



OAASIS INFORMATION SHEET

A D H D

Office for
Advice
Assistance
Support
and
Information
on
Special needs

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OAASIS
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Services



Attention Deficit Disorder, with or without **Hyperactivity**, has been described as a condition when, compared with most children of the same age and sex, and in more than one setting, the child has a range of problem behaviours associated with poor attention span. These can include:

- inattentiveness
- impulsiveness, not thinking before saying or doing something
- restlessness
- hyperactivity, unable to control the amount of physical activity which is appropriate to a situation
- poor learning and socialising skills

Hyperkinetic Syndrome or Disorder is the term used by the World Health Organisation (the European Guidelines) when comparing extreme levels of motor activity in children with 'normal' peers. It is now recognised as a sub-category of AD/HD that applies to highly hyperactive children.

Three sub-types have been recognised:

- ADD with hyperactivity (the 'impulsive-hyperactive' type)
- ADD without hyperactivity (the 'inattentive-impulsive' type)
- ADD – residual type (found in adults whose childhood symptoms persist after adolescence)

It is estimated that in the USA 5% of children may suffer from AD/HD. In the UK standards are organised in a different way and experts believe the rate here to be about 1.7%. The condition is more common in boys, who are also more likely to be hyperactive.

Attention Difficulties: A child must exhibit at least *six* of the following symptoms for at least six months:

Failing to pay close attention to detail and making careless errors; failing to finish tasks; appearing not to listen; failing to follow through instructions; disorganised; avoiding tasks requiring sustained mental effort; losing things e.g. pencils, books, toys; easily distracted; forgetful in daily activities.

Hyperactivity: A child must exhibit at least *three* of the following symptoms for at least six months:

Runs around or excessively climbs over things; noisy or can't take part in quiet activities; unable to stay in a seat; fidgets with hands and feet or squirms on seat.

Impulsivity: A child must exhibit at least *one* of the following symptoms for at least six months:

Blurts out answers; fails to wait in lines, turn taking, group situations; interrupts others' conversations/games; talks excessively without regard to others.

ADHD children may also exhibit temper tantrums, sleep disorders, clumsiness, confrontational defiant disorder, conduct disorders, specific learning difficulties, severe clinical depression, and anxiety disorders.

Diagnosis and treatments: Diagnosis is by a doctor, usually a child or adolescent psychiatrist, a paediatrician or your GP. Other professionals should be consulted and evidence collected. Most experts favour a multi-modal approach toward treating and managing the disorder, recognising the co-existing conditions and the importance of treating all symptoms. Treatment may consist of management techniques for home and school, medication, psychological treatments, diet e.g. food allergies and supplements.

Drugs should only be prescribed by a doctor or consultant for true ADHD and they should be taken only as and when directed. Each individual reacts uniquely to medication: if one causes unwanted side effects (such as weight loss, headaches or insomnia) then consult your GP again: the amount given, the time it is given, or the drug itself may need changing. There are several well-known and tried drug treatments for addressing the problems posed to young people with ADHD. They can help increase attention, and reduce hyperactivity and impulsivity. There may also be some side effects.

At home your child will need

- structure and routines
- consistency
- clearly defined rules and boundaries
- deliberate eye contact when spoken to
- sanctions and rewards
- your patience
- your love

Your child was born like this; appreciate this. Do not use confrontation to change him: make your expectations realistic and give him your patience and time, but most of all make him feel valued and loved.

At school: Help create a structured environment so that these children have less problems with starting and completing tasks, making transitions, working with others, following directions, organising multi-faceted

projects and maintaining attention: They need predictability, structure, short work periods, more individual instruction, positive reinforcement and an interesting curriculum.

