



SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH ATTENTION DEFICITS

HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL GOOD ABOUT THESELVES

- Be certain that your child's eating and sleeping requirements are met and satisfactory for their needs.
- Monitor the amount of time your child spends watching TV and playing video games. Encourage social interaction.
- Make physical surroundings as simple as possible. Remove any distractions.
- Talk with your child about their fears, worries and concerns. Listen to your child when they speak. Help your child identify feelings, i.e. say, "I know you must feel angry, sad, rejected, etc. when..."
- Help your child find a constructive way to gain peer approval.
- Try to select teachers who understand the need to tolerate individual differences yet have the patience and skill to manage classroom misbehavior.

GIVE YOUR CHILD GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOR IN THE HOMES

- Choose only important rules and list them or make pictures of them.
- Follow a violation of rules with an immediate consequence.
- Gain your child's full attention before speaking to them.
- Post a schedule for daily routine.
- Break tasks into small units. Set timer for 10 minutes followed by a break for another 10 minutes.
- Phrase expectations positively, i.e. "Put your feet on the floor" rather than "Don't put your feet on the desk."
- For additional information on behavior modification principles, read *Parents are Teachers* by Wesley Becker.

PUNISH WITH LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

- Call "time out" when behavior is unacceptable. One minute per year of age is recommended. The time out area should not allow for play or social interaction.
- Take away a toy that is misused.
- Put away toys that repeatedly cause fights.
- Use token reward system for pleasant behavior. Start the day with 24 tokens and remove one each time the child misbehaves. Give the message that each day has 24 hours that can be filled with joy or reduced by unkindness to others. Have the child turn in tokens for a special surprise at the end of each day.
- Praise your child for good behavior. Reward each five (5) minutes of good behavior. With enough credits, the child earns a special treat (having a story read to them, ice cream, etc.)
- Reward the group when several children are getting along well together.

LIMIT DISTRACTIONS

- Provide out of sight storage for toys not in use.
- Permit play with only a few toys at a time.
- Sort toys based on logical use. Insist that the child turn in one basket before checking out another.

- Supervise outdoor play.
- Remove distractions from study areas.
- Provide a special study area in a secluded spot in the house.
- Insist on household quiet for homework time.

SECURE THE CHILD'S ATTENTION

- Touch the child on the shoulder. Have the child look you in the eye. Ask the child to repeat your instructions.
- Use a 10-minute timer to keep child focused on one activity for that period. Do not permit child to do anything else. Have the child check their work.
- Limit homework time to what the teacher states is normal. Ask the teacher about the time expected to be spent each night and allow only that. Ask the teacher to reward or praise the child for completing and turning in assignments.
- Explore computer programs, if available, which give continuous feedback about right and wrong responses.
- Reinforce important communication in writing or via recording. Include messages that say, "I love you" as well as instructions.

HELP YOUR CHILD FOCUS ATTENTION TO IMPORTANT FACTORS

- Quiz "What was the most important thing he said?" "How many things do the instructions ask you to do?" "What are they?"
- Help your child understand directional concepts of up/down, right/left, and those of inclusion some/all, and one/a few.
- Teach the child to highlight key words of phrases when reading passages.
- Teach the child to read the questions they are expected to answer before reading the assignment. Have the child reread the questions when finished and then answer them.

GIVE YOUR CHILD THE TOOLS TO HELP SELF MANAGE

- Show your child how to keep their place on the page by using a ruler or their finger.
- Help your child space their words on paper by using a finger as a measure between words.
- Help your child put math problems on graph paper to maintain proper alignment.
- Teach your child when they are in a dilemma to stop, identify the problem, and think of several solutions. When the child chooses a solution, have them check the results.
- Teach relaxation strategies, i.e. taking a deep breath, tensing muscles and relaxing them one at a time, etc.
- Teach your child to prepare for changes.

FIND AND ENCOURAGE STRENGTHS AND INTERESTS

- Support and nurture talents.
- Find sports adapted to child. Soccer and swimming are good choices.
- Insist upon participation in areas of strength, i.e. music and art, even though remediation is needed in other areas).