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And the ADHD Information Library at NewIdeas.net

101 Classroom Interventions

FROM THE ADHD INFORMATION LIBRARY
AT NEWIDEAS.NET

101 Classroom Interventions Elementary School Edition

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101 Elementary School Classroom Interventions from ADDinSchool.com

*Powerful insights from teachers, school psychologists,
and Dr. Cowan*

The structured school classroom setting can be a tremendous challenge for individuals who have difficulty sitting still, being quiet, and paying attention to the right thing. We want your ADHD student to be successful in school! We hope that these ideas will be helpful to you.

We have collected these interventions for ADHD students from a number of sources over the past 20 years. We do not know who should get the credit for many of them. So we will simply say “thank you” to all of the professional educators, educational psychologists, and family therapists who patiently work to help students with Attention Deficit Disorder.

When you visit us at ADDinSchool.com, you will find over 500 classroom interventions for students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. These interventions are organized into two main sections:

- Classroom Interventions for Elementary School children, ages 5 to 12
- Classroom Interventions for Junior High School students and High School students, teenagers ages 12 to 18

We would also like to invite you, the professional educator, to share your experience with us. If you have any great ideas that you have seen help your students with attention deficit disorder, we would like to know about them, and we will add them to the web site. Feel free to use these interventions in any non-commercial way. If you belong to a support group, such as ChADD, or other ADHD Support Group, please feel free to share this information with others who might have ADHD students, but please share the ebook in its complete format without changes, including the proper citations, etc.

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Using this eBook as a Resource

Elementary School and ADHD:

Can you imagine the most difficult setting for a child who has difficulty sitting still, difficulty paying attention, and loves to talk to other children?

Imagine that this child has to go into this setting every day, and is expected to perform successfully in this environment.

When you think about it, it is the classroom that is this difficult setting for these kids. There are a lot of distractions, yet they are told to sit still, don't move, don't talk, to pay attention to boring worksheets, and keep on task until the work is finished. None of these things come easily to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder kids. But day by day, off to school they go.

Many children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder "hit a wall" in elementary school as their school year progresses, often about ten or twelve weeks into the school year.

Every week they have gotten just a little farther and farther behind, until they're so far behind that it's impossible to catch up.

They lose their homework assignments, even after they have spent hours working on them (hint: it really is in their backpack!) And they study hard for tests only to perform poorly the next day. They just slip farther and farther behind with each passing week.

ADHD is most often recognized and referred for treatment in third grade. This is when elementary school kids most often first hit the "academic wall."

In third grade they are expected to do more work, and to work more on their own. They are given more homework to do as well.

We also see many referrals for evaluations in the seventh grade, or when the child leaves Elementary School for Junior High School, with several classes and several teachers.

Many Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder kids who found ways to compensate in Elementary School are totally lost in Junior High School.

How can we help these children to be more successful in elementary school?

That's what this little resource all about. This is a collection of classroom interventions that I have found from a variety of resources - teachers, parents, school psychologists, and even a few of my own from my twenty-something years as a family therapist working with ADHD kids.

Parents, just a note to you:

Please just look over these ideas, and then find one or two to discuss with your child's teacher. Please do not take the ebook and make some kind of demand for the teacher to implement all of the interventions. Relax, take a deep breath, and find one or two ideas that might really help your child with ADHD.

At our ADDinSchool.com website we have 500 classroom interventions for ADHD students, covering both elementary school ages, and teenagers.

Take the time to search our website to find even more interventions to help your child.

Tips for the Classroom Teacher

Studies show that somewhere between 5% and 9% of children have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, making it very important for teachers to understand both the myths and realities of the disorder.

