



Community Contributor

Ruth E. Harris – Director of Northwest Reading Clinic, Ltd
2600 Stein Blvd, Eau Claire, WI
715.834.2754

www.NorthwestReadingClinicLTD.com

ADD/ADHD and SPORTS: Did You Know?

If your child has ADD/ADHD and is in sports, his/her grades may not be used to prevent him/her from participating.

This is a pivotal issue with many ADD/ADHD students with learning disabilities. They may be putting forth maximum academic effort and still receive low grades. Yet, sports may be the one passion and talent they can succeed at.

Since preserving self-concept is paramount to the ultimate success of ADD/ADHD/LD students, we need to advocate for them so that they can have every possible opportunity to succeed.

ADD/ADHD and FUNCTIONING AT 70%: Did You Know?

ADD/ADHD children and adolescents function at about 70% of what you would expect in terms of their academic, social, emotional, and "schoolsmanship" skills.

Understanding this limitation can help parents and educators to have a realistic perception of expectations from ADD/ADHD students. This is especially important in terms of "independent work tasks".

Daily monitoring may be necessary in order to keep track of chores and assignments, as well as such behaviors as coming to class prepared, following directions, finishing tasks, handing in work, and exhibiting socially appropriate behavior.

ADD/ADHD and TEENS AND DRIVING: Did You Know?

ADD/ADHD teenagers have a higher driving accident rate than non-ADD teenagers (who already have a higher rate than the general population).

What is a parent to do?

Withholding a license from a teenager can be a very volatile issue. Therefore, compromise is called for. The recommendation is two-fold.

First, your ADD/ADHD teenager should not be allowed to drive with more than one passenger in the car. This seems to reduce the distractibility factor as well as ameliorate the impulsivity that can be triggered by group "mentality."

Second, your ADD/ADHD teenager should only be allowed to drive in a "purposeful mode". This means that he/she has a specific destination agreed upon beforehand by parent and teenager.

Since driving is such a powerful motivator for teenagers, you may want to incorporate driving time per week into a positive behavior modification program that starts with a minimal base time, with extra driving time "earned" by the teen based on homework, chores, etc. The idea is to keep it positive – they earn it.

ADD/ADHD and ACT AND SAT TESTS: Did You Know?

ADD and LD students are eligible to take the ACT and SAT college entrance exams "with extended time. This can make a tremendous difference to ADD/ADHD students who have test anxiety and/or slow processing skills.

The procedure to follow is to get a special needs college entrance testing form in your high school guidance counselor's office. Requirements for eligibility include a recent diagnosis or IEP or 504 Plan within three years of the request and documentation that there has been some precedent at school for allowing extended time on tests.

It is interesting to note that many ADD/LD students taking college entrance exams with extended time only use a "little" extra time, but the knowledge that they can have as much time as they need often relieves tension and anxiety so that they can concentrate more effectively.

ADD/ADHD and ADOPTION: Did You Know?

ADD and ADHD occur in the adoptive child population 10:1 over the general population. This may be due to prematurity, low birth weight, poor prenatal care, fetal alcohol syndrome, substance abuse, or genetics (remember one of the main characteristics of ADD/ADHD is impulsivity).

This can be a devastating issue for adoptive parents who have no biological children of their own to present behavioral benchmarks to guide them. They may become very self-critical of their parenting skills, not realizing that their adopted child may have undiagnosed ADD/ADHD.

Information about the symptoms and appropriate diagnosis of ADD/ADHD should be readily available to all adoptive parents.

ADD/ADHD and CENTRAL AUDITORY PROCESSING DEFICIT: Did You Know?

If your child has been diagnosed with "central auditory processing deficit", you should know that many professionals consider this condition to be an aspect of "attention deficit disorder".

In other words, ADD is the umbrella that central auditory processing comes under. This is an important distinction because valuable time can be lost in making an ADD diagnosis while language intervention occurs.

Keep in mind that language intervention may be appropriate for these children but that may only be part of the problem. So if your child has been diagnosed with central auditory processing problems, it may be wise to have them evaluated for ADD/ADHD as well.

