

An Instant Help Book for Parents & Kids

The ADHD Workbook for Kids

Helping Children Gain Self-Confidence,
Social Skills & Self-Control



44

simple, fun
activities to teach kids to:

- **Improve attention & focus**
- **Control emotions**
- **Communicate effectively with friends**

LAWRENCE E. SHAPIRO, PH.D.

The ADHD Workbook for Kids

Helping Children Gain Self-Confidence,
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A Letter to Parents

Being the parent of a child with ADHD requires an extra amount of patience, a special kind of dedication, and a willingness to be an advocate for your child even when no one seems to understand his special needs. (Note: ADHD affects both boys and girls, but boys are about three times more likely than girls to have this problem. Respecting the statistics, I will use masculine pronouns more often than feminine pronouns throughout the book.)

It also requires some very specific knowledge and skills. Let's face it, many things that other parents take for granted, you cannot. You probably worry more about your child's behavior than other parents you know. And well you should. Children with ADHD often say and do things that get them into trouble at home and at school. If you are like most parents of children with ADHD, you also worry about your child's school performance. Many children with ADHD have above-average academic potential, but their problems in organization and in completing work make them perennial underachievers. And while extra school help may be available, it is often not enough.

Most children with ADHD also have problems making and keeping friends, and this is a great concern for parents. It is hard for parents to see their child being ignored when invitations for birthday parties are passed around or sitting home alone instead of having a play-date. Some children with ADHD have even more serious social problems. They are teased by classmates, excluded from recess games, and socially isolated.

Then there is the problem of self-esteem. Children with ADHD are often magnets for criticism and negative attention. And if your child is on medication for ADHD, he might have his own concerns about why he is different from other children.

I have written this workbook to help your child learn new emotional, behavioral, and social skills in four major areas of concern: behavior, school success, social development, and self-esteem. Some people call these skills "emotional intelligence." Researchers tell us that emotional-intelligence skills can be taught just like other skills, such as reading, hitting a baseball, or playing a violin. Like these other skills, emotional-intelligence skills need to be taught in a systematic way, and they need to be practiced and reinforced.

That is what this workbook attempts to do, and you can help. Explain the concepts to your child if he seems confused or unaware. When you see your child trying his new skills, make sure to give him plenty of praise.

Please be aware that this workbook has been written as a supplement to a comprehensive treatment program, which should include the use of behavior

modification in the home, classroom modifications, and in some cases, specialized tutoring and counseling.

There are no simple answers for children with ADHD, and every child has unique needs. But it is my hope that with your patient guidance, and with good support from your school, your child will achieve the happiness and success that we all wish for our children.

Sincerely,

Lawrence E. Shapiro, Ph.D.

A Letter to Kids

What is it like for you to have ADHD? I have known lots of kids with ADHD, and they tell me it is not really a problem most of the time, but sometimes it can be a pain in the you-know-what.

Kids with ADHD tell me that they get into trouble more often than other kids do. They tell me that their teachers and parents are always saying things like “I know you can do better if you just try a little harder,” even when they’ve tried very hard in the first place! Most kids with ADHD tell me that they don’t have many friends and that sometimes their classmates are mean to them.

I’ve written this workbook to help you with some of these problems, and I hope it will help you. In each activity, you’ll learn to handle a different aspect of your ADHD a little better, and you’ll also have some fun while you learn. I’ve included lots of activities that kids enjoy, like drawing and mazes. But I wouldn’t be honest if I said that these activities don’t require some work, too. And the more you work, the more you will learn, just like in school.

Each activity will teach you a new skill. The activities in Section I will teach you ways to behave that will keep you out of trouble. The activities in Section II will teach you how to do better in school. In Section III, you’ll learn some new ways to make friends and have more fun with the friends you already have. And in Section IV, you’ll learn some things about yourself and what makes you such a unique and special kid.

Some of activities you will be able to do yourself, and some may require help from your parents or teachers. If you have a counselor, he or she will probably want to help you with these activities, too.

There are lots of people who want to help you be happy, healthy, and successful every day of your life—and I’m one of them!

Best of luck,

Dr. Larry

Section I

Learning Self-Control

Most kids with ADHD have problems with their behavior. It is not that they are “bad” but rather that their behavior doesn’t fit with what their parents and teachers expect. Kids with ADHD may not remember the rules and may get in trouble for breaking them. They may have trouble sitting still in class or remembering to raise their hands to be called on. They may talk too loudly at home or even with their friends.

The activities in this section will help you learn new behaviors to get along better with other people, including your parents, your teachers, and even your friends.

