



Accept – don't reject

Greetings from the Attention Deficit & Hyperactivity Support Group of Southern Africa. (ADHASA)

Keeping up with ADD

March 2004

Company not for gain
93/03639/08

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Counselling hours:
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08h00 to 13h00
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DO YOU HAVE A FLOPPY CHILD?

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15 years of service to the community!!

Low Muscle tone can make life far more difficult for an ADD/Hyperactive child however they also affect many non ADD/Hyperactive children and the solutions are for everyone.

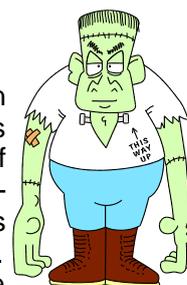
Do you have a floppy child? One that leans against the nearest wall rather than standing up straight; who prefers to sit rather than stand; and slouch or lie down rather than sit?! At meal times he flops on the table, drops his spoon or fork, is a messy eater and avoids eating anything that is difficult to chew – like a piece of steak. He often squirms in his seat, his feet are swinging and he uses any excuse to get up and leave the table! Some children won't even sit at the table, preferring to grab a handful of food from their plate as they cruise by. Makes meal-times so frustrating... doesn't it!!!

Homework or classroom behaviour is not much different and regular clashes are almost inevitable. To make it worse there are always those know-it-alls who regularly tell you that there wouldn't be any problems if it were their child!!! If only they knew.

At one stage it was thought that these children are just lazy and naughty but, thank heavens, we have come to understand the situation. Rather than having the regular dinner table clash we can now help the child cope with the situation.

LOW MUSCLE TONE

Muscle Tone can be described as the readiness of the muscles to respond to orders from the brain. Low Muscle Tone indicates that there is an under-response from the muscles and you could say they don't get as much message from the brain. This means that a child with low muscle tone has to put in much more effort to get the same results as a child with normal muscle tone – it is more difficult for him to sit up straight and even more difficult for him to comfortably retain the posture.



And so he fidgets and is in trouble for disturbing others. Often these children put so much effort into sitting still that they are unable to concentrate on what the teacher is saying.

When they walk (or run) they don't lift their feet as high as other children because of the poor response to messages from the brain and so frequently trip over the smallest unevenness on the road and then have less ability to stop themselves from falling. They are taking as much care and probably trying harder than the next person

but don't get the same results. Ability to play sports can also be affected and they tire easily because it takes a lot of energy to resist the pull of gravity. Being a couch potato makes life so much easier for them!

Adequate elimination depends upon good muscle tone which means that children with low muscle tone often have frequent bouts of constipation.



HELPING THE CHILD

It becomes so much easier to stop judging and criticizing the child once we understand the challenges he faces virtually every moment of his day. We can then praise him when he manages to sit still at the table for five or ten minutes and tell him that we appreciate the effort he put into doing so.

It is equally important for us to find ways to help him cope and function more efficiently. For example, the younger child has shorter legs, his feet don't reach the floor and he is not comfortable just balancing on the seat. To help him, put a few telephone books or a box under his feet to help stabilize him. If you're not too sure about this, try spending a half hour sitting on a high bar stool without a cross bar for you to rest your feet. Even if you don't have low muscle tone you'll soon enough discover that it's not very comfortable especially if you cannot lean on the counter in front of you, and that is probably how your child feels every time he sits at the table. In addition to the books under his feet, a cushion tied to his chair for him to sit on often works wonders.

"To help him, put a few telephone books or a box under his feet to help stabilize him"

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Children's muscle tone is greatly assisted as they play – climbing, running, hopping, skipping and jumping! But they lead such busy lives that they don't have the time to play as they should. TV has also demanded large chunks of their spare time.

Find a balance between TV and play. Play with the child. Dad can do some wrestling or rough and tumble but always in a supportive manner – stretch the child but never until he gets upset or cries. Opportunities can be organized for them to play games such



as wheelbarrows, leap-frog, doing cartwheels, swinging from the jungle gym or even catching a large ball. If your child marks the door frame trying to climb up it – don't make a fuss! Rather encourage him to climb and choose the door frame on which he can practice whenever he wants!

