

NASET's HOW TO Series

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How To Identify Children with Attention Deficit Disorder in your Classroom

Introduction

Accurate and early diagnosis is crucial for the child with Attention Deficit Disorder. This will facilitate a treatment plan and reduce the chances of secondary problems. Follow the checklist below if you think the child in your room may have Attention Deficit Disorder. Compare the child's behavior to the following list of symptoms:

INATTENTION - AT LEAST THREE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- The child often fails to finish things he or she starts.
- The child often doesn't seem to listen.
- The child is easily distracted.
- The child has difficulty concentrating on schoolwork or other tasks requiring sustained attention.
- The child has difficulty sticking to a play activity.

IMPULSIVITY - AT LEAST THREE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- The child often acts before thinking.
- The child shifts excessively from one activity to another.
- The child has difficulty organizing work.
- The child needs a lot of supervision.
- The child frequently calls out in class.
- The child has difficulty awaiting turn in games or group situations.

HYPERACTIVITY - AT LEAST TWO OF THE FOLLOWING:

- The child runs about or climbs on things excessively.
- The child has difficulty sitting still or fidgets excessively.
- The child has difficulty staying seated.
- The child moves about excessively during sleep.
- The child is always "on the go" or acts as if "driven by a motor."
- Onset before the age of 7
- Duration of at least 6 months
- Not due to schizophrenia, affective disorders (disturbance of mood) or profound retardation

See if the observed behaviors also appear in the classroom as well as other school areas. If they do, ask the school psychologist to observe the child. If he/she agrees that such a possibility exists, have the psychologist notify the parent so that their doctor can examine the child. He/she may suggest a neurological examination in order to determine the presence of the disorder. Medication may or may not be suggested. If the disorder is diagnosed, meet with the parent and psychologist in order to plan a management program at home and in school. If the disorder is serious and affects your child's ability to learn, he/she may need to be reviewed by your district's IEP Committee so that a suitable program can be determined. A full psychological and academic evaluation would also assist in determining a proper course of action. In conclusion, early diagnosis and active treatment will greatly enhance the child's opportunity for a meaningful and improved life both at home and in school.