



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.*



Keeping up with ADD

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Parents Positively in Charge

It's the first term of the New Year and for some the beginning of their school career. These are supposed to be 'the best years of our lives', but that's not always the case for children with ADHD. It is in the early school years that difficulties are often first uncovered. Despite their best efforts, many children with ADHD cannot always produce what is demanded of them, no matter how hard they try. They need help. Without adequate support and assistance, life can become an on-going uphill battle.

It's far more difficult for them when one, not even their family, recognises the difficulties they face on a daily basis. After years of struggling many children decide that they are not good enough, that they are inadequate. Ultimately they lose both confidence and self-esteem, and spend the rest of their lives believing they are inferior.

In the long run this lack in self-belief causes far greater hardship than the grades on their school leaving certificate.

Fortunately we have over the past decade learnt a lot about ADHD. From people who have had these difficulties yet been highly successful, we have learnt about the valuable role of parents in loving and supporting their children through the difficult times. We've also learnt about the value of recognizing and building on the strengths of ADHD.

Parents often don't realize how much they can do to secure a brighter future for their children.

Children from a loving home where they are valued and given the unstinting support of their family, where their confidence is built and resilience cultivated, are invariably far more able to deal with the challenges of life. This is even more important for children with ADHD.

Here are a few ideas for you to work on - it's easiest to start when the children are young, but any time is better than none at all.

1. Clear ground rules. Children with clear but fair ground rules at home usually are more secure as they know where they stand.



2. Routine. Knowing what's going to happen and when it's going to happen, regular meals, play time, homework, bed time etc. add to their security levels. A secure child is a more stable child.

3. Consider their opinion. Be prepared to hear and consider their opinion especially in things that affect them. For example, listen to why he doesn't want to go to a birthday party – if may be because he can't handle the noise, or the school bully is picking on him and will be at the party. If she doesn't want that brand new jersey that you've just chosen it could be that it's too scratchy and she knows she'll never want to wear it.

Sometimes they struggle to explain their reasoning, but try to hear what they are saying and, if reasonable, give children the option of saying 'yes' or 'no'.

4. Give children responsibility at home. Children often gripe and groan to such an extent when asked to help out with something that parents often choose to do it themselves. However duties and chores in the home are part of building a child's character and skills.

Apart from helping the child recognise that they are a valuable part of the family, these activities build self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Jobs usually change with age and could be from making their bed, setting the table for supper, clearing the dishes, to adolescent chores like mowing the lawn or washing the car. It often works better if the child can choose from a list of options the job(s) he would prefer to do.

Children with ADHD are invariably the ones who will take the longest due to their poor organizing skills. Rather give them a lighter workload to ensure their job can be done without it demanding too much of your time as you monitor their progress. Give praise both for effort put into their work and well as their completing it.

The important thing is to keep it a positive experience with gentle reminding and possibly even rewards (depending upon the age of the children). Older children could be working towards a long term reward or privilege.



5. Be prepared to accept the absent-mindedness of children with ADHD.

Absent-mindedness is often the cause of huge family upheaval – both short and long term – and almost impossible to understand unless you have experienced it yourself.

Not registering your requests or instructions is common amongst children with ADHD. If you have given them several instructions in a row, chances they have only heard the first one and the rest have been lost. They aren't ignoring you, being stubborn, non-caring or wilful.

Admittedly there are times that they are just being otherwise, but in general they really don't know what you have said. It's all part of the symptom of being unable to pay attention.

Make sure you have your child's attention before you give the instruction, speak slowly and clearly and if necessary ask your child to repeat the instruction. You may have to give a few firm but gentle reminders. Avoid yelling confrontations as they usually end up being destructive. In the same way sarcasm, frustration and anger only make the situation worse. They undermine the child even more and increase frustration levels all round.

Children with ADHD often forget to take swimming costumes, library books etc to school. They lose their possessions and it's most important to ensure that everything is marked.



Rather than lose your cool when you're hunting for yet another lost item, it's worth thinking of the many times you've searched for your own keys or glasses. In addition, a sense of humour can go a long way to defuse an unpleasant situation and restore calm.

