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Cognizance

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Hello parents and staff, and welcome back to the 2008-2009 school year. As the school psychologist I look forward to working with you and the students served by Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District. I am entering this position with big dreams and a strong vision. Ultimately, my mission is to be a catalyst for change for all those I serve. In order to achieve this I will facilitate collaboration and partnerships between families, schools, and the community. I promise to play an active role in ensuring that parents, teachers, and supportive staff are empowered to help their children/students grow academically, socially, and emotionally. I will continuously share my knowledge by developing and implementing a monthly newspaper focusing on contemporary research, disabilities, and effective interventions. It is my personal hope that by providing a full range of prevention and intervention services that support the mental health and learning potential of all students, we can help our children and young adults gain the skills, confidence, and good citizenship to become lifelong learners and contributors to our global world.

September 14-20

We may all occasionally have difficulty sitting still, paying attention or controlling our impulsive behavior. But for some children and adults, the problem is so pervasive and persistent that it interferes with their daily lives at home, school, work, and social settings. According to the National Institute of Mental Health three to five percent of children have ADHD. This means that in a typical classroom at least one child has ADHD. The NIMH estimates that about 2 million children in the United States have ADHD. Additionally, more than half of the youth with a history of ADHD diagnosis were being treated with medication. The principal characteristics of ADHD are **inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity**. Many "normal" children may have these symptoms, but at a lower level. Also, there are several other disorders, impairments, and/or environmental factors that can "mimic" ADHD-like symptoms. These include:

Physical impairments

- Vision & hearing impairments
- Sleep disorders

Neurological Problems
Drug Abuse
Child Abuse or Neglect
Giftedness
Psychiatric Disorder

- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Anxiety
- Asperger's Disorder

Thus, it is important that any child exhibiting characteristics of ADHD receive a thorough examination and appropriate diagnosis by a well-qualified professional.

Possible Causes

It is likely that students differ with respect to the specific underlying cause of their ADHD symptoms. There is growing evidence that these symptoms are at least partially caused by genetic factors. Specifically, the brains of individuals with and without ADHD may differ with respect to the balance of certain chemicals, referred to as neurotransmitters, as well as the size and operation of specific brain components such as the prefrontal cortex. Further, other biological factors such as pregnancy and birth complications and environmental toxins (e.g., early lead exposure and prenatal exposure to alcohol and tobacco smoke) are thought to cause ADHD symptoms in some individuals. Although genetic and biological factors account for ADHD symptoms to a large degree, environmental factors—such as the nature of classroom

Intelligence

ADHD Resources

- ❖ ADHD in the schools: Assessment and intervention strategies (2nd ed.). G. DuPaul & G. Stoner. 2003. New York: Guilford.
- ❖ Behaviorally effective school environments. M. Shinn, H. Walker, & G. Stoner (Eds.). 2002. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- ❖ Challenging Horizons, <http://chprogram.jmu.edu>
- ❖ National Resource Center on ADHD, www.help4adhd.org
- ❖ Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD), www.chadd.org
- ❖ Intervention Central, www.interventioncentral.org

References

DuPaul, G.J. & White, G.P. (2004). An adhd primer. *Principal Leadership Magazine*, 5. Retrieved from www.Nasponline.org on 9/14/08.



tasks and the behavior management style at home and school—also affect the expression of the disorder. Although these factors do not directly cause ADHD, they can make symptoms better or worse. In general, it is best to view this disorder as having both biological and environmental influences, thereby indicating that both medical and psychosocial treatments could be helpful (DuPaul & White, 2004)

Effective Instructional Strategies

- ❖ giving directions
- ❖ Class participation: Keep students guessing
- ❖ Employ proximity control
- ❖ Provide clear, concise directions.
- ❖ Give opportunities for choice
- ❖ Instruct at a brisk pace
- ❖ Make each activity stimulating
- ❖ Praise students for all on-task behavior (even if infrequent)
- ❖ Provide a quiet work area
- ❖ Provide attention breaks
- ❖ Reduce length of assignments
- ❖ Schedule challenging tasks for peak attention times
- ❖ Select activities that require active student responding
- ❖ Transition quickly
- ❖ Use advance organizers
- ❖ Use preferential seating
- ❖ Adopt a silent signal
- ❖ Allow discretionary motor breaks
- Encourage acceptable outlets for motor behavior (e.g. stress ball)
- ❖ Have the students monitor motor behaviors and call-outs
- ❖ Ignore low level motor behaviors
- ❖ Remove unnecessary items from student's work area
- ❖ Schedule group 'stretch breaks'
- ❖ Select a supportive peer

From Jim Wright: Intervention Ideas for OFF-TASK/INATTENTION, HYPERACTIVITY.
www.interventioncentral.org

Visit this website for more detailed information on these strategies.

Sample Behavior Contract

Effective Dates: From 10/20/99 to 12/20/99
Mrs. Jones, the teacher, will give Ricky a sticker to put on his 'Classroom Hero' chart each time he does the following: Works quietly through the morning seatwork period (from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m.) without needing to be approached or redirected by the teacher for being off-task or distracting others

When Ricky has collected 12 stickers from Mrs. Jones, he may choose one of the following rewards:

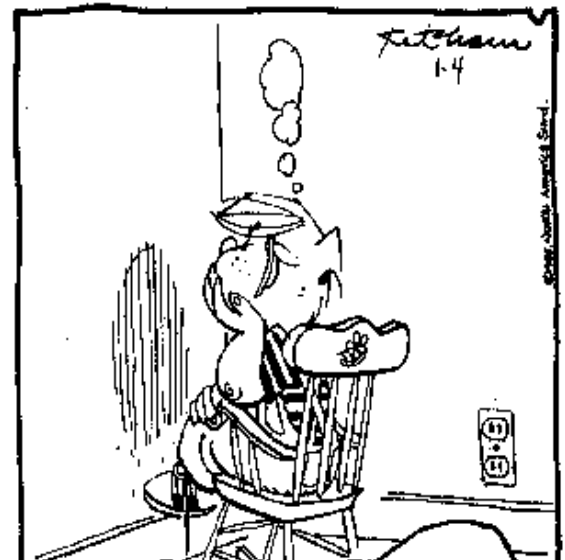
- ❖ 10 minutes of free time at the end of the day in the classroom
- ❖ choice of a prize from the 'Surprise Prize Box'

Student Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

DENNIS THE MENACE



Be aware that students with AD/HD are NOT "stupid or lazy" as some claim, but actually may be among the outstanding individuals of each passing generation:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| -Beethoven | -Albert Einstein |
| -Prince Charles | -Henry Ford |
| -Leonardo da Vinci | -Galileo |
| -Walt Disney | -Michael Jordan |
| -Thomas Edison | -Steven Spielberg |
| -Robert F. Kennedy | -Michael Phelps |

Top 10 Great Characteristics of AD/HD

Creative, Artistic, Intuitive, Empathetic, Visionary, Inventive, Sensitive, Original, Loving, Exuberant