



March 4, 2008

FIRST NAME, LAST NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE ZIP CODE

Dear Provider,

In April 2007, ValueOptions adopted the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Practice Parameters for the Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.¹ One of the key recommendations when assessing a child or adolescent in your practice is to consider family functioning. ADHD runs in families with about 25% of biological parents also having this medical condition.

Since ADHD is inheritable, the guidelines note that a high prevalence is found among the patient's family. For this reason, ValueOptions promotes parental education regarding the need to have other siblings screened for ADHD. Enclosed are educational materials that you may reproduce and use in your practice with families when clinically indicated.

- AACAP Facts For Families #6
- Questions to Ask
- Safety Tips for Children with ADHD
- Tips for Parents Of Children with ADHD - Getting Started
- ADHD Resources

Visit the Valueoptions website to download additional copies of the ADHD educational materials or to download the 2008 ValueOptions North Carolina KeyUpdates provider newsletter at http://www.valueoptions.com/providers/Network/NCSC_State_Local_Government.htm or call the toll free prevention line at **1-866-719-6032** for hard copies or questions.

Thank you and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah L. Tosi".

Deborah L. Tosi, RN, MSN, CPHQ
Quality Management Director
ValueOptions

¹ Copies may be downloaded from the AACAP website http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/member_information/practice_information/practice_parameters/practice_parameters or by calling the AACAP at 202.966.7300, x137.

Questions to Ask

Be prepared to tell the doctor about any problems that your child is having.

Consider asking the following questions:

- ❖ What other kinds of problems could cause my child to have trouble paying attention?
- ❖ How will you decide my child does/does not have these other problems?
- ❖ How will you decide:
 - ✓ If my child needs more tests?
 - ✓ What kind of treatment my child needs?
 - ✓ If my child needs medicine?

- ❖ If your doctor decides that medication will help:
 - ✓ How will medicine help my child?
 - ✓ What kind of medicine will help my child?
 - ✓ What dose of medicine will he/she need?
 - ✓ How long will it take for the medicine to work?
 - ✓ Will my child need medicine every day?
 - ✓ What if this medicine does not help?
 - ✓ Are there any side effects to this medicine?
 - ✓ When should I worry or call the doctor?
 - ✓ What should I tell the school or family about the medicine?
 - ✓ How long will my child need to be on the medicine?

- ❖ How often does my child need to see the doctor?
- ❖ Does my child need to see a specialist?
- ❖ What kind of action plan should we have for my child?
- ❖ Are there other things that I should do for my child?

Check-ups with the doctor

If your doctor recommends medicine, regular check-ups are important. Plan on seeing your doctor *at least* every three months to make sure your child is making progress.

Safety Tips for Children with ADHD

The Center for Disease Control reports that children with ADHD may be more likely than other children to be hurt when:

- ❖ Distracted.
- ❖ Not paying attention or not being careful.
- ❖ Hasty.
- ❖ Reckless or rash.

What can a parent do?

- ❖ **Fun Safety.** Keep a watchful eye on children when they are:
 - On the playground.
 - Climbing.
 - In or around a swimming pool.
 - At cook-outs, barbeques, fireworks, or any open flames.

- ❖ **Wheel safety.** Make sure a helmet is used when:
 - Bike riding
 - Skating
 - Skate boarding
 - Skiing

- ❖ **Car Safety**
 - Remind children frequently to watch for cars when playing or walking.
 - Seatbelt/child booster seats are a must.
 - Stay seated on the school bus.

- ❖ **Animal Safety.** Watch around pets and farm animals. Children love animals, but animals don't always love children.

Watch for common dangers: Parents don't realize that young children can drown in less than an inch of water, that drinking mouthwash can cause a young child to fall into an alcohol coma, or that children can fall out of a window that is only opened 5 inches.

Use pictures: Use stickers like the "Mr. Yuk" or ☹ or ☹ to remind your child of safety issues. Put them on lighters, matches, power tools, the knife drawer, or any other likely cause of injury.

Make rules specific and clear: Give specific instructions and keep them simple. *Cross the street only with a grown-up.* Be clear about what's off limits: the windowsill, the oak tree.

Role play and practice: Go over situations such as: "What do you do when the ball rolls into the street?" Showing your child what you mean is more helpful than telling them.

Look, watch, listen: Watching all six year olds is important. Watching ADHD kids takes extra care. Make sure that your baby-sitter or child care provider has the needed energy and caution to keep play safe.