True, some children diagnosed with ADHD have some other disorder that is similar, and they can usually benefit from these classroom interventions as well. Kids with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, or Asperger's, or Tourette's Syndrome are often misdiagnosed with ADHD. But their learning problems are often very similar, as are the solutions. Here are some brief thoughts that teachers should consider:

1. Don't buy into the line, "He'd behave if he wanted to." That may or may not be true. He may behave just fine from time to time, and if you encourage him, he may do well for long periods of time. But his problem is not that he does not want to behave, rather his problem has a medical basis that makes it hard for him to sustain self-control, especially if he gets excited.
2. Understand that of all of the kids with ADHD, about 60% or so are hyperactive, and that 40% or so are not hyper at all. Also know that about 60% are male, and about 40% are female. Not all kids with ADD will cause problems. Many will just sit and stare. Only one out of three kids with the Attention Deficit Disorder will ever get help from a professional.
3. Don't dismiss the behaviors as either poor parenting on their part, or poor classroom management on your part. What's going on is far more complicated than that. The parent's may be as frustrated as you are. Try to partner with them in helping the student to be more successful.
4. Before talking to the parents, get a second opinion from another teacher, the school psychologist, etc. When you do meet with the parents, make a list of the behaviors that you are concerned about. If the child has never been diagnosed by a doctor, don't try to diagnose the child yourself, as this will simply make the parents defensive.

Instead, just report the behaviors that you are observing, and ask the parents to get it checked out by a doctor.

5. Invite the parents to come in to your classroom and quietly observe. More than one visit will be required, as having the parent present the first time creates a "unique" situation which stimulates the child to do better than normal.

6. Be aware that the ADHD child often does very well in unique or novel situations, or in one-to-one situations. This would include his visit to a physician or a therapist to diagnose a problem. Also be aware that the hardest place for an ADHD child is in the classroom setting. There are dozens of distractions, pressures, and rules that can be difficult for the child.

And teachers, please be sure to visit us at <http://www.ADDinSchool.com> to find over 500 classroom interventions to help children with ADHD be more successful in school.

Identifying ADHD in Classrooms: Things Teachers Should Consider

You see certain kids in your classroom. There are two, maybe three of them. They act like "space cadets," paying attention to someone or something else when they should be paying attention to you. Or they are always out of their seat, sharpening their pencil or wanting a drink. They cannot sit still for very long, and they are disturbing others. Or worse.

Are these kids ADHD? Or are they just undisciplined? Here are some questions to ask yourself, and a bit of background information for you to consider.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the phrase that is used to describe children who have significant problems with high levels of distractibility or inattention, impulsiveness, and often with excessive motor activity levels. There may be deficits in attention and impulse control without hyperactivity being present. In fact, recent studies indicate that as many as 40% of the ADHD kids may not be hyperactive.

Research shows that there are several things happening in the brain of the ADHD child that causes the disorder. The main problem is that certain parts of the Central Nervous System are under-stimulated, while other parts may be over-stimulated. In some hyperactive kids there is also an uneven flow of blood in the brain, with some parts of the brain getting too much blood flow, and other centers not getting as much. Certain medications, or other treatments, can be used to address these problems.

I know this all sounds pretty vague, but the brain is very complex. It is the subtle variations in the "causes" of the ADHD that account for the different types, or manifestations, of the disorder: some are hyperactive, some in a fog, some depressed, some anxious, and so on. You can read more about the different types of ADHD at NewIdeas.net.

Often the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder child has special educational needs, though not always. Most Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder kids can be successful in the regular classroom with some help. Teachers can find over 500 classroom interventions to help children be successful in school at ADDinSchool.com.

As a teacher ask yourself these questions:

1. Can the child pay attention in class?

Some ADHD kids can pay attention for a while, but typically can't sustain it, unless they are really interested in the topic. Other ADHD kids cannot pay attention to just one thing at a time, such as not being able to pay attention to just you when you are trying to teach them something. There are many different aspects to "attention," and the ADHD child would have a deficit in at least one aspect of it.

2. Is the child impulsive? Does he call out in class? Does he bother other kids with his impulsivity?

These kids often cannot stop and think before they act, and they rarely think of the consequences of their actions first. Impulsivity tends to hurt peer relationships, especially in junior high school years.

3. Does he have trouble staying in his seat when he's supposed to? How is he on the playground? Can he wait in line, or does he run ahead of the rest of the class? Does he get in fights often?

4. Can he wait?

Emotionally, these children often cannot delay gratification. Combined with impulsivity, this often leads to difficulty waiting their turn in games, waiting in lines, waiting for anything.

5. Is he calm?

They are constantly looking for clues as to how they are doing. They may display a wide range of moods, which are often on the extremes: they act too sad, too angry, too excited, too whatever.

