

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Bill of Rights for Children with ADD/HD

HELLO!

Have you recently been diagnosed as having ADD or AD/HD? Do you want to know what that means? Well, it means you have Attention Deficit Disorder and you may have hyperactivity, too. It means that you might:

- find it hard to sit still
- get distracted easily
- have a hard time taking turns
- have a hard time playing quietly
- blurt out in class without raising your hand first
- talk too much or too loud
- be forgetful
- have a hard time keeping track of your things
- lose your homework papers
- have trouble getting along with your friends
- not have many friends
- not remember to do things
- not remember where things are

AD/HD Behavioral Characteristics

There are three types of behaviors that might give you problems. These are common in students with AD/HD.

DISTRACTIBILITY

Distractibility is when you have a hard time focusing for a length of time on something that may need extra thinking power. You may be more easily distracted when you are supposed to do your homework if there are other things or noises going on around you. You might have a hard time concentrating unless you are in a very quiet place with no other people.

HYPERACTIVITY

Hyperactivity is when you can't seem to hold still for anything. Something has to be moving all the time. Maybe you are tapping your pencil, jiggling your legs, swinging your arms or wiggling some part of you. You may get up and down a lot during a sitting tie, (meal time or during whole class lessons) or you may have a hard time sitting on a chair at all. You and "quietly sitting" just don't seem to go together. At school you may be under or over your desk or laying across your chair. Your body just has to be in motion constantly.

IMPULSIVITY

Impulsivity is when you act before you think. You might blurt out answers in school before your teacher has a chance to call on you. You might interrupt someone when they are talking without even thinking about it. You don't mean to be rude, you just can't wait to say what you have to say. You might even hit someone and not even intend to hit, but it just happens. You don't stop to think about what your actions might be causing. You do first and think next.

Why Do I Have AD/HD?

First of all, it's not your fault! It's really no one's fault. AD/HD is caused by a part of the brain that doesn't work the way it should. It doesn't mean you aren't smart...because you already know that you are smart about a lot of things. It does cause you to have a hard time focusing your attention and sometimes you can't screen out things that are happening around you. It means that sometimes you do things that you don't really mean to do. It doesn't mean you are bad, either. It does mean that you have a disability. In other words, you are not always able to do things the way other kids do.

Have you ever had someone tell you that you were lazy, uncooperative or just plain stubborn? Sometimes people who don't understand AD/HD might think that about you.

They might think you are unwilling to do the work or the things asked of you. They don't understand about AD/HD.

Do you feel like you get in trouble more often than the other kids in your neighborhood or class? Both of these problems are pretty typical of children with AD/HD. You aren't trying to be difficult. You aren't really lazy or uncooperative or stubborn, either. It's all part of your disability.

It's important for you to learn about and understand your disability and then you will want to learn how to cope with it too. Your parents and teachers all want to help you. But you must be willing to help yourself and do your part.

It's Not Fair!

No, it isn't. But you will learn that a lot of things in life aren't fair. What you have to do is recognize that some things are going to be different for you. Then you will have to work hard to overcome some of those things. You didn't have any say in what the color of your eyes would be. You didn't have any say in this AD/HD disability either. And your parents didn't have any choices in this either. They wanted everything to be just perfect with you. Lots of children are born with severe handicaps or disabilities that don't allow them to do a lot of the things you are able to do. So let's just get on with it. Face it. Accept it. Work with it.

YOU CAN DO IT!

Anything Else?

As a matter of fact, yes! Unfortunately kids with AD/HD often have problems with organization skills. That means you have a hard time keeping track of things. You may do a homework paper, but the next thing you know...you can't find it. You can put something away, but it somehow moves to another spot or disappears completely.

You probably get frustrated easily. When you can't find something, or you can't do something the way you think it should be done, you get frustrated. You might even get angry and want to give up all together.

Sometimes you have a hard time getting along with your friends. They might think you cause all the problems. They may seem to blame you a lot. You might hit at them or say unkind words that you don't really mean to say and then they don't want to be your friend for a while. You might even have a hard time getting along with brothers, sisters and parents. You might argue a lot within your family and it might seem like everyone is ganging up against you!

Even when you are disciplined, you feel you have been dealt with unfairly. You don't think you should get punished or blamed when someone else was also involved...but you get the blame and the punishment. It seems like every time something goes wrong...it's your fault! Life just doesn't seem fair, does it?

There is HOPE there is HELP!

Be All That You Can Be!

You might think that everyone just bugs you about the things you do wrong all the time. You might feel like you get blamed for everything that goes wrong. You might feel like it's always your fault. You might feel like you are the only one that forgets things, the only one that loses things a lot or the only one that gets caught not paying attention.

But you know what? Everyone is like that once in a while. True, you may have a harder time, but don't forget there are lots of wonderful things about you that your parents, friends, family and teachers love about you!