For You to Know

Kids with ADHD sometimes forget to think before they act. They may forget about certain rules and what will happen to them if they break these rules. But you can learn to think before you act and to avoid doing the things that make adults angry.

Chris and David were best friends who played together almost every Saturday. David had a castle set up in his basement, with knights and horses and even a fierce dragon. Chris loved to play with the knights, and one Saturday, he wanted to have a jousting tournament. But after a while, David said he was bored and wanted to ride bikes instead.

Chris said, "I can ride my bike anytime. But I never get to play with a castle like this at my house, and it's so cool."

"Well, I play with the castle all the time, and I'm bored," David replied, "and since you're at my house, I get to make the rules about what we do."

Chris knew David did get to make the rules about his toys in his house. But he wasn't very happy about going outside, and he thought that David was being too bossy. When David turned to go upstairs, Chris put one of the knights into his pocket. It was a black knight waving a sword over his head.

Later that day, Chris's mom saw him playing with the black knight. "Where did you get that?" she asked. "It doesn't look familiar."

"I found it," Chris said, not able to think of a better answer.

"Where did you find it?" his mom asked, moving closer to him and looking at him suspiciously.

"I don't remember," Chris said. "It was just in my pocket."

"Well, maybe we need to have a talk about how toys just get into your pocket," said Chris's mom. From the look in her eye, Chris knew that this was not going to be a talk he would enjoy.

Have you ever taken anything that didn't belong to you? What happened?

For You to Do

Think about the things you have done in the past that got you into trouble. Maybe you did something that you knew was wrong and you are sorry that you did it. Or maybe you did something that got you into trouble, but you didn't really think it was wrong. If you think before you act, you can avoid doing these things. You won't have to feel bad, and you won't get punished.

This Six-Point Decision Scale can help you decide whether what you want to do is a good idea or a bad one. To use the scale, just assign a number to the thing you want to do. Here is what the numbers mean:

- 1 = This decision will help people.
- 2 = This decision won't hurt anyone, and it will make me happy.
- 3 = This decision will make me happy, but it really isn't good for me.
- 4 = This decision will make me happy, but it may make other people mad.
- 5 = This decision is against the rules.
- 6 = This decision is against the law.

In the chart below, write down five things you did in the past that got you into trouble. Then use the Six-Point Decision Scale to rate each of these things.

Things That Got Me into Trouble	Decision Scale Rating (1 to 6)

... And More to Do

Once you learn the Six-Point Decision Scale, it will help you decide whether a behavior is a good idea or a bad one. You *can* do things that are a number 1 or 2, but you should *not* do things that are a 3, 4, or 5. Here are some situations you can use to practice. Put the decision rating next to each behavior. Then ask an adult to check your answers.

_____ Susie wouldn't let Shauna play with her group at recess.

_____ Ethan snuck out of bed after his parents were asleep, and he ate six cookies.

_____ Tyrone wanted to ride his bike, but he decided to make a get-well card for his grandma first.

_____ Karen made a thank-you card for her aunt Emma.

_____ Abby kept interrupting her father while he was on the phone.

_____ Tanya spent two hours playing video games instead of doing her homework.

_____ Elizabeth was mad at Isabelle, so she sent her a mean e-mail, pretending that she was Isabelle's friend Mark.

For You to Know

Many kids with ADHD don't predict the consequences of their actions. Even though you probably know what will happen if you break a rule, you may do it anyway. But you can predict what might happen in most situations if you really think about it. When you learn to predict what other people will do and what might happen to you, you will find it easier to control your behavior.

Every Monday, Marybeth's teacher gave out a list of new spelling words. Every Thursday, the class had a spelling test.

On Monday night, Marybeth was supposed to start learning the words, but she watched her favorite television show instead. On Tuesday, Marybeth was supposed to spend fifteen minutes learning the spelling words again, but she had soccer practice. Then she ate dinner, did some math homework, and later went to bed. She didn't spend any time on her spelling.

On Wednesday, Marybeth was supposed to practice her spelling words with one of her parents. But her mom was busy taking care of her little brother and her dad had a headache, so Marybeth didn't ask either of them to help her. On Thursday, Marybeth took her spelling test. On Friday, she got back her test, marked with an F. Fifteen of the twenty words were spelled wrong.

All the tests had to be signed by a parent and turned in the next Monday. After school, Marybeth gave her spelling test to her mom to sign. "What happened?" Marybeth's mom asked. "How did you get such a bad grade on this test? You are a pretty good speller."

"I don't know," Marybeth said. "I don't know what happened."

But you know, don't you?

Have you ever gotten a bad grade because you didn't study? Tell what happened.

For You to Do

Can you predict what will happen to the kids on the left? Draw a line from each picture on the left to the picture on the right that shows what will probably happen.



