



Keeping up with ADD

Accept—**don't reject**
Greetings
from the
Attention Deficit
and Hyperactivity
Support Group of
Southern Africa

ADHASA

Helping the community
For  years!

Useful information to
help families with
ADHD, and others ...

Please send this
newsletter
to anyone who
could use it.

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*Please note that
ADHD refers to
Attention Deficit
Disorder with or
without hyperactivity.*

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It's Exam Time!

It's exam time and, for families with ADHD, stress levels can skyrocket! But it doesn't always have to be that way. There's a lot that the family can do to ease tensions at this challenging time. We know that children with ADHD are usually bright, but that many have learning difficulties, or are slow workers. They may also lack the motivation to learn. This can put them at a tremendous disadvantage in the examination situation.



SUPPORTING THE CHILD

Parents can make a tremendous difference to the learning experience of children with ADHD, and how they cope with pre-examination stress and stress on the day.

They may be doing their very best but finding it difficult to keep their temper, to learn, or even just sit still for more than five minutes. Giving them a little more space than usual can make a tremendous difference. For example, if your child has **a meltdown because he can't solve a maths problem**, allow him time to vent before he settles down again.

Once he's cooled down, you may comment that it is difficult and you also struggled with it when you were at school. Offer to work it out with him – remember that working it out with children helps them to learn. Working it out for them is a lost learning opportunity.

If they don't want your help it may be better to let them work it out with another member of the family, or a friend. Your **decisions will be influenced by your child's** personality as well as the relationship between the two of you.

Whatever you do, this is not the time for you to lose your temper, shout at or beat your children, especially if they are trying to study and not finding it easy. Rather than solving any problems you could be making things worse.

Research has shown that increased stress levels make it more difficult for messages to travel from one neuron to the next. This makes it far more difficult for studying and learning.

ORGANISING SKILLS

People with ADHD often have poor organizing skills which can affect their ability to plan a study schedule, or stick to it. If possible, help them prepare a study schedule, planning which chunks of work should be covered by particular target dates, and also agreeing on basic study periods.

The length of study sessions depend on the concentration span of the child. Follow each session with a short break which could be for as little as fetching a glass of water or doing a few scissor jumps, to ten minutes of physical activity such as jumping on a trampoline or having a bath or shower.

Some children find it easier to learn while moving - sitting on a rocking chair, or a physio ball can help give them the movement they need. A hot water bottle (in summer filled with cold water) can also help. Even children in matric need short breaks and should be taking them at least every 30 to 45 minutes.

Become creative and find ways to support and assist them with meeting their various study goals, while also encouraging them to take responsibility for achieving them.

Make sure you also build in periods of relaxation as well as rewards for their efforts.



A CHEWER?

If your child chews his pens, pencils, sleeves, collars etc. now is the time to ignore it. Believe it or not the chewing could be helping his concentration which **could be lost with a "STOP CHEWING!!"** Rather stock up on more suitable chews which can be kept for study periods. Examples are a chunk of (plain) biltong, a piece of sugar cane (not a sugar block), genuine honeycomb, a toy (not soft rubber), or even a teething ring!

Several years ago research showed that chewers fared better in exams if they were allowed to chew.

HEALTHY EATING HABITS

ADHASA has always stressed the importance of avoiding unnecessary additives in food, and doing so can make a huge difference to children with ADHD especially during the exam period. They are usually far more affected by these additives and eating them can affect their social interaction, behaviour, **concentration and everyone's stress levels for the next 72 hours!** Why make studying more difficult than it should be?

If you have never really excluded these additives from your **child's diet, then it's time to start.** Use the ADHASA shopping basket to help you choose your groceries and take a couple of weeks to replace the additive laden foods with better choices. This is not the time to make your child feel deprived so make **sure that any 'treat' discontinued is replaced by an equally tasty but healthier alternative.**



Keep fresh fruit available at all times – especially if your children enjoy it.



Thanks to Lori for the layout of Keeping up with ADD

Contact: Lori@MindFocus.co.za, if you are interested in the course:



ADHD & ROMANCE

One Day course at the end of November, place and date to be confirmed.

Instant ADD Success

We thank ADDvance for their generous sponsorship of our Food List.



The following supplement has been endorsed by ADHASA:



Creche Guard Brain Fuel "Omega-3 Chews"

Volunteer

We can finally and comfortably accommodate a regular volunteer preferably with computer skills. If you are this person and you can help one or two mornings a week, please phone Sandy at 011-793-2079.

Your attitude to introducing the healthier alternatives can make all the difference about children accepting **some new choices**. **If you're stressed, your children** pick it up and become stressful too. Keep the home front calm – contact ADHASA if you need help.

SUPPLEMENTS

Ensure they are taking their omega oils as well as a good multivitamin and mineral combination that is free of synthetic colorants and flavourants. Add Vitamin B complex to help them relax.



BREAKFAST FOR SUCCESS

Breakfast plays a vital role in helping our children concentrate. They need a slow steady supply of **glucose but don't get it from most cereals on the shelves**. Too much glucose coming in, or too little, can undermine concentration. Examples of breakfasts to help concentration include:

- ♣ Protein on toast or bread e.g.: egg, cheese, sardines, baked beans, peanut butter.
- ♣ Muesli made with rolled oats and served with milk or yoghurt. Keep sugar to a minimum.
- ♣ Mealie meal porridge with beans. Not to be piping hot, rather warm or cool.



- ♣ Pronutro whole wheat (original flavour) or Apple Bake.

If your child is allergic, or reacts to any of these foods, then avoid them.

If you would like more breakfast ideas then have a look at the ADHASA Shopping Basket.

WHEN DO WE STOP?

Children with ADHD invariably need extra support with their homework or studying for much longer than their classmates. This could be up to matric level if your child wants your help. Assistance in a supportive manner during the school years can reap rewards for many years to come. The key is to do it with the child but not for the child!

CHANGE TOO SUDDEN

None of us like change, and we cope with it even less when we are stressed – even if the changes are for the **better**. **We become uneasy when we don't understand** what is happening, and so do our children.

Introduce improvements at a pace that your family understands and that can comfortably sustain. Doing a little less and being relaxed and supportive could be far more effective than trying to do all at once and not coping.

A TIME TO PAINT?

Please don't decide to start building operations, paint your house, varnish your woodwork, or fumigate just before or during exams!!! Not only does the upheaval unsettle the child, the powerful fumes can interfere with concentration and ultimate achievement in the exams. If you've already started with the alterations, put the children onto vitamin C to help modify the impact..

ALWAYS REMEMBER

Parents may feel frustrated and angry at their children. They may also be fearful of the consequences of the child not working. They may be tempted to harshly criticize the child, but that could be more damaging in the long run.

Ultimately, parents can only do their best and view this **exam in the context of the child's whole life: an exam is important but the relationship between parent and child and the child's self esteem are even more important.**

Heather Picton

Teachers Conference

Hurry, hurry, hurry.!

Book your place for our

February Teachers Conference
(therapists and parents all welcome).

Our special Early Bird offer of R100 discount only lasts till the end of November.

[Click here for further details.](#)

