

PARENT'S GUIDE
TO
ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDERS

Intervention Strategies for the Home

SECOND EDITION

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I. Introduction

The **Parent's Guide to Attention Deficit Disorders** was developed to provide parents with specific, practical strategies to use in helping their child be more successful in the home environment. The intervention strategies have been tried and tested by teachers and parents of children with Attention-deficit Disorders and are presented in the most convenient and practical manner possible.

The format chosen for the guide was designed for ease of use in identifying the problem the child exhibits and providing a selection of strategies parents may implement to successfully deal with that problem. This format reduces the need for lengthy reading exercises, indecision over how or exactly what to do, and indecision over whether the intervention strategies are appropriate for the child.

Because of differences in situations and the kinds of behaviors associated with Attention-deficit Disorders, the interventions take several forms. Some interventions are appropriate for the prevention of problems, while others reduce problem behavior, increase the child's self-control of his/her behavior, or help the child learn more appropriate behavior. A variety of intervention strategies is presented for each behavior problem associated with Attention-deficit Disorders so that **parents** will be able to choose the interventions best suited to **their child**, in **their home**. We chose to produce a collection of strategies parents can practice in the home, without the need for a therapist or counselor to explain how to "implement" those strategies. We also chose to develop a reference guide that parents can keep available in their homes to answer that primary question, "What do you do when your child . . . ?" rather than a text parents read one time and then shelve without further use. And, lastly, we chose the most logical and common sense approaches because they are the ones that work best with children.

We believe it is extremely important that the intervention strategies employed to help a child succeed are those with which parents are most com-

fortable. Parents are likely to be more successful implementing those interventions they think are best for themselves and their child rather than attempting to implement interventions suggested by a third party who would not have the same insight the parents have relative to their child's behavior.

The **Parent's Guide to Attention Deficit Disorders** was written for all parents who are genuinely concerned about their child's success and are willing to do all they can personally to make that success possible. We also wrote the **Parent's Guide to Attention Deficit Disorders** for a little boy who came to live in my home a few years ago. He came with nothing but a trash bag containing a few mismatched pieces of clothing that were too small for him. He also brought all the love a little boy's heart can hold and an optimism and zest for life that would seem to negate his past. He has been my teacher for these past few years and he has taught me far more than I had accumulated in all the years prior to his coming. Some days have not been easy, with problems at school and some educational personnel who have been reluctant to be understanding. But, at night, after his bath, when he's in his pajamas and robe, wearing his slippers and smelling really good, and I put him in bed and pull the covers and he wraps those little arms around my neck and booms out in that little boy voice, "I love you, Daddy!" I know the answer to all his problems. The answer is, "We will get up tomorrow and do all this again because we are all he has. And he is all we have."

We dedicate the **Parent's Guide to Attention Deficit Disorders** to you, Billy. You made it possible. May God bless you and watch over you always.

S.B.M.

A.M.B.

II. Behaviors and Interventions

1 Is easily distracted by other things in the home

1. Carefully consider if your child is capable of performing the responsibilities expected of him/her. Do not give your child too many chores to do at once; make sure he/she gets up early enough to get to school on time; provide more than enough time to perform a responsibility, etc.; and do not expect perfection.

2. Establish rules for performing everyday expectations (e.g., get up on time for school, do your chores right after you get home from school, finish your homework before you watch TV, etc.). These rules should be consistent and followed by everyone in the home. Talk about the rules often.

3. Establish a routine for your child to follow when getting ready for school, performing chores, doing homework, etc. This will help your child remember what is expected.

4. Reward your child for getting things done without being distracted. Possible rewards include verbal praise (e.g., “You’re on time for school. Good for you!” “Thank you for remembering to finish your homework before you turned on the TV.” etc.), a kiss on the cheek, a hug, having a friend over to play, staying up late, watching a favorite TV show, and playing a game with a parent. (See Appendix for Reward Menu.)

5. If there are other children or adolescents in the home, reward them for getting things done without becoming distracted.

6. Model for your child the appropriate ways to get things done without becoming distracted. Show your child how to follow a routine by following one yourself and getting things done on time.

7. Make certain that your child sees the relationship between behavior and the consequences which follow (e.g., failing to feed the dog will cause the dog to go hungry).

8. When your child does not get something done because he/she was distracted, explain exactly what he/she did wrong, what should have been done and why.

For example: Your child is supposed to catch the school bus at 7:45 a.m. but is still getting dressed when the bus arrives. Go to your child and explain that the bus was missed because he/she was not ready on time. Explain that it is unacceptable to miss the bus because you don’t have time to take him/her to school.

9. Write a contract with your child.

For example: I, William, will be ready and waiting for the school bus at 7:40 a.m. for three days in a row. When I accomplish this, I can watch 30 extra minutes of TV.

The contract should be written within the ability level of your child and should focus on only one behavior at a time. (See Appendix for an example of a Behavior Contract.)

10. Allow natural consequences to occur due to your child becoming distracted and not getting things done (e.g., a pet goes hungry if not fed, possessions are lost if not put away, etc.).

11. Along with a directive, provide an incentive statement (e.g., “After you get ready for bed, you may watch TV.”).

12. Provide your child with written reminders (e.g., a list posted in the bathroom, indicating what his/her chores are and when they need to be done). (See Appendix for List of Chores.)

13. Tell your child when it is time to set the table, feed the dog, etc.

14. Limit the number of chores for which your child is responsible and gradually increase the number of chores as your child demonstrates the ability to get them done on time without becoming distracted.