Learning to control your impulses, your distractibility and maybe your hyperactivity can allow others to show you more positive attention and you will feel that they really do like you!

You have an inquisitive mind and a sensitive nature that will allow you to become a happy successful and productive person!

YES! I'm a terrific person!

Something Wonderful!

You are Creative!.....You are Inquisitive!.....You are Forgiving!.....

You are Sincere!.....You are Energetic!.....You are Loyal!.....You are a Risk Taker!.....

You are Spontaneous!.....You are Inventive!.....You are Warm Hearted!.....

You are Resilient!.....You are Trusting!.....You are Resourceful!.....You have a Good Sense of Humor!.....

Things to Try

1. LOVE YOURSELF! You don't have to be a show-off or go around praising yourself, but know that you are an okay kid. You have likable qualities and if you don't like yourself very much, others will find it hard to like you, too.

2. Use the strengths that you have. If you are creative or perhaps a good artist, use those qualities to your advantage.
3. Help yourself get organized by getting a three ringed binder. Divide each school subject with a colored divider. Remember to use the same color for everything you do in that subject. For example: Say you use the color blue for math. Just take a blue marker or pencil and put a blue dot on the top right corner. When you are going through your papers, you will see your math paper right away. File it in your binder behind the blue divider. You could even make a blue line clear across the top of the paper to make it easier to see. If you have a math assignment due on a certain date, write it on your calendar in blue ink or blue pencil.
4. Speaking of calendars...that's one of the best ways to get organized. Maybe a "daytimer" is the thing for you, but putting a monthly or even a yearly calendar in the front of your binder will really help you stay on top of things. Then by using your color code system, you can easily tell what you need to do and when. it's a good idea to have someone check your calendar to make sure it's right and you could check theirs, also.
5. Tell your teachers about your color system. he/she may even think of ways to help you. For example: He might write the assignments that are due in your color code.
6. Have a special place that you will always put your binder, but make sure it's high enough that little brothers or sisters can't get it.
7. Lots of people write themselves notes. You can do that too, but put your notes on the wall or on the fridge so that you can see them often.

It's not the mistake, but how I handle it that counts!

Words of Encouragement

There is so much more help today than there used to be, so you are very lucky in that way.

First of all, there is an organization to help you and your parents with your AD/HD. It's called CH.A.D.D. (Children & Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder) and they have meetings right here in Davis County. They are held at the Davis High School Cafeteria on the first Tuesday of every month. The meetings are free. This is a national organization and they have all the latest information on helping you and others like you. Encourage your parents to go to a meeting as soon as possible. If they join, they can use their leading library. They have videos, books and magazines. You could try to learn as much as you can about your disability. Ignorance is not bliss...it's terrifying? You don't need to struggle alone.

Second, there are a lot of professional people that can help you, too. Sometimes you will need to see a specialist, because they usually know more about how to treat you. But you might have a really good family physician that also knows about AD/HD. Sometimes your doctor will put you on a medication that helps you have better control. But you need to see your doctor. That is a decision he and your parents will make.

Third, there are so many things you can do to help yourself Get help from your parents, teachers and friends. If you don't understand something, don't be afraid to ask for help. If your teacher or parents talk too fast, ask them to please slow down or have them write it down. If you look people in the eye when they are talking to you, it is much easier to stay focused. Repeat what you hear them say for clarification. Whatever you want to be good at....you need to practice! PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

Other Resources

If you feel like getting other resources to help you or if you just don't know where to turn next, the following list may offer you some help. If you don't get the answers you need, don't stop looking until you are completely satisfied!

- Your teacher
- Your School's 504 Coordinator
- CLASS ACT, Davis County's team of experts on AD/HD and Good Teaching Practices,
- District Office, Farmington, Utah (801)402-5143
- Utah Attention Deficit Disorder Guide, Utah State office of Education/Division of Students at Risk (801) 538-7700
- Utah Parent Center, 2290 East 4500 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117 (801)272-1051
- CH.A.D.D. of Northern Utah, Davis County Branch (801)296-2264
- Primary Children's Medical Center/Learning Problems Clinic (801)588-3570
- Parent Education Resource Center (PERC), 320 South 500 East, Kaysville, Utah (801)546-4309

BOOKS TO READ

- Putting on the Brakes , Patricia Quinn, M.D. and Judith Stern (ages 8-13)

- Learning to Slow Down and Pay Attention , Kathleen Nadeau, Ph.D. and Ellen Dixon, Ph.D. (ages 6-11)
 - Otto Learns About His Medicine , Matthew Galvin, M.D. (ages 5-10)
 - Shelley the Hyperactive Turtle , Deborah Moss (ages 3-7)
 - Adolescents and ADD: Gaining the Advantage , Patricia Quinn, M.D.
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