



Big Brothers Big Sisters

A Brief Look at ADHD

According to the Attention Deficit Disorder Association, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is defined as a condition resulting in symptoms of inability to maintain attention, impulsive behaviors and/or motor restlessness.

This condition affects both children *and* adults. The most visible sign of a person with ADHD may be excessive energy or activity. Some may have difficulty concentrating on tasks (especially routine ones). Others may have trouble knowing where to start a task, still others may get lost in the directions along the way. People with ADHD generally act before thinking.

Does this sound like your Little? If so, this may be a great opportunity to find creative ways to connect with him/her. Here are some suggestions:

- One on one “sit down” time may be tough for them. Therefore, talk to your Little as you’re *doing* something together. Maybe while you’re painting, jogging, eating, playing a video game, etc.
- Share decision making with your Little. Decide together where to go, what to do, where to sit, what time to meet, etc. As you may know already, they can change the dynamics of a situation if they feel like they have no power.
- Be predictable. Show up, and show up on time.
- Slower, “down time” planned activities are OK as long as they are short. They work even better if the child knows that it will be followed by a more lively activity.
- Think about using a timer, stopwatch alarm of your cell phone or Blackberry. Do one activity for 2 to 4 minutes and only after the alarm has gone off can you get up move around or change your mind on the activity you want to do together.
- Use plenty of positive reinforcement and use it often. However, this reinforcement must be honest and sincere.

It’s OK to be ADHD. It’s not OK to close your eyes to it. Many who are identified as ambitious, decisive, driven, spontaneous, humorous and productive may be ADHD. In fact there are many celebrities, scholars, artists, actors and presidents thought to have been ADHD or who are currently ADHD. These include Einstein, Mozart, John Lennon, Michael Jordan, Steven Spielberg, Bill Cosby, Edgar Allen Poe, JFK, Whoopi Goldberg, Abraham Lincoln and Prince Charles (to name just a few). ADHD may not be a bad thing after all.