

Information taken from a workshop on ADHD

Presented by Dr. Michael Knapp of LAUSD – Fall, 2003

Background Information:

- 3-5 % of children have ADHD, which averages out to 1-2 children per classroom
- Most common characteristics of ADHD: inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity
- Causes of ADHD: 90% genetics, 10% environmental
- ADHD is the term used for the disorder - ADD is a sub-type of ADHD
- It is a life-long condition
- It is most successfully treated with medication and behavior modification techniques

Pointers for working with students with attention problems:

- Classroom assignments - should be brief, broken into manageable parts, with feedback given as soon as possible on tasks - short time limits for task completion is recommended, enforceable with the use of timers
- Peer tutoring provides timely feedback and is highly successful with ADHD students
- Morning instruction increases success, with nonacademic activities in the afternoon when possible
- Presenting novel, interesting, highly motivating material improves attention (e.g., using color, shape, and texture)
- Careful structure of lessons with points clearly identified is very helpful - giving a brief outline and teaching note-taking techniques increases memory of main ideas
- Structure memory tasks meaningfully, providing a context and purpose for the activity
- Give clear, well-defined rules with specific and frequent reinforcement through visible means of presentation - posting rules on the walls, written reminders on student's desk, etc.
- Checklists, lists of things to do and remember, notes on student's desk are good visual cues
- Rules should have clear consequences and should be reinforced with visual reminders and cues placed throughout the classroom
- Giving auditory cues is helpful to remind students to monitor their on-task behavior
- When possible, allow students with ADHD to set their own pace for task completion. Work that is self-paced can lessen problematic behavior, as compared to situations where work is paced by others.
- When giving instructions, be short, specific, and direct. Multi-step directions may be hard to follow. When possible, ask student to rephrase directions in their own words. Be prepared to repeat directions until student understands.
- When possible, reduce assignment length and emphasize quality over quantity
- External reinforcement works well - use tangible rewards
- Use both negative and positive consequences - use rich incentives as much as possible - rotate rewards frequently
- Use praise, encouragement, and affection to promote desired outcomes
- Token economy works well with ADHD students: giving students tokens (e.g., poker chips) when they display appropriate behavior - tokens are turned in for tangible rewards or privileges after determined length of time
- Time-out should be used only for disruptive or aggressive behavior - when student is avoiding school work, time outs are less effective

Hope this is helpful!
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