Tips for Parents Of Children with ADHD

Getting Started

- ❖ **Keep it simple.** Don't ask your child to do too many things at once.
- ❖ **Help your child focus.** Reduce distractions in your child's environment when you're talking to them or they are doing tasks. Focus on one thing at a time. For example, having the house be quiet (no TV or radio in the background) when trying to do homework, reading, or listening to direction. This will make it easier for them to pay attention.
- ❖ **Keep things structured.** Having a routine helps – a set time for getting up, getting to school on time, playtime, schoolwork, meals, and bedtime. You may need to experiment with schedules or change the routine. If your child has too much energy to sit still, have some active playtime before trying to do a quiet activity. See what works best for your child.
- ❖ **Start small.** If good behavior lasts only 10 to 15 minutes, limit activities and social gatherings to that time frame. Plan to leave before problem behavior starts. As your child makes progress or adjusts to medication, you will be able to gradually increase the time. Find ways to be successful.
- ❖ **Use a timer.** Children with ADHD have trouble keeping track of time. This will help them with the beginning and ending of an activity. You can also help your child create a list of things to do. This way they can check things off the list when they're finished.
- ❖ **Focus on what's positive.** Children with ADHD usually get attention when they're doing something wrong. Try giving your child attention when they're doing something right instead! Say "Great job!" when they clean up their clothes. Give them a high-five when they've stayed focused on their homework or a task for a period of time.
- ❖ **Prepare for family visits.** Any change is hard and even fun family gatherings can be stressful. Prepare your child: "Grandma is coming for a visit." Extended family will need coaching so that well meaning "help" does not result in extra criticism. Help your child by providing structured activities and limiting the time.
- ❖ **One friend at a time.** Developing friends can be hard. Try asking a teacher or school counselor to help put you in contact with a family, but be patient. It may take several tries before identifying a well-matched playmate. With one friend at a time, you can keep tabs on the visits and intervene before problems arise.
- ❖ **Find friends/families with similar issues.** Other parents of children with ADHD will be more understanding. They will identify with the special needs that you and your child are facing.
- ❖ **Work with the school.** ADHD will affect how your child learns. He or she may also have a learning disability or be gifted. Whatever the situation, certainly your role as a parent is important. Parents need to know that their child's needs in the classroom are being met. Some teachers are specially trained to modify the classroom to meet the needs of children with ADHD. Some teachers do not have this skill and you may need to ask the school for special help.

ADHD Resources

Organizations

CHADD

www.chadd.org

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) is one of the largest national organizations devoted solely to issues related to ADHD. The site provides a comprehensive array of resources including FAQs, research, and publications such as "Parenting a Child with ADHD." It includes places to get support. It also has extensive information on public policy and legal issues, and a chapter-locator function that allows users to search for local CHADD affiliates.

ADDA

www.add.org

The Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA) is a national organization devoted to ADHD issues. ADDA's site contains FAQs, research and information on treatment, legal issues, work issues, and lists of other resources. It also has a fairly comprehensive section on ADD coaching.

Informational sites

LDOnline.org

www.ldonline.org

This site has information about ADHD and Learning Disabilities (LDs). Its collection of FAQs and articles is fairly extensive. It also has a forum for teachers of ADHD students, an area for kids, and a list of local resources broken down by state.

ADDvance.com

www.addvance.com

This site is sponsored by the National Center for Gender Issues and ADHD and focuses on girls and women with ADHD. It contains articles, links, lists of books and organizations, and upcoming events all related to girls and women with ADHD. Users can subscribe to a monthly newsletter with articles related to ADHD and gender.

NIMH

www.nimh.nih.gov

The mission of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is to "reduce the burden of mental illness and behavioral disorders." The site contains a large ADHD FAQ section, including an extensive collection of information about ADHD research.

Help4ADHD.org

www.help4adhd.org

Funded by the Centers for Disease Control, this site is managed by CHADD. It contains extensive information on diagnosis and treatment, how to deal with the legal system, the education system, the insurance system, and how to get along in everyday life with ADHD. It also has FAQs for each topic, and links to related sites.

CDC.gov

www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/

General information about ADHD, its symptoms, and its effects on relationships. Some links, references, and publications.

WebMD.com

my.webmd.com/medical-information/condition_centers/add_adhd/default.htm

The site has substantial information about all facets of ADHD including its causes, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatments. It also provides specific information about medications, updated articles about ADHD, information about adult ADHD, and even message boards for ADHD-related discussions.

AdditudeMag.com

www.additudemag.com

This is the website of an ADHD magazine. It provides access to some of the articles in the magazine, as well as some more general ADHD-related information.

ADD.MiningCo.com

add.miningco.com/mbody.htm

This site contains articles on a variety of different ADHD-related topics, including some that are not widely covered, such as ADHD and risk-taking, and TV ads for ADHD medications.

E-books and Books

PediatricNeurology.com

www.pediatricneurology.com/adhd.htm

This is an “e-book” about ADHD with chapters on a wide variety of topics including various checklists, therapies, polls, and audio simulations of ADHD. It also contains some interesting ADHD analogies and humor.

NewIdeas.net

www.newideas.net

This is a 10-chapter e-book about ADHD. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of ADHD.

Making the System Work for Your child with ADHD by Peter S. Jensen, MD

This book is written by a psychiatrist who raised a son with ADHD. Practical help with sample forms, letters, and charts to help parents.

Articles and Tools

npin.org

www.npin.org

This site contains detailed information on educational software and services for middle school, high school, and college students. Related topics includes; learning disability software, tutoring services, home schooling, learning disability scholarships, homework tools and live homework help.

ericec.org

www.ericec.org/digests/e622.html

This site has facts and references about adult ADHD.

nichq.org

www.nichq.org

This site has a downloadable toolkit with excellent information and resources. Although it is intended for clinicians, the kit has a Parent Information and Support Section. This includes tips for parents on dealing with homework, the school system, and sleep problems.

Courtesy of