6. Support your child when he is in trouble at school.

Children with ADHD can be completely exasperating to

their teachers especially those who don't understand the difficulties (and often rejection) these children have to deal with on a daily basis.

We don't want our children to bad-mouth their teachers but we should listen to them if they're going to tell us about their problems at school. Children with ADHD desperately need a safe haven and the best place for this would be home.

Comments such as 'that must have been difficult for you' or 'you must have been very angry' show your empathy and validate your child's feelings. Once they know they have your support, they are in a better position to recognise their own role in causing the upheaval and look for a better way of doing things in the future.



Thanks to Coach Lorí for putting this ezine together.

Contact Lorí

(Lori@MindFocus.co.za), if you want to improve your life, and or that of your children, utilizing coaching to supplement the diet and create Skills, Strategies, Structure and Support.



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



The following supplement has been endorsed by ADHASA:



Crèche Guard Brain Fuel "Omega-3 Chews"

In addition you may be able to explore the situation with the teacher, looking for solutions. Decide ahead of time to make her your friend rather than the adversary.

7. Make healthy eating an integral part of your family's life. Good healthy and natural foods build people's bodies enabling them to function at their very best – physically, emotionally, academically and also immune function.



A couple of years ago, well known British nutritionist, Patrick Holford took up a challenge of showing that children's IQ can be increased with good food, and a whole classroom of children had up to a 10% improvement in a week! This means improved problem solving abilities and being able to carry on with their task for longer periods and isn't that what we all want?

Try to make healthy eating an integral part of your family's life. Contact ADHASA for more information.

8. Become involved in your child's school – attend meetings and talks, make sure you're at every parents' evening. Go early – be the first – and you may have the opportunity to speak to the teacher before the crowds arrive. Most effective teachers appreciate parents who show an interest in their children's schoolwork and are prepared to work with the teacher to build the child.

If you are able, join the school's PTA or committee. This gives you more opportunity to encourage the school to focus on a good understanding of ADHD. It also gives you greater opportunity to lobby for a healthy tuck-shop. Even if your own child never buys food from the tuck-shop, he will still benefit with the quieter classrooms and improved concentration of all around him.

9. Become an ADHD expert.

Join ADHASA, read books, attend meetings and conferences, speak to others, and learn as much as you can. Understanding ADHD goes a long way to solving the challenges that come with it.

When you're in the middle of another ADHD-related crisis, it's difficult to believe that you could ever be in control of the situation. But you can. Introducing the above can go a long way to improving life for your children and yourselves. It can also be an integral part of building your children's confidence and self-esteem for a happier future.

Heather Picton

ADHASA NEWS

Events

One of the most rewarding parts of my life is bumping into someone that I haven't seen for many years and almost immediately they're telling me of the amazing difference that ADHASA has made to their lives. Often it's been the turning point moving from a life of struggling in the dark, to a newer and better place where home and family are happy and healthy.

That's the difference made by a combination of relevant information and TLC (tender loving care) and it works in the ADHD setting whether you are the parent or teacher. This formula also works for ADHASA when people approach us, and it's imbued in our conferences. That's why they are so popular and successful!

2012 promises to be a very busy year and we start with our Teachers Conference to be held on 25 and 26 Feb— bookings are already open and you can book your place now!

Other events include:

- 10 March....Family Fun Day (Delta Park School)
- 26,27 May..Parents' Conference
- 26 June.....High Tea (fundraising event)
- 4 AugustAdult Seminar
- 13 SeptGala dinner (fundraising event)
- 14 SeptADHD Awareness Day
- 28 OctFamily Fun Day (Soweto)

Please diarise these dates so that you can join us and share in the learning and fun. As we get them, we'll be telling you more about ADHASA happenings in other parts of the country.

Lotto

We're thrilled to announce that Lotto provided the funds for an ADHASA car. In the past transport has at times been problematic and already this car has made a difference – especially with meeting people out of town. With the Lotto-ADHASA co-branding people are approaching us asking about the support group and requesting information. You've guessed it, we carry leaflets wherever we go.



We're also grateful to Aqula for their professional assistance with the branding.