Praise his successes and help him through the more difficult exercises. **Ultimately everyone wins!!**

If you have a child that avoids these activities, he has already given up and needs even more encouragement to play these games. Always do so in an environment in which he feels safe and secure. Never put him in a situation in which he cannot cope – make it fun and slowly build his confidence.

DOES FOOD MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

According to Adele Davis, a British nutritionist, vitamin E can help improve muscle tone for anyone from young babies to the very elderly. Ideally we should be able to get our vitamin E from natural sources such as cold-pressed vegetable oils, soy beans, whole raw nuts (but children under seven should avoid them), milk, egg-yolk, whole grain cereals, fresh wheat germ, wheat germ oil, whole wheat bread or avocado pears.

As far as possible avoid frying foods, avoid eating rancid fats or products containing hydrogenated vegetable oils as they destroy vitamin E and, in sufficient quantities, they can induce a vitamin E deficiency.

If you use a lot of frozen food, ensure there is a balance between frozen and fresh foods.

"As far as possible avoid frying foods, avoid eating rancid fats or products containing hydrogenated vegetable oils"

WHAT ABOUT SUPPLEMENTS?

Even if we eat adequate quantities of the foods supplying vitamin E, supplementation may still be recommended. However, always keep in mind that Vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin and so care must be taken to ensure that it is not given in excess especially if it is taken over a period of a few months.

Always ask for natural (as opposed to synthetic) vitamins.

If you suspect that your child has low muscle tone and it is making his life more difficult than it should be, speak to your Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Dietitian, or contact the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Support Group National Office at 011-888-7655 Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Heather Picton



We wish all our readers Peace and Goodwill during the holiday season:

- To our Christian friends a Happy Easter.
- To our Jewish friends a Blessed Passover.

And safe traveling for all.

Please forward this email to anyone who could use it

Your Diary !!

Seminar!!! Seminar!!!

For more details of our Seminar to be held in collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand Special Education Division, please read the enclosed attachments. Accommodation is limited so book your place as soon as possible! Find out about our new speakers and the early bird discount.

Please take note:

The National Office of the Support Group has closed for the school holidays. It re-opens on Friday 16 April. Unfortunately there won't be anyone to man the phones but you can still send your faxes to ensure that they are immediately attended to when the office re-opens.

Cooking course for Domestic

A domestic who understands the basics of ADD, and is able to prepare 'additive-free' meals, can make a tremendous difference to a family with ADD/H members. We have often had requests for such a course and so Heather has been working with Sandy and Janet to put this course together. It will be starting in early May 2004 – classes are small, so book early to ensure a place for your domestic.

Please phone Sandy or Janet at (011) 880-9293

Contact Details

Tel: Sandy (011) 793-2079
 Fax: (011) 793-4790
 E-mail: rscox@icon.co.za

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Did you know.

The Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Support Group of Southern Africa is already in its 15th year. Join us in our 2004 celebratory activities to make this the best year yet.



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Can you help us?

No experience needed – we offer full training.

One morning a week of your time enables us to provide a better service to the ADD/H community. As you help others, you inevitably gain greater skills for helping your own family.

Can you afford not to come?

Please contact Sandy at 011-793-2079



Accept – Don't reject

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Counselling hours:
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Blairgowrie, Johannesburg
Tel: (011) 888-7655

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM - Annual Subscription R85-00 PLEASE PRINT

NAME:

POSTAL ADDRESS:

.....CODE:.....

TEL: (h) (.....)(w) (.....).....CELL.....

FAX NO: (.....).....E-MAIL.....

NAME OF CHILD/MEMBER:.....

DATE OF BIRTH:/...../.....

SCHOOL:

SIBLINGS: (Names & Ages)

1 2

3 4

OCCUPATION: Mother

.....

SIGN/...../.....

For confirmation of application kindly deposit into ABSA Sinoville Branch, Saving Account No. 907-161-3544.

- Please make all cheques payable to: ADHD Support Group – National Office (Jhb)
- Cash payments can also be made into this account
- Please complete the deposit reference blocks below your signature with your printed full name
- Please fax your application form together with the bank deposit slip to (011) 793 4790 or 793 2079.
- Alternatively, post this form, together with your remittance to PO Box 3704 Randburg 2125.