

# Contents

• Behavioural characteristics	4
• The question of restraint	5
• A guide through the statementing process	5
• Getting to know you	7
• Identifying triggers	7
• Working with parents	8
• What a child needs	8
• Strategies for working	14
• Emotional literacy	17
• Coaching	18
• Social issues and bullying	19
• Medication	20
• Rewards and sanctions	22
• Relaxation and anger management techniques	23
• Observation Sheets for IBP or IEP	23
• Useful Contacts	24

## Pages to copy and use:

- Example of an Observation Sheet

Inside Front Cover



# Introduction

**The literature available on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is huge and you should read as much as possible if you have children with ADHD in your care or in your class.**

This is a practical reference guide that aims to help you in your daily work with a child affected by the condition.

Within this book are included the signs and symptoms of ADHD, information on statementing, problems and issues, rewards and boundaries and ideas to help with behaviour and education plans, together with sections on strategies and techniques. These include some holistic approaches and information on coaching.

## Behavioural Characteristics

**Most behavioural characteristics are apparent at all times. Some children can have issues with attention or concentration, but may not be impulsive or hyperactive.**

Any disorder should be identified early to ensure that a child receives the support he needs to attain his full potential. There are numerous problems when diagnosing ADHD, as there are no physical tests available. ADHD symptoms can be masked by other issues such as dyslexia or speech and hearing problems.

Children with ADHD can display few or many of the following symptoms with varying severity:

### Hyperactivity

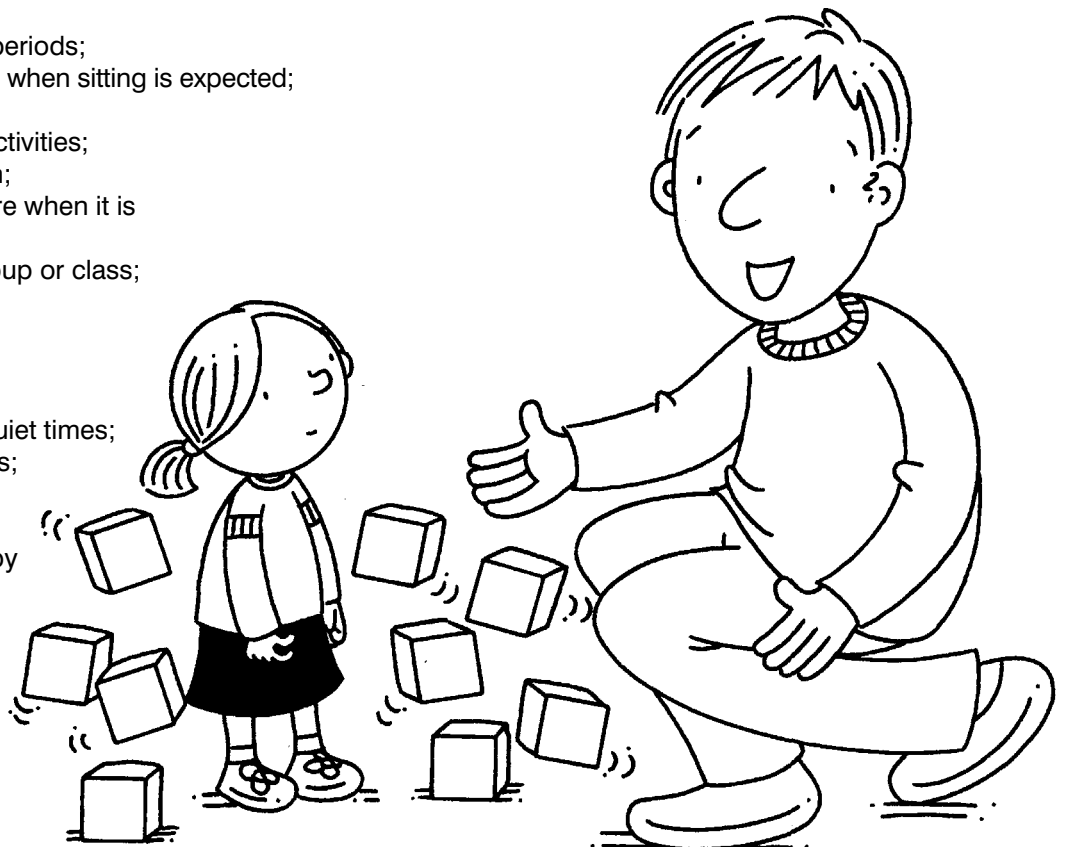
- restlessness or fidgeting;
- inability to sit still for long periods;
- leaving his seat or standing when sitting is expected;
- excessive talking;
- problems in engaging in activities;
- issues with remaining calm;
- running, climbing or explore when it is inappropriate;
- attempting to leave the group or class;

