

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Success with an ADHD Child

“I can’t get my son to be responsible for anything, especially his schoolwork. He can’t remember a thing. He’s driving me insane!” I bet you recognize the person saying this as the parent of a child who’s been diagnosed as having attention deficit hyperactive disorder, or ADHD for short.

Parents of ADHD children are among the most frustrated parents I have ever known. It doesn’t help that a common belief about children who suffer from ADHD says that they can’t remember and can’t concentrate for any prolonged period of time. Fortunately, many of the recent discoveries about ADHD show that these children can be motivated to remember, concentrate, and learn from the consequences of their mistakes. They often just have more difficulty in these areas than other children.

Since drug therapy alone is usually not successful with these children, the solution to this problem often involves a combination of drug therapy and changes in the way parents work with their children. These changes include a willingness and determination on the part of parents to work on changing only one behavior at a time. This shows the child that the parents can and will be successful in expecting responsible behavior. When this approach is used, a ripple effect takes place. Parents who are willing to focus most of their energy on helping the child change only one behavior at a time find success quicker with each new behavior that they tackle.

Parents who master the four steps explained below will see dramatic changes. Each step will be easier than the last. It is essential, however, that parents move to the next step only after total mastery of the previous step. This is the secret to success in this process.

Step One - The child learns to complete chores without reminders

Roger must believe that his parents think successful completion of chores is the only important thing in the world. To accomplish this the parents say, “Your chores are important. We expect you to do them without reminders before your next meal. Your next meal may come today, tomorrow, or Saturday. You decide.”

It works best to start this step with Roger at a time close to the dinner hour so that the consequence for not remembering the chores is available in a timely fashion. Most children will argue, bargain, and manipulate at this point. It is crucial that the parent not give in. Be prepared to say over and over, “I’m sure this doesn’t feel fair, and you will eat when the chores are done.” Remember there are to be no reminders, reasoning or arguing with the child about the fairness of the situation.

Step Two - The child learns to go to timeout

“Off to your room, dear. Please return when you can be sweet. Thank you.” In this second step, Roger learns that his parents mean business when sending him to time out. Once more, work on only this problem until there is success. Some parents have seen success hiring an older neighborhood child to keep their youngster in his room. It is even better when the child pays for this service with either his allowance or a toy.

Step Three -The child learns to have only “good minutes” in the classroom

In this step Rogers parents tell him that school and learning are privileges. The parents and Roger meet with his teacher and agree that Roger is to learn to sit in class without bothering other students or the teacher. The parents back the teacher by saying, “If Roger cannot go to timeout in a pleasant way, call this phone number and someone will pick him up and take him home. We will not complain or lecture him. However, he will do some chores to make up for the inconvenience.”

Step Four - The child completes classroom assignments

This step requires a foolproof communication system between teacher and parent. At this point the parents say to Roger, “Now you are ready to start doing your school assignments. We expect them to be done at school. Any assignments not completed at school will be supervised at home. Each supervised assignment will require a payment on your part of one chore.”

Many parents have been successful treating attention deficit hyperactive disorder with this method. It is also helpful to obtain the advice of a pediatrician regarding how drug therapy may make this process more workable.

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