



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Strategies, Supports, and Interventions
for Parents

Presented By:

Jennifer Nicholson, Special Education Coordinator & Caryn Tomer, Program Specialist II

Burbank Unified School District

Special Education Department

February 2023

Definitions of ADHD

- **ADHD is a neurobiological disorder characterized by chronic and developmentally inappropriate degrees of inattention, impulsivity, and in some cases hyperactivity, and is so pervasive and persistent that it interferes with a person's or child's daily life at home, school, work, or other settings.**
- **ADHD is also a disorder of self-regulation and executive functions.**

Types of ADHD

- ***Predominantly Inattentive (ADD)***: Hyperactivity symptoms are not present.
- ***Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive***: Individuals with this presentation of ADHD have a significant number of hyperactive-impulsive symptoms.
- ***Combined Inattentive and Hyperactive-Impulsive***: Both symptoms are present.

Positive Traits and Strengths

- **Creative, Persistent, Imaginative, Big-Hearted, Accepting and Forgiving, Inquisitive, Adventurous, Resilient, Resourceful, Risk-Taking, Entrepreneurial, Observant, Empathetic, Full of Ideas & Spunk, Intelligent, Enthusiastic, Outgoing, Optimistic, Good Sense of Humor, and Talented in Certain Skills and Areas (artistic, musical, athletic).**

ADHD: Effects on the Family

- There are generally major issues surrounding homework as well as morning and evening routines (getting ready for school and bedtime).
- It is common for parents to disagree about treatment, discipline, management, structure, and other issues.
- Parents might deal with criticism and advice from relatives, friends, and acquaintances regarding how they should discipline and parent their child. This can cause parental self-doubt and adds to the stress.
- Frequently, the family must deal with such social issues such as peer conflicts and exclusion
- As any parent of a toddler knows, having a child who needs constant supervision and monitoring is very time consuming and interferes with the ability to get things done as planned (i.e. housework and other chores).

Multimodality Intervention

- **Medication Therapy (Pharmacologist Intervention)**-Stimulant medications have been proven effective in treating 70-90 percent of children with ADHD. Appropriate medical treatment requires well-managed and carefully monitored use of medications.
- **Specific behavioral strategies** are very important interventions for managing ADHD. Behavioral interventions are learned through parent trainings and implemented at home.
- **Educational Interventions**-Differentiated instruction (teachers using multiple approaches to teach curriculum), accommodations (environmental, academic, instructional, behavioral), and academic supports through IEP or 504 plans.
- **Counseling (family and/or individual)**
- **Social Skills Training**

Positive Discipline & Effective Behavior Management for the Home

- **Provide structure, routine, and predictability.**
- **Set limits and let your child know you mean business.**
- **Establish a few specific, important rules and expectations that are clearly understood by all members of the household.**
- **Your response to your child's behaviors and misbehaviors should be predictable.**
- **Establish clear-cut consequences in advance with your child that are logical, reasonable, and fair. Enforce them with consistency and follow through.**

More....Positive Discipline & Effective Behavior Management for the Home

- Use contingencies in establishing boundaries. This basically involves the age-old “Grandma’s rule” — “First eat your vegetables, then you can get dessert.” (i.e. “As soon as you clean your room, you may get computer time”. “Once you have finished your homework, you will then be able to watch a movie”. “You have cleared off the dinner table, now you can go out and play”.
- Children and teens with ADHD receive far more than average negative attention from parents because misbehavior captures our attention. NOTICE and pay attention to your child when he or she is behaving appropriately.
- Make it a goal to “catch” your child being good. At least four times more frequently than when you need to respond to misbehavior.
- Be specific in acknowledging and praising: “I really appreciate how you cleaned up without being reminded”. “I noticed how well you were sharing and taking turns when you played with John”.