6. Is the child working at grade level? Is he working at his potential? Does he/she stay on task well? Does he fidget a lot? Does he have poor handwriting?

Most ADHD kids have trouble staying on task, staying seated, and many have terrible handwriting.

7. Does he have difficulty with rhythm? Or with the concept of time, or time management? Does he lack awareness about "personal space" and what is appropriate regarding touching others? Does he seem unable to read facial expressions and know their meanings?

Many children with ADHD also have Sensory Integration Dysfunctions (as many as 10% to 20% of all children might have some degree of Sensory Integration Dysfunction). SID is simply the ineffective processing of information received through the senses. As a result these children have problems with learning, development, and behavior.

8. Does he seem to be immature developmentally, educationally, or socially?

It has been suggested by research that children and teens with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder may lag 20% to 40% behind children without ADHD developmentally. In other words, a ten year old with ADHD may behave, or learn, as you would expect a seven year old to behave or learn. A fifteen year old with ADHD may behave, or learn, as you would expect a ten year old to behave, or learn.

There is a lot to learn about ADHD. Both teachers and parents can learn more by visiting the ADHD Information Library's family of web sites, beginning with ADDinSchool.com for hundreds of classroom interventions to help our children succeed in school.

The ADD ADHD Information Library's Family of websites includes:

NewIdeas.net - The ADHD Information Library is the most comprehensive resource on ADHD on the web. Over 300 articles for parents and teachers.

ADDinSchool.com - Five Hundred classroom interventions.

ADD101.com - Basic ADHD information for parents.

ADD411.com - One hundred recommended ADHD books and resources. It's the ADHD Bookstore.

AttentionDeficitDisorder.ws - Links to hundreds of ADHD related websites.

ADD-Products.com - Researching the effectiveness of alternative treatments for ADHD.

ADHD is Not Related to I.Q.

It's important to know that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Intelligence, as measured by I.Q., are two different things.

Some parents are convinced that if their child has ADD it means that they are retarded. On the other hand, other parents say, "I've heard that ADD kids are really very, very bright. I think my child must have ADD," as if they wanted to wear a button that said, "My child is smarter than your child because he has ADD." Both of these points of view are unfortunate, and are based on bad information.

Intelligence falls into a Bell Curve, even for those with ADHD.



Some Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder kids are below average I.Q., and some are even retarded.

Other ADD ADHD kids are above average I.Q., and some are even quite brilliant.

But the awful truth for a parent to hear is that MOST children (about 2 out of 3) are AVERAGE I.Q. That's why they call it "average." And most Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder kids have average I.Q. as well.

Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder just have a very tough time in the classroom setting. We tend to see lower academic achievement than we would predict based on the child's I.Q.

If they are really smart and they ought to be A students, we are disappointed when they're getting C's instead. If they ought to be B students, they're getting D's instead. Their school performance is disappointing, but it probably is not due to a lack of intelligence.

Setting Up the Classroom for ADHD Students

Right from day one, make clear rules and post them, with logical consequences and with rewards. Then, be consistent.

Move your ADD ADHD student's desk to where there are fewer distractions, close to the teacher to monitor and encourage, or near a well-focused child from time to time.

Privacy boards can work well, but should never embarrass a child. Use them for short-term projects, not as his permanent home.

Students with attention problems do better in classrooms with four walls than in an "open pod" arrangement. Open pods allow too many visual and auditory distracters throughout the day.

It is usually better to use rows for seating arrangement and to try to avoid tables with groups of students. Often the groups are too distracting for the ADHD child. In the ideal setting, provide tables for specific group projects, and traditional rows for independent work. Of course, we are rarely in an ideal setting.



Every once in a while try arranging desks in a horseshoe shape to allow for appropriate discussion while permitting independent work.

Your ADD ADHD student's desk should be near the teacher (for prompting and redirection), away from other challenging students, and not touching others' desks. However, if you notice that your attention deficit student looks around a lot to see where noises are coming from because he is very distracted by what he hears, he may benefit from being seated near the rear of the classroom. Experiment with seat location in the front of the classroom (near the board) and instructional area if your student is more visually distracted.