### Impulsive behaviour

- easily distracted;
- speaks or shouts during quiet times;
- shouts out answers in class;
- interrupts;
- has problems taking turns;
- spoils games or activities by interfering;
- when upset, may become violent or aggressive;
- acts first and think later, may disregard the safety of others or self-harm;

### Inattention

- prone to losing equipment;
- has difficulty focusing on tasks;
- may be forgetful (especially with a long list of instructions);
- easily distracted;
- lack of attention to detail, careless with work;
- reluctant to complete tasks requiring long-term attention;
- finds it difficult to start tasks which require mental effort and be overwhelmed;
- appears not to be listening.



# Working with parents

**All parents are different. Some fight for their child's rights, some find ADHD overwhelming and have trouble coping. No matter what their outlook, they all love their child and want to act in his interest.**

It is your responsibility to keep parents informed of everything that is going on. You can keep them up to date, explain the statementing process to them and support them through it. It is important to encourage them to work with you. Parents can feel socially isolated for a range of reasons: the child's behaviour outside school may have caused arguments with neighbours or friends, and some parents may even isolate themselves as they try so hard to spend time with their child. It can be a confusing time and many parents feel lonely and depressed.

By making parents an integral part of the child's school life, you can give them a sense of control and understanding, which can be empowering. Include them in meetings, so they are aware of the child's goals, and be willing to take their advice. They can provide vital information that may help identify triggers and share strategies that have worked for them. The majority of contact with parents of a child with ADHD may be for negative reasons. This can be very disheartening for them, so make the effort to inform

them of all of the positives too. Then the parents can talk to the child about his achievements at home and encourage him at the start of each day.

Introduce a daily communication book for parents. You can note both positives and negatives through the day, and any rewards or boundaries. The parents can use this to let you know how the child responded to homework or if he has had a good morning before school. If a child has had an argument or outburst before school, this can affect the child's behaviour throughout the day.

If you know that the child may be upset, you can provide an opportunity for him to calm down and talk to him before any structured lessons. Without the book, you may not understand why the child is angry. It can also be used to notify parents of meetings or ask them to come in to see you. When you are writing the child's IEP, talk to the parents about it. Advise them of the child's different goals and introduce them to his reward scheme. Encourage the parents to introduce similar strategies at home to give the child structure, routine and a unified approach. Parents usually appreciate reward schemes at home, as they can offer much better incentives than you can at school.

## What a child needs

### Structure

**Children with ADHD really need structure. Guidelines, rules and routine form structure, whereas differentiation relates to the curriculum with regard to content, style and delivery. When working with a child with ADHD, you must be flexible with both.**

Areas of the curriculum are adapted for most children, but for children with ADHD changes may need to be made on the spot (usually depending on their reaction to the session). Constant revision may be needed day-by-day. This may seem a tall order, but with various structures in place it can be achieved relatively easily.

Many children with ADHD do not like change and are

easily bored. You need to provide a regular timetable that provides stability and security so they are aware of their weekly routine. This must be combined with interesting sessions to whet their appetite at the start of the day. Be sure to tell them all the wonderful things you will be doing.