Preventive Strategies

- **Remind through gentle warnings: “The rule is...”. “Next time...”. “Please remember to...”.**
- **Use “do” statements rather than “don’t” statements (i.e. “Please walk in the house” rather than “Don’t run in the house”).**
- **Talk about, acknowledge, and label feelings (your child’s and your own).**
- **Be observant. Notice when your child/teen is becoming agitated, overly stimulated, frustrated or angry and intervene right away. Try redirecting his/her attention and focus on something else.**
- **Only give your child chores and responsibilities that he/she is developmentally able to handle, not necessarily what other kids of his/her age or siblings can do.**

More Preventive Strategies

- **Provide the supports to enable your child to follow through with chores and responsibilities. Remember that forgetfulness, procrastination,, and disorganization are part of ADHD. Your child will need reminders, help getting started, and so forth.**
- **Provide physical outlets. Your child needs to release energy and participate in active games and physical activities.**
- **Prepare your child for changes in the home, such as redecorating, visitors, and changes in parent work schedules. Talk about the change and avoid surprises.**
- **Children/Teens with ADHD are often significantly delayed in their development of organization skills. They need to be taught strategies and encouraged to use methods that will work for them. They also need much more direct parental support and organizational assistance than most other children/teens their age.**

Tips for Giving Directions

- **First, get your child's attention directly before giving directions. This means face-to-face and direct eye contact, not just calling out what you expect your child to do.**
- **Physically cue your child prior to giving directions, if needed; i.e. gently tap his/her shoulder to get them to look at you.**
- **Do not attempt to give directions to your child if you are competing with the distractions of TV, video games, or when he/she is using any electronics. Pause or turn those devices off first.**

Communicate Clearly and Effectively

- **Keep verbal directions clear, brief, and to the point. Eliminate unnecessary talking and elaboration. State what you want with as few words as possible, for example, “Please come to the table now”.**
- **Always check for understanding of directions. Have your child/teen repeat or rephrase what you asked him or her to do.**
- **Show your child what you want him or her to do. Model and walk through the steps.**
- **If possible, use a visual chart for chores.**
- **Avoid multiple-step directions. Working memory weaknesses make it difficult for children/teens with ADHD to hold on to information while carrying out tasks. Giving one direction at a time is more useful.**
- **Do not state your direction in the form of a question such as, “Would you get in your pajamas, please?” “Are you ready to turn off the lights?” Instead, make a direct statement, for example, “Lights off in ten minutes.” Please get in your pajamas now.”**

What parents Can Do to help with Organization

- **Provide your child with a backpack and notebook or binder according to the teacher's specifications.**
- **It is recommended that beginning in the third grade your child should use a three-ring binder with colored subject dividers and a plastic pouch for pencils and other small supplies. Younger students should use a soft pocket folder for storing papers.**
- **Provide a spelling dictionary or list of common and frequently misspelled words, a multiplication chart, and any other useful reference materials for your child's notebook.**
- **Place hole-punched colored folders in the binders (i.e. red for homework, blue for parent notices or papers that to be left at home). When folders are attached to notebook rings, papers that are placed in the folders have less chance of being lost or falling out.**

More....What parents Can Do to help with Organization

- Another technique is to use large laminated envelopes that are hole-punched and inserted in the binder for homework and assorted project papers.
- An accordion folder is an alternative to a three-ring binder for those children/teens who find it easier to manage at school. The tabs of the accordion folder are labeled for homework assignments, work to turn in, and each subject. At school, during the day, papers can be quickly placed behind the tab for that subject. Papers not needed in school should be refiled in the evening into the three-ring binder maintained at home.
- Your child/teen's planner, monthly calendar, or assignment sheet should be hole-punched and kept in the front of the notebook (or in the front or back of an accordion folder if used instead of the three-ring binder at school).
- Provide material to organize his/her locker at school (shelves, magnetic hooks, and other locker accessories).

Even though ADHD generally persists from childhood throughout adulthood, it does not have to limit one's future. There are countless adults with ADHD who are highly successful in every profession and walk of life!

QUESTIONS???

