems to help teach-

ers monitor students' progress. Prices range from \$30 to \$700.

Home Learning Kit (LLL)

Lincoln Home Learning Lab can help coordinate the parent's and teacher's efforts. Includes cassette tapes, videos, and notebooks. \$279 plus shipping/handling. For brochure or to order, contact:

Lincoln Home Learning Lab
6710 86th Avenue North
Pinellas Park, FL 34666
1-800-937-ADHD

Support Groups/Newsletters

These organizations can provide information regarding local support groups with presentations and resources for teachers and parents. Both publish newsletters and advertise books, materials, schools, and camps.

CH.A.D.D.
499 Northwest 70th Ave.
Suite 308
Plantation, FL 33317
(305) 587-3700

Learning Disabilities
Association of America
4156 Library Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15234
(412) 341-1515

University Resource Center

Several university centers are conducting research on effective teaching methods and other interventions for ADHD persons. The following center is an excellent resource for anyone interested in up-to-date interventions:

University of California, Irvine
Project Director: Dr. James Swanson
UCI ADD Intervention Center
19262 Jamboree Blvd.
Irvine, CA 92715
(714) 856-8730

(Just published: *School-Based Interventions for Attention Deficit Disorder*)

Schools/Centers

There are many private (usually expensive) schools for LD students but few geared primarily to ADHD students. Contact them anyway to see what they offer, as they are adapting to the market's needs. The lab school at UCI ADD Center is considered one of the best. Also, the Center of ADHD at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center is excellent. Contact any large university to see if they have a lab school for ADHD students.

Florida Association of Independent Special Educational Facilities
9600 S.W. 107 Avenue
Miami, FL 33176
(305) 271-9771

(Florida has several ADHD schools. For a listing contact the above address.)

The Federal Resource Center at the University of Kentucky is identifying successful practices already implemented in U.S. public schools. They will publish a report in spring 1993. (Call 606-257-1337; ask for Bobbi). However, several private schools also submitted information. The researchers found that these Midwest day schools offered effective specific programs for ADHD students:

Elton Academy (1-12)
1755 Melton
Birmingham, MI 48009
(313) 642-1150

ADHD RESOURCES FOR THE TEACHER

The dePaul School of NE Ohio, Inc. (K-8)
1551 East Wallings Rd.
Broadview Heights, OH 44147
(216) 526-0003

If an ADHD student is already failing and exhibiting conduct disorders, contact this private Adventist year-round boarding school:
Miracle Meadows School (ages 6-18)
Route 1, Box 289-B
Salem, WV 26426
(304) 782-3628

Two private Adventist centers have advertised in denominational papers:

Learning Unlimited (ADHD and LD)
6263 N. Co. Rd. 29
Loveland, CO 80538
1-800-528-7323

Potentials (LD)
Rt. 7, Box 85
Ringgold, GA 30736

more information and evaluate whether they could meet the needs of children in your classroom. Evaluation should include a visit to the facility and a check of the qualifications of those operating the program. ☞

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. James Swanson and Others, "School-Based Interventions for A.D.D. Students," *CH.A.D.D.ER* 6:1 (Spring-Summer 1992), p. 8.
2. Russell A. Barkley, *Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Handbook for Diagnosis and Treatment* (New York: Guilford Press, 1990), p. 75.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 519-521.
4. Andrew and Mack Hicks, "The ADHD Classroom," *ADHD/Hyperactivity Newsletter* (Spring 1991), p. 5.
5. Barkley, pp. 61, 503-505, 530-531; ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, "Gifted but Learning Disabled: A Puzzling Paradox,"

Outlook 24:1 (July-August 1992), pp. 4, 6.

6. Michael Gordon, *ADHD/Hyperactivity: A Consumer's Guide for Parents and Teachers* (DeWitt, N.Y.: GSI Publications, 1991), p. 132.

7. Barkley, pp. 503, 504; Sam and Michael Goldstein, *IT'S JUST ATTENTION DISORDER: User's Manual and Study Guide* (Salt Lake City: Neurology Learning & Behavior Center, 1991), pp. 37, 38, 55, 56, 63, 64.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

9. CH.A.D.D. grants permission to reproduce anything in their newsletter without special request unless the material is specifically marked as copy-righted.

10. William Ellis, "Learning Disabilities and the Principal," *Their World* (1991), p. 62.

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