

THE CENTER FOR SPEECH EXCELLENCE

Classroom Management Suggestions for Children with Attention Deficit Disorders (A.D.D.)

1. Permit the child to use learning aids as long as needed without penalty (discard when no longer necessary).

- Allow child to keep his place by use of finger or an underliner.
- Allow children a reading window (slot in card) to keep them from losing their place. This could be done for part of the time.
- Allow use of fingers, or other concrete materials, for counting when working math problems. Concrete "touching" materials helps focus attention.
- Use carrying and borrowing marks to help child focus and remember.
- Allow the child to print if this is easier for him. For some learning disability children, learning a new code (cursive) sets them back unnecessarily. Many successful adults use only printing.
- Encourage the use of a typewriter or a computer for children whose writing is slow and labored. It acts as a sequencer and concretizer.

2. Foster the idea that individual differences are natural and accepted.

- The speed of mentation (processing mental information) is different in LD children. The teacher should make allowances by using "slow talk" and short sentences, and by giving the LD child extra time to formulate his ideas. These children don't *hear* (process) group directions well; it may save time to go directly to this child and repeat directions.
- If three things are presented: "Open your math book to page 36 and do the first row of addition," he may only *hear* one of the three items. If his difficulty is anticipated, the teacher can repeat the directions slowly and thus will experience fewer frustrations. Watch the child for fuzzy disorganized behavior or escapes into daydreams.
- Each child has his own rate of learning, as well as his own timetable of physical and social development. The "average child" concept can be misleading.
- The timetables for acquiring the concepts of time, money, and other measurements are especially slow in LD children.
- Search for strengths which can be appreciated and rewarded.

3. Make simple classroom adjustments in organization and procedure to help the LD child.

- Provide a sheltered "learning place" for the child, free from distractions. Ideas include appropriate desk placement, use of movable partition, the "private office" idea, not used punitively, but so the child can concentrate better.

Pamela H. Bashor and Associates

Speech and Hearing Building, Suite 202, 320 Lillington Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28204, 704/375-5231

- Help him organize his study space. He should have paper, pencils, crayons, books in order, available for use but not in the way.
- Break his work into short segments. Place a paper over distracting pictures. These children can't suppress their reactions to these things, so they experience quick mental fatigue.
- Raise the "stimulus value" of elements to be learned. Any novel emphasis will help. Color coding, emphatic use of voice and animation of material bring out elements in relief and promote associative learning.
- Grading should be adjusted so that he is not currently experiencing failing marks. For example, a 10 year old in the 5th grade could be given a grade of c2, i.e., "C" at the 2nd grade level. Yes, he knows the meaning and will comment, but it is still helpful - he will adjust to it.

4. Provide better learning odds for the child.

- The teacher should find the child's true functioning level in reading, math, etc., and should be aware when assignments are actually over his head.
- Select special material for his reading alone. This should be gauged to give him 90% success and enjoyment. If a 5th grade child can read at only the 2nd grade level, it is quite impossible for him to keep up when he can decode only 40% of the words. High interest, low vocabulary material is need for his solo reading.
- For reading grade-level material, a volunteer or family member reader is needed. This is essential so that he can keep up with this class' content of material. Most LD children can learn content (as opposed to basic skills).
- When tutoring an LD child while reading above his level, the difficult words should be supplied fairly quickly by the tutor so that the child will get the story and enjoy it. It helps the tutor to realize that providing him a word on line 4 will not at all assure his recognition of it on line 12. In fact, the child may call it successfully on line 14 and miss it again on the next page. This is par for the course with these children. Being forewarned avoids impatience and irritation.
- Tapes of books and lessons can be made by volunteers, so that he can replay them himself at his convenience. Many children profit by reading silently along with the tape.
- Oral examinations should be considered if a fair appraisal of the child's knowledge of content is to be found out. A trustworthy student, volunteer or aide could be used to write as the child dictates.
- Grading should be for ideas and content and not for spelling, punctuation, or neatness. Look for what he can do; look for improvements rather than faults. After all, the mechanics of reproduction (basic skills) are where he is disabled, and one doesn't grade down for being disabled.