

ADD/ ADHD learners

Attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) belong among behaviour disorders and are considered to be a kind of health disability. Approximately 7 – 10 % of the population suffers from these disorders which are twice more common with boys than with girls. The cause of these disorders can be a slight damage of the brain before, during or after the birth. Sometimes the cause can be hereditary, mixed or unknown. The disorder should be diagnosed by a psychologist or psychiatrist. In case of moderate or severe problems, the child can be integrated into common classes and educated according to an individual education plan.

The main signs and symptoms of ADHD are inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.

- Children with ADHD are restless. They are not able to sit still; they stand up and move around the classroom during lessons.
- They do not pay attention and often overhear instructions. They have poor short-term memory.
- They have problems with completing their tasks.
- They are disorganized and they often forget or lose things.
- They interrupt conversations and ask irrelevant and too personal questions.
- They have difficulties in social interaction and they can be in danger of being bullied.

Children with ADD do not have problems with hyperactivity and impulsivity.

- They are quiet and not disruptive. Therefore they are often overlooked.
- They have poor attention span and do not pay attention to details.
- They are very slow and they have problems to complete their tasks.
- They are unable to plan and organize their tasks and activities.
- Daydreaming is typical of them.

There are some strategies teachers can use in class to prevent or reduce negative impact of ADD/ADHD both on school work of ADD/ADHD children and also on the entire class:

- 1). Seat the pupil away from windows or notice boards and near teacher's desk. It is also recommended that s/he should sit next to someone calm.
- 2). Give simple and clear instructions. Write the most important ones on the board and always check whether ADD/ADHD learners understand them.

- 3). Use visuals and vary the pace of your lesson. Include shorter activities of different kinds. Try to make your lesson enjoyable and interesting.
 - 4). If they do not pay attention or disrupt others, move towards them, establish an eye contact or use a calming touch.
 - 5). Never shout at them. Stay calm but consistent.
 - 6). If you want to discuss behaviour problems, talk to the learner in private. Give them a frequent feedback.
 - 7). Allow them to have enough movement not only during breaks but also during lessons. Use games and TPR activities, let ADD/ADHD children collect exercise books or distribute worksheets. They can also play or tap with something that does not make noise, e.g. a rubber.
 - 8). Set clear rules and insist on following them. If all teachers agree and insist on the same rules, it is easier for ADD/ADHD children to follow them. Remind them of the rules frequently. They need borders to feel safe.
 - 9). Be tolerant and patient. Focus on the positives about ADD/ADHD children. They can be really creative and enthusiastic.
 - 10). Praise them as much as possible. It works better than criticism or punishment.
 - 11). Believe in them and support them because they often lack self-confidence.
 - 12). If you talk to their parents, show that you want to help their child and try to establish cooperation with them.
 - 13). Be aware of the fact that they are responsible for their ADD/ADHD child for 24 hours a day, which is really demanding and requires a lot of effort. So be understanding.
- The disorder does not disappear or improve as ADD/ADHD children grow older. However, it is highly probable that they will develop some coping mechanisms that will help them to improve their behaviour. If they are provided with an individual approach and special care both at school and at home, they can develop their potential fully.

References:

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< http://www.helpguide.org/mental/adhd_add_teaching_strategies.htm >

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