It is important for the teacher to be able to move about the entire room and to have access to all students. Practice "Management By Walking Around" in the classroom. The more personal interaction, the better.

Have all of the ADHD students seated nearest to the place in the class where you will give directions or lectures - at least as close as possible without being punitive.

To minimize distractions, seat the ADHD student away from both the hallway and windows. Keep a portion of the room free of obvious visual and auditory distractions. Have at least a part of the room free from bright, loud, or distracting objects.

Really, don't seat him next to the classroom pets.

Use desk dividers and/or study carrels carefully. Make sure they are used as a "study area option" rather than as a punishment or a permanent solution for you.

Your attention deficit student will do better when he is able to anticipate times requiring increased concentration. Make a copy of the day's schedule and post it for your students.

If your ADD ADHD student tends to lose focus, and his activity-level increases during the day, schedule the most demanding tasks in the morning.

In our desire to provide an engaging classroom for students, try to be aware of the auditory and visual distractions present. Attempt to place your ADD ADHD student where these would have the least effect.

Seat those really smart and quiet girls next to the ADHD child. I know, the girl won't really like it, and you don't want this to impact her learning. But it might help you a bit, and might help the ADHD child just a bit as well. It's worth a short-term trial. Start with just one subject a day.

Stand near the attention deficit student when giving directions or presenting the lesson. Try to make extra eye contact with him.

Use the ADD ADHD student's worksheet as an example when possible. And that is only as a positive example.

We know that teachers are neither God to control the weather, nor the janitors to control the thermostats. But as best as you can, provide comfortable lighting and room temperature.

Use individual headphones to play white noise or soft music to block out other auditory distractions. Be sure the music is not too interesting so that it becomes a distraction.

Presenting Your Lesson to ADHD Children

ADHD kids are easily bored, even by you. Try to increase the pace of lesson presentation. Include a variety of activities during each lesson appropriate to your grade level.

Use peer tutoring when possible with Attention Deficit students. Get older children to help the ADHD student, and perhaps allowing the ADD ADHD student to tutor a younger child. Doing this once in a while breaks up the day, and allows interesting interaction with others.

Provide an outline to ADHD students with key concepts or vocabulary prior to lesson presentation.

Use multisensory presentations, but be careful with audio-visual aids to be sure that distractions are kept to a minimum. For example, be sure interesting pictures and or sounds relate directly to the material to be learned.

Make lessons brief, or break longer presentations into discrete segments. Sprints are better than marathons.

Actively involve the attention deficit student during the lesson presentation. Have the elementary school age ADHD student be the instructional aid who is to write key words or ideas on the board.

Encourage the ADD ADHD students to develop mental images of the concepts or information being presented. Ask them about their images to be sure they are visualizing the key material to be learned. Some children cannot visualize anything. Ask them to visualize a tree by a lake, and they can't do it. This makes it much harder to learn by reading stories.

Try role-playing activities to act out key concepts, historical events, etc. I have taught ADD ADHD students the history of the Revolutionary War in the parking lot of the school, using cars, trees, and other objects to represent events and places in history. This can work well.

Worksheets and Tests:

Stress accuracy instead of quantity of work. This is really what you want as a teacher anyway.

Many ADHD students have “brain jams” as soon as work is put on a timer. Timed tests are the worst. It’s a brain-workload thing.

The ADHD child may be easily overwhelmed and discouraged. Reduce the quantity of work on a page. Instead of giving 30 problems on a page, give only 10 or 15. Then the ADHD child won't be overwhelmed, and successes will build up his self-confidence.

Your ADHD student in elementary school may tend to want to be “the first one done” on assignments and rush through them. Set reasonable accuracy goals with him and collect the entire group's work at once to reduce time pressures. Stress being “fast” and “accurate.”

Use larger type on your worksheets and tests. It is easier to read.

Keep your page format simple. Don’t include unnecessary pictures or visual distractions that are unrelated to the problems to be solved.

Provide only one or two activities per page. Have more white space on each page. Use dark black print only.

Draw borders around parts of the page you want to emphasize.

Avoid handwritten worksheets or tests.

Use buff-colored paper rather than white if the room's lighting creates a glare on white paper. Florescent lights are the worst.