ADD/ADHD and CHRONIC EAR INFECTIONS: Did You Know?

Children who have chronic ear infections and/or tubes in their ears may be "at risk" academically even though they do not suffer any permanent hearing loss.

The ability to distinguish sounds (auditory discrimination) is a prerequisite to accurate speech (articulation) and to the acquisition of phonemic awareness (phonics skills), as well as for sound-symbol relationships (spelling). These skills are acquired when a child is in K-2 grade. If they have chronic ear infections or fluid in their ears that interferes with acquiring accurate auditory discrimination skills during this crucial time, they may end up with speech/language or reading difficulties later on even though they no longer have this medical condition. They may need the help of a speech and language teacher and/or a remedial reading teacher to acquire these skills.

ADD/ADHD and DIAGNOSIS OF ADULTS WITH ADD: Did You Know?

Many adults first suspect that they have ADD/ADHD when they are going through the diagnostic evaluation of one of their children. As they learn about ADD characteristics and look at behavioral checklists, they may see themselves at their children's age and begin to wonder if they too could be ADD.

We do know that ADD is genetically linked and can run in families. We also know that ADD is a chronic condition that persists into adulthood.

If an adult suspects that he/she may have ADD it is important to seek out a physician - often a neurologist or a psychiatrist who is familiar with diagnosing and treating adult ADD and its co-morbid conditions, including sleep disturbance, irritable bowel syndrome, obsessive/compulsive behavior and depression.

ADD/ADHD and PERSEVERATION: Did You Know?

Perseveration is a term that refers to the behavior of repeating a particular task, even after it is no longer necessary. It is not an action of intent but more of a compulsive act. It interferes with smooth transitions from one task to the next. Students who perseverate may for instance be doing addition problems and then when subtraction problems are brought into the assignment, they may continue to add rather than switch to subtraction. A coping strategy may be to trace all the plus signs on an assignment with one color and all the minus signs with another color and then work all of one type of problem first.

When activity "transitions" are about to begin, children with perservation problems need advanced notice. "We'll be starting spelling in five minutes, so finish the math problem you're on, put your math book away and take out your spelling book." They also need advanced warning of "clean-up" time to put away materials appropriately in an organized fashion before class time is over or the next activity is to begin. The same is true at home. Any change in routine needs to be discussed ahead of time and a plan of action made. Even routine activities need to be put on a daily checklist in sequence so that there is reinforcement to move from one activity to the next for such everyday tasks as getting ready for school in the morning, doing chores, or homework, or getting ready for bed at night.

Without a daily, reinforced game plan, parents and teachers may find themselves reinventing the wheel every day!

ADD/ADHD and MEDICATION AND JUICE: Did You Know?

If your child is taking a prescribed stimulant medication for ADD or ADHD, it is very important not to dissolve it in juice or any other liquid. Dissolving stimulant medication in a liquid solution will increase the absorption rate of the drug and alter its bio-availability profile. In other words, it will affect its potency and effectiveness. It is best if you watch your child swallow the pill. The same is true at school. Some children have difficulty swallowing pills and may try to dissolve it in the drink they are given at home or school.

Remember, if your child is on “time-release” stimulant medication, it could be harmful to break up the pill whether it is dissolved or not.

For further information, contact your physician or pharmacist.

ADD/ADHD and RECORDED TEXTBOOKS: Did You Know?

ADD and LD students are eligible to have all their textbooks recorded by “Recordings for the Blind, Learning Disabled, and Attention Deficit”. The form to apply is available from your local public library. Advance notice is helpful so that books will be available at the start of a school year.

When your child has textbooks recorded, it is important to have him/her follow along in the book and not just listen passively. This will help them when they have to locate information to answer questions because they will remember “seeing” where the information was on a page.

In addition to textbooks, the “Recordings for the Blind, Learning Disabled, and Attention Deficit” also can record storybooks, novels, magazines, and newspapers. ADD/LD adults may find this service invaluable.