You can introduce a golden rule sheet. These rules are for the whole class, and the sheet can be created during circle time by asking the children what the rules should be. You can make suggestions too, to ensure all the rules are covered, such as turn taking, not leaving your seat, disruption, violence and taking care of property. Do include everything you wish as this will be very useful later on.

With regard to your classroom, allocate specific areas and make sure the children are aware of them.



These areas can include a role-play area, a reading corner and an art station. Include a writing desk with postcards and notepaper, a cool-down zone and PC table. These different areas can be very useful if a child is finding a task difficult and needs a break or if you need to alter a task so that a child can complete it. A child must be made aware of which areas of the classroom are accessible at different times. If an ADHD child completes his work, it is difficult to sit in his seat with nothing to do. With these structured areas in place you can direct him to one of the activities or even let him choose one. Don't forget, this is a class-wide strategy.

You should also consider seating and storage. Most children are protective of their own things, though a child with ADHD can be overly-protective. It all depends on a specific child's triggers and how he reacts. Children with ADHD already feel 'different' and it is your mission to dispel that. The advantage of a structured classroom is that it is class-wide. All the children have the same experience, which supports inclusion. You are not separating the child with ADHD nor are you making him feel different. Allocate a seat to each child with his name on it and include 'do not touch other children's property without permission' on your golden rule sheet. If you introduce a behaviour and reward scheme in class, explain the process to the whole class and include all the children in the scheme.

The structure of the class also relates to your expectations, so make the details of the scheme clear and state why children may receive a reward or a punishment. These expectations must be consistent. The children can be referred to the rule sheet and can understand the consequence of any errors. The same applies to rewards. Children with ADHD should be given on-the-spot rewards and praise as they have little response to long-term rewards. This can cause resentment from children who do not understand long-term rewards. Although rewards are positive, again an ADHD child can feel singled out if you treat him differently. Try to treat all the children in the same way, but feel free to vary the rewards. One day you may wish to offer extra playtime (in minutes), another day you may choose to give stickers or time on the PC. If you use a merit point or sticker system with a reward

for reaching a certain target, it defeats the object when you are constantly giving stickers out. Mark which days the children can earn stickers on the class timetable, when they can earn time on the PC and when they can earn extra playtime. Advise them that fantastic behaviour could mean a bonus sticker, even when it is not a sticker day.

Finally, there are whole-school structures to consider. Ensure that your class knows the school rules and pays special attention to punctuality, as this can be a problem for children with ADHD. Put a wipe-clean sheet on the wall with all of the children's names on, and as each child walks into class they can mark themselves off. When they have five symbols for the week, they get a sticker which contributes to their long-term reward. Another approach is to offer the chance to earn some free time for the class at the end of the week in exchange for five punctual days from all the children. It is important not just to reward or punish for punctuality, but explain its importance. Tell the children that if they are late, the whole class has to wait for them. In addition, there are great things that you might have planned that there would not be time to do. Encourage the children to make it a group effort. You may be surprised by the results.

If your school has a uniform or dress code, point out when a child looks particularly smart. This can instil a sense of pride throughout the class and encourage the children to take care of their uniforms. Children with ADHD can have a problem with uniforms as they may refuse to wear it. A uniform is symbolic and if a child is having problems at school he may reject it. Many parents have been forced to spend a fortune on replacement

items, as due to their child's hyperactivity and behaviour his uniform is ruined within weeks. Encouragement from you and praise for looking smart can only reap positive results. After all, you are a role model and the class teacher; you may find the children will try their best to look smart in the hope that you will acknowledge their effort. Complimenting them will raise self-esteem and encourage them to take pride in themselves.

To avoid a shock reaction or fear, you should make sure all the children know about fire exits and fire drill. Hold your own drill every week and let the children take turns in making the noise of a bell.