Write clear, simple directions. Underline key direction words or vocabulary, or have the students underline these words as you read directions with them.

Divide the page into sections and use a system to cover up and hide sections not currently being used. If possible, use different colors on worksheets or tests for emphasis, particularly on those involving rote, potentially boring work. Have the students use colored pens or pencils.

Give frequent short quizzes and avoid long tests. Provide practice tests.

Provide alternative environments with fewer distractions for test taking.

Using a tape recorder, have the student record test answers and assignments or give the student oral examinations. Keep in mind that timed tests are very hard for ADHD kids.

Shorten assignments. If the child can demonstrate adequate concept mastery in 10 or 20 questions/problems, don't require 30-40 problems.

Organization

Model an organized classroom, and model the strategies you use to cope with disorganization. There are many important skills that you can teach to your students.

Establish a daily classroom routine and schedule. Show that you value organization by allowing 5 minutes each day for the children to organize their desks, folders, etc.

Reinforce organization by having a "desk fairy" that gives a daily award for the most organized row of desks.

Use individual assignment charts or pads that can go home with the child to be signed daily by parents if necessary.

Develop a clear system for keeping track of completed and uncompleted work such as having individual hanging files in which each child can place completed work and a special folder for uncompleted work.



Develop a color coding method for your room in which each subject is associated with a certain color that is that subject's textbook cover and on the folder or workbook for that subject.

Develop a reward system for in-school work and homework completion. One example of a system that reinforces both work quality and work quantity involves translating points earned into "dollars" to be used for silent auction at the end of grading period.

For children needing more immediate reinforcement, each completed assignment could earn the child a "raffle ticket" with her/his name on it. Prizes or special privileges could be awarded on the basis of a random drawing held daily or weekly.

Write schedule and timelines on the board each day.

Provide due dates for assignments each day.

Divide longer assignments into sections and provide due dates or times for the completion of each section.

Tape a checklist to the child's desk or put one in each subject folder/notebook that outlines the steps in following directions, or checking to be sure an assignment is complete.

Provide study guides or outlines of the content you want the child to learn, or let the child build her/his own study guide with worksheets that have been positively corrected.

Be clear about when student movement is permitted and when it is discouraged, such as during independent work times.

The biggest complaint from both ADHD students, and their parents, is that it will take the child two hours to complete a homework assignment that it takes other students just twenty minutes to do.

The second biggest complaint is that after spending hours getting the homework done, the child can't find it to turn it in the next day.

If the ADHD child maintains that he/she did the homework, but just cannot find it, it can be found within the "black hole of homework," which is either the child's desk or the child's backpack. Really, it's there. Make them really look, and they'll find it.

Behavioral Interventions

Keep the classroom behavior rules simple and clear.

Have the class agree on what the rules should be, and why.

Define and review at least some of the classroom rules each day.

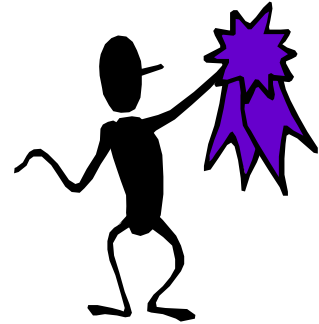
Implement a classroom behavior management system. Actively reinforce and reward desired classroom behaviors. This will “pay-off” sooner than later.

Use self-monitoring and self-reinforcement of on-task behaviors during independent work time. Use a kitchen timer to indicate periods of intense independent work and reinforce the class for appropriate behavior during this period. Start with brief periods (5-10 minutes) and gradually increase the period as the class demonstrates success.

When necessary, develop contracts with an individual student and her/his parents to reinforce a few specific behaviors. Set hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly goals depending on the reinforcement needs of the specific student. Provide frequent feedback on the student's progress toward these goals.

Provide a changing array of backup rewards or privileges so that students do not "burn out" on a particular system. For example, students can earn tickets for a daily or weekly raffle for the display of positive behavior.

To improve out-of-the-classroom behavior, allow the class to earn a reward based on the compliments they receive on their behavior from other teachers, lunchroom staff, playground aides and principals.



Avoid giving the whole class negative consequences based on the ADHD child's behavior. This will just give the other kids one more reason to pick on the ADHD student.

