

# Important Information for the Teacher About Attention Deficit Disorder

Your student has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This diagnosis was previously known as Attention Deficit Disorder or ADD. The brochure that you received along with this handout will explain details about this illness.

As his/her teacher, you will play an integral role in this student's treatment. In the classroom, you will be in a unique position to observe him/her. What you observe will be very important information to share with the treatment team, including the student's family and the staff of your local mental health center.

Your input is essential in helping this student and their family gauge the impact of treatment and helping to determine when medication adjustments may be needed. You may be asked to periodically complete a behavioral survey on this student.

Respecting the confidentiality of your student is critical. Please remember that you are being entrusted with personal, private information. Don't discuss anything about his/her diagnosis, treatment, medication, etc. with someone else, unless you have written permission from your student and their family.

## In the Classroom

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders have a profound impact on your student. In addition to the problems resulting from inattention, poor concentration, distractibility and impulsivity, other learning problems may occur. Language deficits include slow processing in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Organizational skills, memory, fine motor skills and motor coordination may be affected. However, it is important to remember that ADHD can occur in children at all levels of intellectual abilities, including those who are gifted and talented.

### The student may be affected by the following:

- Have difficulty completing work
- "Tune out" and daydream
- Have difficulty getting started
- Be unable to focus or concentrate on work
- Lack attention to detail
- Lack awareness of grades

- Have an impulsive learning style-starts without reading directions, rushes through work, doesn't double check answers
- Have difficulty giving articulate, clear answers-slow cognitive process, slow recall of facts
- Exhibit impulsive behaviors that get them into trouble, be noncompliant, talk back to teachers, walk out of classroom, behave defiantly, fight, have poor control of frustration and anger
- Have difficulty understanding and following directions-don't always "hear" instructions
- Have difficulty taking good notes-takes notes slowly, trouble identifying main points, hard time taking notes and listening to teacher at the same time
- Write slowly and have poor or illegible handwriting
- Produce less work, have difficulty with themes, reports, and tests
- Have poor reading comprehension, lose place, stop and start over, skip words, problem remembering what is read
- Have difficulty getting and staying organized, procrastinates, forgets books, homework, loses possessions, isn't prepared
- Have messy desk, notebooks, locker
- Have difficulty memorizing and doing work that requires rote memorization such as spelling, history, foreign language, algebra
- Have difficulty staying in their seat, easily distracted from work
- Weak math skills, can't memorize multiplication tables, slow recall of basic math
- Have trouble shifting from one task to another

## Helpful Suggestions

There are specific strategies that teachers have found to be helpful when working with students who are experiencing ADHD. If your student is receiving Special Education or Section 504 services, you will have more flexibility in implementing some of these approaches.

- Adjust assignments; divide them into several shorter assignments that are checked by an adult at the end of each session.

## Important Information for the Teacher About Attention Deficit Disorder (cont.)

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- Provide both oral and written instructions. Keep rules simple. Give the student only one or two steps at a time.
- Help the student to keep a daily calendar or, for older students, an assignment planner.
- Issue two sets of books, one for home and one for school.
- Provide individual assistance to help student begin his/her work.
- Grade student's work on the basis of production, not completeness. Ex.: Student completes 6 of the 10 problems assigned. Grade the 6 completed problems.
- "Each day is a new beginning."
- Don't hold incomplete work over from the previous day. Allow more time to complete work.
- Be flexible about the child's workspace and movement in the classroom.
- The more calmly you can respond the better if the student overreacts to a particular incident.
- Offer choices whenever possible. "You can do your assignment orally or in writing. You decide."
- Encourage student to use computer, when appropriate.
- Encourage student to dictate themes or reports.
- Provide immediate and frequent positive reinforcements.
- Cue/use private signal system to get student's attention.
- Make eye contact.
- Assess the optimal seating arrangement for the child.
- Use multi-sensory approach.
- Request a classroom aide.

### Other Diagnoses

It is not uncommon for children with a diagnosis of ADHD to have other co-existing disorders. These may include the following diagnoses:

- Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)
- Anxiety Disorders (such as Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Separation Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive/Compulsive Disorder, Social Phobia,

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

- Aggressive Disorders (such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Intermittent Explosive Disorder, Conduct Disorder)
- Tourettes Disorder, Tic Disorders

### Resources

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Local Clinic Contact:

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Phone Number:

#### **Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)**

**US:** 1-800-233-4050  
<http://www.chadd.org>

#### **National Attention Deficit Disorder Association**

<http://www/add/org>

#### **National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities \***

**US:** 1-800-695-0285  
<http://www.nichy@capcon.net>

#### **Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health**

**US:** 1-703-684-7710  
**TX:** 1-800-860-6057  
<http://www.ffcmh.org>

#### **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill**

**US:** 1-800-950-6264  
**TX:** 1-800-633-3760  
<http://www.nami.org>

#### **National Institute of Mental Health**

**US:** 1-800-421-4211  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

*\* Good Resource for Teachers*