



## PARENT LINK- INFORMATION SHEET no. 3

# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD;ADHD)

## 1. What is it?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is an internationally recognised condition associated with behaviour problems. It describes children who have much greater problems than their peers in attentiveness, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Other criteria needed for diagnosis include onset of the problem at an early age, and evidence of behaviour in two or more settings, such as home and school.

## 2. Implications

There are three main areas of behaviour:

### (i) Inattention

- Failure to give close attention to details, makes careless mistakes.
- Difficulty organising tasks and activities.
- Reluctance to participate in tasks that require sustained mental effort.
- Loses things necessary for tasks or activities.
- Easily distracted by external stimuli.
- Has short attention span.
- Does not listen when spoken to directly.
- Forgetful.

## **(ii) Hyperactivity**

- Fidgets with hands or feet, or squirms in seat.
- 'On the go' or acts as if 'driven by a motor'.
- Talks excessively.
- Has difficulty in playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly.
- Leaves seat in classroom when remaining seated is expected.

## **(iii) Impulsivity**

- Blurts out answers before questions have been completed.
- Has difficulty awaiting turn or coping with any form of delay.
- Interrupts or intrudes on others.

## **Managing Behaviour:**

Typically the behaviour of a pupil with ADHD can be managed by good discipline, behaviour modification programmes, behaviour management approaches, counselling. However, given the persistence of the behaviour, the inevitable damage not only to the pupil's education but to the education of others caused by the disruptive behaviour, referral an educational psychologist/ child psychologist may be the next step forward. Only when a clinical diagnosis of ADHD occurs is there any possibility of a drug being used to help the child. Ritalin is now being prescribed more often as acceptance of ADHD becomes more common.

**Ritalin:** Ritalin is a stimulant. It can significantly improve a pupil's ability to gain control of his own behaviour. It has an immediate effect in improving concentration and creating a calming effect. It may make the pupil thirsty.

## **3. Strategies**

\*You may need to access specialist advice - see County Psychological service

### **(i) Environment**

- **Seat the pupil near the teacher's desk, with their back to the rest of the class.**
- Surround with good role models.
- Encourage peer support and collaborative learning.
- Avoid distracting stimuli, such as doors or windows.
- Avoid transitions, room changes, disruptions, and monitor closely on field trips.
- Encourage parents to set up appropriate study space at home.

### **(ii) Giving instructions**

- **Maintain eye contact during verbal instructions**
- *Make instructions clear, concise and consistent.*
- Repeat instructions calmly if necessary.
- Help the pupil feel comfortable with asking for help.

### **(iii) Setting a task**

- Give only one task at a time.
- Monitor frequently and maintain support.
- *Modify the task as needed.*
- *Give extra time for certain tasks.*
- Remember that stress, pressure and fatigue can lead to poor behaviour.

### **(iv) Modifying behaviour**

- **Remain calm and avoid debate or argument.**
- Enforce classroom expectations consistently
- Avoid ridicule or criticism
- Avoid publicly reminding a pupil to take their medication
- Praise all good behaviour immediately
- Change rewards if they are not effective.
- Encourage the pupil to think positively about himself.

## **4. More information**

ADD-ADHD Family Support Group  
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Westbury

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