The ADHD child, as well as the whole class, can benefit from implementation of social skills curriculum for the entire class.

Modeling, and requiring the children to use, a systematic method of talking through classroom conflicts and problems can be particularly valuable for the ADHD child. To implement this, teachers are referred to the literature on cognitive-behavioral approaches to developing the child's self-talk and problem solving.

Praise specific behaviors. For example, "I like how you wrote down all your assignments correctly," rather than "Good boy!"

Use visual and auditory cues as behavioral reminders. For example, have two large jars at the front of the room, with one filled with marbles or some other object. When the class is behaving appropriately, move some marbles to the other jar and let the students know that when the empty jar is filled they can earn a reward.

Frequently move about the room so that you can maximize your degree of proximity control. It is “management by walking around.”

When appropriate, give students choices about several different activities that could choose to work on one at a time.

With students who can be quite volatile and may initially refuse negative consequences (such as refusing to go to a time-out), set a kitchen timer for a brief period (1-2 minutes) after refusal has occurred. Explain to the child that the child can use the two minutes to decide if she/he will go to time out on her/his own or if more serious consequence must be imposed.

Several experienced teachers insist this method has successfully reduced the extent to which they have had to physically enforce certain negative consequences with students and seems to de-escalate the situation.

Increasing “Time On Task”

Promote time on-task with attention deficit students, never time off-task. Reward the behaviors that you want the ADHD student in elementary school to do, not the one's that you don't want him to do. Pick and choose what behaviors you reward, and what you ignore.

Give a minute timer to keep on his desk. Ask the ADD ADHD child how long he thinks it would take to perform a certain task. Let him set his own time and race against the timer.

Most elementary school students with attention deficit disorder have difficulty with sustaining attention on tasks over time. Students with ADHD problems may need different levels of stimulation to keep them focused.

ADHD students will do better in elementary school classrooms with four walls than in an "open pod" arrangement, which will have a lot of distractions.

Break work up into smaller segments and sprints, and allow your ADHD student frequent breaks to move around inside and outside the classroom. This may vary from a daily outside walk, doing errands around the building, to classroom stretching exercises.

Schedule the most demanding tasks in the morning.

Your ADD ADHD student in elementary school may get overwhelmed with large assignments. His attention may wander after guided practice on similar tasks. Adjust the assignment down to smaller intervals. Give the assignment one sheet at a time.

Assign every third problem, rather than every one, for completion to reflect mastery level. Cut apart single worksheets into strips. Tailor guided practice to occur during those time periods. Schedule breaks after this “optimum attention” time period and then return to the assignment.

Seat work is often extremely difficult for students with attention deficit disorder. This can become compounded when the teacher is instructing another small group. Check on your ADD ADHD student as much as possible or have him check-in with the teacher at certain time intervals.

Dealing with Impulsive Behaviors

"ADHD" children in elementary school tend to act without thinking first. Behaviorally, this shows itself in a lack of understanding of cause and effect. Attention Deficit students do things without thinking about the consequences of their actions. They say things without considering how others will respond.

Research also suggests that attention deficit students in elementary school can often verbalize the rules in place for behavior but have difficulty internalizing them and translating them into thoughtful behavior. Difficulties in delaying gratification also add to the impulsivity.

Some clinicians believe that this lack of self-control (poor regulation and inhibition of behavior), rather than their ability to pay attention, is the main problem with ADHD. How can you help these ADHD students with their self-control?

By having attention deficit students in elementary school think "out loud" when they are problem-solving, the teacher will gain insights into their reasoning style and the process will slow them down before they respond impulsively. Or ask the ADHD student your question, but ask him not to answer for 15 or 20 seconds, long enough to think about it first and not just respond impulsively.

Quite often, attention deficit students will continue to have difficulty with certain types of interactions on a regular basis; difficulty in taking turns, over-interpreting others' remarks as hostile, personalizing others' actions excessively, and misreading social cues. With the help of your ADHD student, his school teacher, and his trusted peers, problems that happen over and over again can be identified.

Role-play the problems, and possible solutions, ahead of time. Use his friends to help in the role-playing. Have your ADHD student practice these responses during the school day and have him and others give you feedback on their success.

