

# Let's Not Diagnose, Let's Problem Solve ADD/ADHD?

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# I DO NOT DIAGNOSE

\*First and foremost this workshop is about how to help children and talk to parents when our toolbox is empty. I DO NOT diagnose ADD/ADHD. As a behavior consultant, I am around many children who have a lack of focus, high distractibility, lots of energy and a shorter attention span. I want to help you fill your toolbox to help these children and leave the diagnosing up to the professionals. Thanks!

\*No single test can diagnose ADHD. Assessment by a doctor or psychologist involves putting together lots of pieces of information to make a diagnosis.

# Who's affected by ADHD?

As reported by Your Health magazine from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

- 6.4 million are diagnosed (4-17 years old) as of 2011. That's 11% of children. Do you think that number has increased or decreased?
- ADHD is the most commonly diagnosed mental health problem of childhood. Current estimates suggest that 1 out of every 9 American children have ADHD.
- 42% increase in diagnoses from 2003-2004 to 2011-2012.
- Boys are 5 times more likely to be diagnosed than girls.
- What causes ADHD?:
  - Brain Injuries
  - Genetics – several genes have been identified that may increase the risk.
  - Environment

# Most Common Signs and Core Symptoms of ADD/ADHD

- Inattention: difficulty concentrating, following instructions and staying “on task”
- Impulsiveness: interrupting, talking over others and loss of emotional control
- Hyperactivity: fidgeting and experiencing restlessness

# What else could the behaviors tell us?

- Temperament
- Nutrition/Allergies to food and drink
- Sensory Integration dysfunction - specialist
- Trauma, post traumatic stress disorder – specialist
- Reactive attachment disorder – specialist
- Fetal alcohol syndrome
- Vision or hearing disabilities
- Depression
- Thyroid problems
- Neglect
- High lead
- Dietary deficits in potassium, iron, sodium, and calcium
- Lack of natural lighting
- Multiple Intelligence
- Learning Style/Modality
- Inadequate structure or instructional stimulation

# Temperament

Does your child look a little bit like this?:

- Enjoys movement
- Energetic
- Incredible capacity for play
- Finds entertainment in the “boring”
- Passionate
- Strong desire for more
- Gets own needs met
- Can multi-task well

# Lack of Natural Lighting

- Improves standardized test scores: 25% improvement when tests were taken in a naturally lit classroom!
- Improves mood, mental alertness, vision
- Natural lighting actually makes students significantly more focused and less distracted from their work even though in the 1970's architects were making smaller windows hoping for the same outcome.
- Higher energy later in the day
- More cost effective than the monthly expense of artificial lighting. Which means more money for schools to spend on the students!
- Read faster in a naturally lit classroom (study out of Alberta, Canada)
- This same study showed that naturally lit classrooms also boasted healthier teeth (due to sun exposure) and less absent children.

# Nutrition

- Nutrition does not cause ADHD but it can exacerbate the symptoms.
- Red Dye 40
- Sugars and the addiction to it
- Preservatives



# Filling your toolbox

- Incorporate movement often inside and outside. Teach children to find it independently
- Use fidgets as a tool not a toy
- Limit choices
- Provide excitement, humor, interest and avoid boredom and mundane!
- Teach skills and meet needs
- Avoid long-winded explanations
- Expand the power of the pause
- Teach cause and effect
- Teach social skills, emotions, empathy
- 2 of my least favorite: Please don't use them!!!!!!!
  - Use goals and rewards☹️
  - Instead of yelling or spanking, use timeouts or removal of privileges☹️

# Resources

- [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org) (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)
- [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org) (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
- [www.help4adhd.org](http://www.help4adhd.org) (National Resource Center of ADHD)
- [www.nimh.gov](http://www.nimh.gov) (National Institute of Mental Health)