

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) & Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

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What is ADHD/ADD?

- Research suggests that particular chemicals in the brain are lower or poorly regulated in children with ADHD.
- Chemicals in the brain (neurotransmitters) that are believed to be involved in ADHD are:
 - “Dopamine”: believed to regulate the reward centres of the brain, involved in gaining pleasure, and in attentional processes.
 - “Noradrenalin”- believed to be involved in regulating behavioural inhibition and abstract and complex learning processes.

What is ADHD/ADD?

- It leaves people who have difficulty with concentration, controlling impulses and in some cases, hyperactivity.
- Children with ADHD have difficulty controlling their actions and this should be regarded as a challenge for the child, **not** an excuse for their behaviour.
- Children with it live 'in the moment' and have little (useable) sense of the past or the future as they progress.

What is ADHD/ADD?

- They may have learnt the right way to act in a given situation, but are unable to self-regulate their actions and pause for a second.
- It may be a lifelong condition.
- It gives difficulty in the following areas:
 - 1) **Impulsivity** –thinking through actions and speech
 - 2) **Maintaining Concentration**
 - 3) **Being motivated to listen to those in authority and act on what they have been told.**

What is ADHD/ADD?

- Some children do not have hyperactive symptoms although they are impulsive and inattentive = ADD

Remember!

ADHD – is not an excuse or a licence to misbehave

Hyperactivity

- Constantly fidgets with hands, feet or nearest object.
- In situations where the child is expected to remain seated they leave their seat constantly.
- Runs or climbs excessively where it is inappropriate, displays restlessness.
- Is unduly noisy and has difficulty engaging in such activities.
- Exhibits persistence of excessive movement not appropriate to the circumstances.

Inattention

- Fails to sustain attention in tasks or activities.
- Appears not to listen to what is being said.
- Fails to follow through instructions/understand what is asked of them.
- Experiences problems in organising.
- Easily distracted.
- Forgetful of events in course of daily routine or activities.

Impulsivity

- Blurts out answers before the question is completed.
- Fails to wait in line or wait their turn during games/group sessions.
- Interrupts/intrudes in conversations and games.
- Talks excessively, no waiting for responses or follow social codes.
- Needs to be on the go all the time, cannot settle, stay focused or interested.

Some Practical Behaviour Strategies for Teachers

(John Park Educational Psychologist 2006)

Organisation:

- Regular, predicable, structured routine.
- Advance notice of change in routine.
- Visual (colour coded) timetable on display.
- Use a diary to communicate rather than rely on the child, use it to communicate positives.

Some Practical Behaviour Strategies for Teachers

- Keep books and equipment accessible and neatly stacked.
- Keep spares of everything
- Have and use checklists for each activity so the child can be prompted to learn to monitor their own organisation, and reinforced for doing so.

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Positive reinforcement and encouragement:

- Immediate reinforcement or consequences are the most effective.
- Reinforce ordinary everyday good behaviour – e.g. not hitting, not yelling.
- Set small achievable targets at first.

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Appropriate curriculum:

- Have the student repeat instructions before starting a task.
- Ensure all materials are to hand before starting a task.
- Vary pace, tasks and activities.
- Where possible include active rather than passive in-seat learning activities.

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- Minimise outside stimuli as much as possible.
- Ensure instructions are clear and concise. Use visual cues where possible.

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- Set small amounts of work at a time.
- Practise to consolidate skills, - be careful that the student does not become bored.
- Use computer programs for rote learning if possible.

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Task training:

- Check that the pupil knows what to do. Use peer tutoring – but change them regularly.
- Used timed activities, chart successes.

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Rules and consequences:

- Limit the number of classroom rules. Prominently display them, prompt frequently.
- Display clear consequences for broken rules and carry them out.
- Revise rules and consequences frequently.

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- Do not confront, do not argue about the fairness of your decision.
- Apply consequences firmly but kindly to all.

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- Avoid constant use of punishments as much as possible as these have reduced efficacy. ADHD children have difficulty inhibiting their actions in order to plan the next action step. Despite learning and knowing the correct action, and intending to behave inappropriately, impulsivity takes over.

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Social skills training:

- ADHD children do not often know when to stop, and are impulsive in their social interactions.
- Teach verbal and physical courtesies.

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Energy outlets:

- Allow a stretch and a physical activity after completing a task.
- Incorporate 'out of seat activities'.
- Use ADHD children for messages to other staff – give them a written note!
- Involve school sports.
- Have gross motor programs for poor co-ordination.

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- Allow them to fiddle with an agreed object, e.g. a stress ball.
- Try to anticipate possible problems and have planned responses.
- Teach and practice the difference between 'in class' and 'out of class' behaviour modes.
- Allow calming period down after coming into class, encourage a calm classroom atmosphere.

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- Plan ahead (with the child) for transition times.
- Give whole class stretching activities midway through lessons.
- Play statue games – how long can they stand still. Link to other activity to make it relevant.

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- Plan a chill out place that the child can access legitimately when the need arises without disrupting others, and before they blow up. Because of the limited ability to inhibit their action, they may need a (rehearsed) unobtrusive signal for this.
- Use them for “jobs” that are active.

Some Practical Behaviour Strategies for Teachers

- Do not confront, do not argue about the fairness of your decision.

Some Practical Behaviour Strategies for Teachers

Organisation:

- Have a monitoring system to track their organisation and readiness for tasks.
- Liaise with parents to ensure consistency of behaviour management and to establish routines that they can develop automatically.

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- Use a targeted incentive system for organisational skills.
- Colour coded timetable.

Some useful Websites

1. www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk – about ADHD
2. www.practicalparent.org.uk – behaviour strategies
3. www.rcpsych.ac.uk – fact sheets
4. www.mind.org.uk – understanding ADHD
5. www.cafamily.org.uk – about ADHD/support groups
6. www.addiss.co.uk – information service