Teach your attention deficit students in elementary school to "Stop and Think" before talking. This will help him to learn to slow down before talking. Encourage thoughtful responding and decrease impulsivity by waiting 10 to 15 seconds to receive responses during whole group instruction.

Keep the classroom behavior rules in elementary school simple and clear. Have the class agree on what the rules should be. Define and review classroom rules each day.

Implement a classroom behavior management system. Actively reward the behaviors that you want the students to do. Focus on the positive.

Helping Students Stay Focused

Students using medication to treat ADD ADHD problems will have their optimal attention effects for Methylphenidate (Ritalin) 45 minutes to 2 hours after taking the medication. Other medications differ, and it is best to check with the physician about the time of maximum medication effects. If possible, try to schedule the most attention-demanding tasks for the ADD ADHD student during this medication window. Work with parents to coordinate this.

And yes, at about 3 hours after taking the medication they might have an emotional “melt-down.” This is part of the way the body metabolizes the stimulant medication. If it happens often, be sure to tell the parents to inform the physician.

If the student looks “over-focused” or “zombied-out” then the physician needs to know, as the child is taking too much medication per dose.

An individualized plan that emphasizes stimulating re-enforcers on a consistent basis has a good chance of success. Consequences and reinforcement should be as immediate as possible. Changing the reward periodically is usually necessary.

If your ADD ADHD students believe that you are on their side, and that you really want them to be successful, then your behavioral plans will probably succeed. If they believe that you are out to get them, then they will view your behavioral plans as punitive and manipulative. Same plan, different interpretation and results. You must be on the ADD ADHD child's side. You must convince the child with attention deficit disorder that you want him to succeed.

Rewards and verbal praise on a continual basis will change the attention problem the most effectively. One suggested system is the "point system". Feedback that is delayed or variable is problematic in that your student may have difficulty in correlating delay and gratification. Your student may begin to make faulty behavioral connections in these situations.

ADD ADHD students respond well to rewards that they experience as highly-stimulating. Computer games, artistic media, and action-based play (sports or other physical activity), building sets, and activities outside of the school setting, can be effective.

Ask your attention deficit student what he would like to earn. Your ADHD student is the best source of identifying the reward.

Rewards should be changed frequently to maintain their "novelty power".

It is important in any behavioral system that your ADD ADHD student finds early success to "buy in" to the program.

One of the characteristics of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is the variability of work performance across settings, tasks, and over time. In other words, ADD ADHD students have good days and bad days, good hours and bad hours. Rather than take high performance on some tasks as an indicator that low performance on other tasks is due to low motivation and willfulness, it is important to understand this as the nature of attention problems. Your ADD ADHD student will do better on tasks he finds inherently interesting and stimulating. He will tend to do worse on tasks that required sustained attention and are boring.

If you bore your ADHD students, they will perform poorly. When they perform poorly, you might quietly ask yourself if your lesson was boring.

About Us

Douglas Cowan, Psy.D., M.S., MFT is a Family Therapist, writer, and serves part-time in ministry. He is a former hospital program administrator, therapist, and researcher who has helped over 1,000 ADHD children and their families be more successful since 1986.

He is the clinical editor of the ADHD Information Library and ADD in School dot com helping over 400,000 parents and teachers find answers for ADHD each year.

Douglas Cowan has the following educational background:

- * Doctorate in Psychology;
- * Masters of Science Degree in Marriage, Family, and Child Therapy;
- * Bachelors Degree in Philosophy and Religion;

Dr. Cowan has become very familiar with a variety of "alternative" or "additional treatments" for ADHD, including counseling interventions, diet interventions, amino acids, essential fatty acids, and EEG biofeedback training. He also is familiar with a variety of medications used in the treatment of ADHD, and has provided lectures to pediatricians and family practice physicians on best use standards for these medications.

In 1996 Dr. Cowan was approached by Gregory Young, Ph.D., Oxon., then President of VAXA International, then in San Diego, CA, to study the effectiveness of their current formula of Attend. Following that project, Dr. Young asked him to study the effectiveness of a new formula that was being considered for production, to replace the product formula on the market at that time. This study was completed in 1997. Dr. Cowan received no compensation for either study. Dr. Cowan recommends VAXA products, along with other types of "alternative treatments" for ADHD.

