

ALCDSB MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board

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Attention & Hyperactivity/Impulsivity

Many children and youth will, at times, have difficulty paying attention, act impulsively, get overly excited, and/or fail to follow through on requests made by adults. Some children may have more difficulty than their peers in concentrating on school work, completing tasks, and ignoring distractions. It is often difficult to determine if inattention or hyperactivity/impulsivity are typical for a child's developmental stage and/or age or whether they are cause for concern. A further complicating factor is that some children and adolescents find it hard to stay focused in settings where it is important to pay attention, such as school, but have no problems in other contexts. Some students continually have difficulty with attention, to the point where the inattention or hyperactivity/impulsivity interferes significantly with their functioning and interactions at home, at school, and/or in the community. It is important for educators, parents, and mental health professionals to observe the student's behaviour and functioning in multiple areas, across multiple contexts, and in relation to typical developmental stages and milestones.



“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

- Matthew 11:28-30

What do Attention and Hyperactivity/Impulsivity Problems look like?

Because attention problems in the early years can put a child at risk of later educational difficulties, it is important to provide preventive and corrective interventions as early as possible (Pingault et al., 2011; Breslau et al., 2009). Unfortunately, while the more visible behaviour of hyperactivity is readily flagged by educators, problems with attention are less noticeable and less likely to be identified in a timely fashion.

Some students with attention problems struggle with cognitive difficulties and have impairments in areas such as executive functioning (e.g., deficits in working memory, planning, and response inhibition) (Rogers et al., 2011). In the classroom, this may translate into such things as difficulty remembering and using information, planning, and acquiring new skills and knowledge in reading, oral and written language, and mathematics (Rogers et al., 2011; Daley & Birchwood, 2010).

Common Signs of Attention Disorders

1. Has difficulty organizing tasks
2. Finds it hard to concentrate
3. Follows directions incompletely or improperly
4. Frequently does not finish tasks
5. Does not listen to what is being said when spoken to
6. Avoids or shows strong dislike for schoolwork or homework that requires sustained mental effort (dedicated thinking)
7. Is easily distracted
8. Fails to pay attention
9. Forgets things

What can educators do?

Strategies to Promote a Calm Classroom Atmosphere to Help all Students Pay Attention

1. Provide a structured environment and a consistent daily routine
2. Provide advance warning of changes in routine or activities
3. Establish a routine and set of rules for moving from one activity to the next.
4. Establish procedures that allow all students equal opportunities to participate in activities
5. Provide easy to follow directions and instructions
6. Post rules where everyone can see them
7. Reinforce positive behaviour, such as raising a hand before speaking, engaging in quiet work
8. Provide opportunities to learn by doing to give students an outlet for excess energy
9. Limit visual and auditory distractions in the classroom as much as possible while considering the needs of all students
10. When talking to students, address them directly and use eye contact. Wait until a student is paying attention before continuing a conversation
11. Avoid a focus on competition, as students' urge to win or be first can increase the likelihood of impulse behaviour

Based on information from: House, 2002; CAMH, 2007

Holidays Can Be Hard for Children

Article from *Education Week Blog*

As the Christmas season and break approaches, this article is a great reminder that although Christmas is a happy time with family and friends for many, it can be a difficult time for some. [Click here](#) to read the article for some tips on how educators can help support those who may struggle during this time. The advent season reminds us that we are called to be the light of Christ for those who most need it in our world.



“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” - Isaiah 40:4-5

Contact Us

Contact your school for more information from the school's Child and Youth Worker or school principal.

For more information from ALCDSB Mental Health Lead, contact Kaveh Khanverdi

khan-kave@alcdsb.on.ca

Additional Resources:

These sites offer ADHD information, but should be used with caution. Never substitute information on a website for solid medical or legal advice.

The Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance (CADDRA)

Canadian ADHD Practice Guidelines,

www.caddra.ca

TotallyADD

Adult ADHD interactive site hosted by Rick Green and Patrick McKenna

www.totallyADD.com

Teach ADHD

Hospital for Sick Children's Website for education professionals

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. -John 14:20