

Raising a Child with ADHD

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It is quite normal for children to be more active, more exuberant, less attentive, and more impulsive than adults. If your child's behavior problems seem a little excessive, even for a child it is probably the case that he or she is simply a little immature, and will likely outgrow these problems. Parents should be reassured that these are natural qualities of children and there is no need for alarm in most cases.

These children could, however, be exhibiting symptoms of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) at school, at home or in relationships. These children can often be helped if parents learn how to manage their behavior.

There are times when a child's attention span is so short, their activity level is so high, and impulse control so limited, that their behavior in these areas is extreme for their age. Perhaps you have known one of these children. One who has trouble completing schoolwork, who may not get along with other children, whose inability to follow through and complete chores without parental supervision causes conflict at home.

These children may have problems with attention, over activity, and lack of inhibition, resulting from a developmental disability known as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or (ADHD).

If you think your child or student may have ADHD, then your child should have a complete evaluation done by a qualified physician or neuro-psychologist.

Raising children with ADHD can be incredibly challenging for any parent. Their problems can place a burden on your role as a parent that you never thought possible when you first considered having a child.

Parents of a child with ADHD must search out school teachers, professionals, and other community resources. They will find themselves having to supervise, monitor, teach, organize, plan, structure, reward, punish, guide, buffer, protect, and nurture their child far more than is demanded by the typical

parent. They will also need to meet more often with other adults involved in their child's daily life--school staff, pediatricians, and mental health professionals.

Bringing up a child with ADHD, however, can elevate parenting to a new, higher plane. Bringing up a child with ADHD may be the hardest thing you ever have to do. Some parents succumb to the stress, but if you rise to the occasion, raising a child with ADHD can provide a tremendous opportunity for self-improvement and fulfillment as a parent. You can watch your investment of time and energy pay off in the happiness and well-being of your child-not always, but often enough to make it richly fulfilling to a parent.

These are the words of Russell Barkley, PhD, an internationally known expert in the field of ADHD. Dr. Barkley has devoted the last 20 years of his life researching this subject. He believes these parents must develop the skills to become a Principle-Centered Parent.

These seven principals are:

- 1) Be proactive**
- 2) Begin with the end in mind**
- 3) Put first things first**
- 4) Think win/win**
- 5) Seek first to understand, then to be understood**
- 6) Synergize**
- 7) Renewal**

Start helping your child as soon as possible.

Treatment of ADHD may require a wide-ranging multi-modal approach including medical, psychological and educational initiatives. There may be no quick fix to ADHD as it may be a lifelong learning experience lasting from childhood through adulthood.

Learning behavior management skills and techniques as soon as possible after your child is diagnosed as having ODD, ADD or ADHD can give your child a better chance at success at school, at home and in social settings.

Elaine Lerner, MSW, CSW is an ADHD Parent Trainer. She trained with Russell Barkley, PhD, an internationally recognized authority on ADHD. She conducts Parent Trainings in Garden City and Melville. She is also available for individual, couple and family counseling as well as Social Skills Coaching for Teens and ADHD Grandparent Trainings

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