These products may be purchased on-line at <http://nutrition2you.com>

Dr. Cowan is currently serving on the following Boards:

- * Member, Medical Advisory Board of VAXA International of Tampa, FL.
- * President, Board of Directors for KAXL 88.3 FM radio, Bakersfield, CA

Helpful Observations From Your Child's Classroom Teacher

Student's Name: _____

Grade: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

As a Professional Educator, and as your child's teacher, I very much want to see your child be successful at school, at home, with friends, and into his future. Like you, I want your child to reach his or her full potential, and I count it a privilege to be your child's teacher at this stage in his or her life.

I work with, and observe, many students in my classroom each day. Here are some of my observations regarding your child that I thought to be important enough to bring to your attention.

<i>I observe that your child:</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Very Often</i>
Struggles to complete his/her assigned tasks	_____	_____	_____
Doesn't seem to listen or pay attention	_____	_____	_____
Has a hard time concentrating on difficult tasks	_____	_____	_____
Is easily distracted	_____	_____	_____
Is impulsive, or acts without thinking first	_____	_____	_____
Can't seem to organize schoolwork	_____	_____	_____
Interrupts or blurts out answers in class	_____	_____	_____
Is very restless and has difficulty staying seated	_____	_____	_____
Is always "on the go"	_____	_____	_____
Gets mad easily, or is easily frustrated	_____	_____	_____
Gets angry when told to do something	_____	_____	_____
Has trouble with reading or spelling tasks	_____	_____	_____
Has trouble with verbal directions	_____	_____	_____
Has poor handwriting	_____	_____	_____
Seems afraid of many things, or worries a lot	_____	_____	_____
Has trouble shifting from one task to the next	_____	_____	_____

As your child's teacher, I want to make you aware of these observations so that we can begin to help your child to be more successful in the classroom setting. It is not my intention to alarm you, or to discourage you. Let's work together to make this a great year for your child! On the reverse side of this form are some suggestions for you to consider that might help your child to be more successful here at school.

There are a number of reasons why your child might be having the problems reported on the front page. Take a minute to consider some of the following items, and see if some adjustments could be made at home that might help your child to be more successful at school.

Is my child getting enough sleep? Yes No

Many children and teenagers require from eight (8) to ten (10) hours of sleep every night, but few children get that much sleep. See if there are some changes that you could make in your daily routine to allow your child more hours of sleep.

Is my child drinking enough water? Yes No

Here is another easy remedy that can make a big difference. You, and your child, need to drink about six (6) to eight (8) glasses of water every day. Sodas, teas, and coffees don't count toward this requirement. If your child drinks less than this amount of water he or she could become dehydrated.

Since our brains are made up of over 75% water, a lack of water can cause us to be distracted, lose focus, and perform poorly at school, in sports, and around the house.

Is my child eating right? Yes No

Most children eat a low protein, high carbohydrate diet beginning at breakfast and continuing throughout the day. However, when it comes to helping your brain work at its very best, your child needs to be eating a higher (60%) protein, lower (40%) carbohydrate diet. This means no more breakfast cereal in the morning, and no more Pop Tarts either. Especially avoid foods that are high in carbohydrates and high in sugar content. Sugars paired with carbohydrates can make your child "hyper" and less focused at school. For more ideas to improve eating habits for greater success at school, visit our eating program web page at <http://newideas.net>

Is my child feeling well? Yes No

Sometimes when children have these kinds of problems in a classroom it is because they are simply not feeling well, or they might be taking certain medications for allergies, or other medical conditions. Sometimes these behaviors are the result of certain conditions that make it hard for your child to pay attention to difficult tasks such as schoolwork or chores. Attention problems can be explained to you in greater detail by your physician, and you can read about them at home by visiting our website at www.ADD101.com.

Is there more that I can do to help my child with his schoolwork? Yes No

Life can be busy, and often parents can get distracted and forget to oversee their children as they do their schoolwork. Involved parents can be the biggest reason for a child's success in school. Let your child know that his education is important by being his mentor, coach, and cheerleader! Encourage your child to want to learn, and succeed.



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