Teachers should

- appreciate and accept that the child cannot help himself: his behaviour is not prompted by naughtiness
- have positive expectations
- monitor progress regularly throughout the lesson
- give directions clearly and frequently, and wherever possible, visually (i.e. timetable)
- be consistent, firm, fair and patient and
- give constant feedback and rewards
- display 'classroom rules' which are unambiguous and written in a positive way
- make clear lists - these children need reminders they can access themselves
- repeat directions: write them, say them out loud more than once. Check that he understands
- use deliberate eye contact when speaking to him (almost 'staring')
- make sure he knows the boundaries: avoid long discussions about what is right and wrong in their behaviour: tell them what you want - give them the positives
- avoid timed tests; they will not tell you what he knows
- do not set lengthy homework tasks: go for quality
- break down each task into its smaller component parts
- allow 'time out' if required
- make learning FUN – all children hate being bored.

Other Useful Contacts:

ADDISS (Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service) provides information and support for parents, sufferers and professionals, keeps an extremely good book list and provide conferences and training. Ring the helpline on **020 8952 2800** (10am-3pm) Web: www.addiss.co.uk Email: info@addiss.co.uk

Dore Achievement Centres help children, teenagers and adults affected by learning difficulties, including ADHD, to achieve their full potential through exercises to improve the performance of the cerebellum, enabling the brain to use its full power. Tel: **01926 514060** Web: www.dore.co.uk Email: info@dore.co.uk

The Hyperactive Children's Support Group supports a dietary approach to the problem of hyperactivity. They offer support to children, their families, teachers etc and runs workshops. Their website has lots of information on foods and substances that affect children and teenagers with ADHD/hyperactivity. Tel: **01243 539966** (10am-12.30pm) 71 Whyke Lane, Chichester, W Sussex PO19 7PD. Web: www.hacsg.org.uk Email: hacsg@hacsg.org.uk

Reading: see also OAASIS information sheet 'Books – where to find them'

OAASIS publishes **A First Guide to ADHD** in its **First Guide** series (price £5.00 plus p&p).

You can ring or write to OAASIS at the address over the page for a publications list / order form or visit the website.

New books on ADHD are coming out all the time, contact -

Routledge Education (member of the Taylor Francis Group) Tel: 020 7017 6000 Fax: 020 7017 6699

Website: www.routledgeeducation.com

Jessica Kingsley Publishers: Website: www.jkp.com Email: post@jkp.com Tel: 020 7833 2307

Sage Publications: For all professionals working in schools and educational settings (includes Paul Chapman Publishing and Lucky Duck books). Web: www.sagepub.co.uk Email: market@sagepub.co.uk

SEN Marketing: Books and software for special educational needs. Website: www.senbooks.co.uk Tel: 01924 871697

The **internet book shop** www.amazon.co.uk

And **ADDISS** - see above.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Practical Guide for Teachers. Authors: Paul Cooper and Katherine Bilton. Available from ADDISS (see above), £18.00 + p&p. ISBN 1 85346 431 7.

The ADHD Handbook: A Guide for Parents and Professionals. Authors: Alison Munden and Jon Arcelus. Available from Jessica Kingsley Publishers (see above), £11.95 + p&p. ISBN 9781853027567.

The Ritalin Fact Book – What Your Doctor Won't Tell You. Author Peter R Breggin, MD. Available from www.amazon.co.uk for £13.00 + p&p. ISBN 0 7382 0450 1. 2003.

Internet sites:

UK sites: Thanet ADDers on www.adders.org where there is a list of local ADHD support groups run by parents. ADHD Family Support Group Milton Keynes on www.mk-adhd.org.uk has superb info, tips, events and links useful wherever you live.

USA sites: **LOADS of information sheets for children and adults** at <http://www.help4adhd.org/en/about/wwk> and www.advance.com.

Cambian Education Services run seven residential special schools and colleges for young people with autistic spectrum disorders, Asperger Syndrome/HFA, severe learning difficulties. OAASIS can give you advice on the schools and send you their prospectuses or visit the website www.cambianeducation.com. OAASIS produces a wide range of **free Information Sheets**, **8 publications** entitled 'First Guide to...' and **wallet sized cards** explaining 9 learning disabilities. Please contact OAASIS (see front of sheet for contact details) for the full list, or view and download them on the website at www.oaasis.co.uk. All sheets are checked annually, please ensure you have the current version.