... And More to Do

When you stop to think about it, you can probably predict the ways that grown-ups will react to different things that you do. Here's your chance to practice:

Write down three things you might do that will get you a hug.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write down three things you might do that will get you yelled at or punished.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write down three things you might do that will get you good grades.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write down three things you might do that will make someone say "Thank you."

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

You Can Keep Trying Even When You Are Bored

Activity 3

For You to Know

Being easily distracted is one of the things that almost all kids with ADHD share. They usually get bored more easily than kids without ADHD. They are often very smart, but still get bad grades. It might be because they don't complete their classroom assignments, their homework, or even their tests. But you can learn to stay interested in something even if it seems hard or boring at first. A kid with ADHD who is interested in something can work for hours.

Kyle's parents went to school for a teacher's conference. Kyle's teacher, Mrs. Macey, said, "Kyle is a very bright boy, and I really like having him in the class. But he never finishes an assignment unless I stand over him. I've thought about bringing his desk right next to mine and keeping an eye on him while he works, but that wouldn't be fair to the rest of the kids who need my attention."

Kyle's mom said, "Kyle is the same way around the house. He'll start to clean up his room, and as long as I'm right there, he is fine. But if I have to go away for even five minutes, he starts to do something else. I don't know why Kyle can't seem to finish anything."

When Kyle's parents got home that night, they asked the babysitter, Jamie, what Kyle had been doing. "Kyle has been doing the same thing for three hours," Jamie said. "I showed him how to make origami swans, and look, he's made nearly a hundred!"

Kyle's mom and dad looked at each other, wondering what made their son work hard on some things and not others.

What activities keep you interested? What activities do you find boring? What do you usually do when you are bored?

For You to Do

Write down five things you love to do that never make you bored.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now write down five things you have to do but find really boring.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Next to each of the things you find boring, write down what would make it less boring. For example, you might not like making your bed, but if you play music while you do it, it won't be so bad. Or you might not like doing homework, but you might like it better if a parent works in the same room and keeps you company. Be creative and see if you can think of some good ways to make things you have to do less boring.

... And More to Do

If you are like Kyle, you will work hard on something that interests you, but not on something that is boring. Sometimes you can make things more interesting. For example, Amelia didn't like raking leaves but when her father said, "I'll give you a nickel for every five minutes that you rake," Amelia thought that would be fun. She raked for ten minutes, and her father gave her two nickels. She raked for twenty minutes more, and her father said, "Now you've earned four more nickels." When Amelia had raked leaves for seventy minutes more, her dad gave her fourteen nickels. Now she had one dollar.

Ask your parents if you can earn a nickel for every five minutes you do a special chore. What will it be? Washing the car? Cleaning out a closet? If it takes a long time, that's good, not bad. The longer you work, the more money you will earn!

If your parents say it is okay, ask them to put out twenty nickels next to a small jar where you are going to do your chore. Do you have a watch you can use to time how long you work? If not, ask your parent or another adult to keep track of the time. Put a nickel in the jar after every five minutes you work. But be fair! If you don't work for five minutes, you don't get a nickel. See if you can earn a whole dollar, like Amelia did, or maybe even more!



For You to Know

Kids with ADHD have a hard time waiting for something they want. They would rather have a small cookie right now than a much larger cookie in two hours. But you can learn to be more patient and enjoy the larger cookie later! Learning to be more patient will make it easier for you to get along with other people.

Heather couldn't wait for her mom to serve dinner. It was meatballs and spaghetti, Heather's favorite! But her mom was on the phone, and Heather could see that dinner wasn't ready.

"When are we eating?" Heather asked. She knew she wasn't supposed to interrupt her mom on the phone, but sometimes her mom didn't seem to mind.

Heather's mom held up five fingers. Then she repeated the gesture three times more.

"Twenty minutes?" Heather asked. Her mom nodded.

Twenty minutes later, Heather went back into the kitchen, ready to eat. Her mom was still on the phone, the meatballs were still simmering, and the unopened box of spaghetti still sat on the counter.

"Where's dinner?" Heather asked loudly. "You said it would be twenty minutes."

Her mom held up one finger to her lips, then pointed to the phone, indicating that Heather should stop asking questions and be quiet.

"But I'm hungry!" Heather said. "You can talk after dinner."

Her mom shook her head back and forth. Heather knew that her mom was getting angry, but Heather was angry, too. "I'm starving," she shouted. "I need my dinner!"

Heather's mom looked at her daughter with a cold stare that Heather didn't like at all. Then she put down the phone and said, "You won't collapse if dinner is a little late. Now go to your room,

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