

Helping Kids



Health Care & the Skills of Living for Children

Personal Message

Parents Helping Kids Does my child have difficulty paying attention?

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Working with you to improve your child's health, our specialist can relieve pain and improve the skills of living..

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In our fast-paced society, our children are often grabbed in the web of this chaos. Over the last decade, the incidence of diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder is on the rise in our youth. Schools of all types are noting an increase in children who are unable to sustain focus long enough to learn the material presented in the classroom. Teachers often express frustration with these children, because they often become 'lost' during a lesson and then begin to disrupt the rest of the class. In these cases, not only is one student missing the content, their peers are interrupted in their learning process as well.

There is conflicting opinion and research on the subject of Attention Deficit Disorder but in order to more easily communicate about the topic, we will use terms most generally familiar and typically used in medical circles.

Attention Deficit Disorder is actually a condition which may be seen in varying degrees. Although the publicity and supposed incidence of this disorder is more prominent at present, these characteristics were first described in 1902 by researchers. This problem has been described by different names over the years including Minimal Brain Dysfunction, Hyperkinetic Reaction of Childhood and finally Attention Deficit Disorder. No matter the current terminology, this condition interferes with an individual's ability to sustain attention, manage emotions and activity level, respond consistently to consequences of their actions and inhibit (or suppress) the urge to move, talk or daydream.

Attention Deficit Disorder can occur with or without hyperactivity. Those children and adults with hyperactivity are often easily

recognizable in a variety of settings by their behavior. However, an entire group of persons may lack ability to attend to tasks but not exhibit the increased activity levels noted in ADHD. These individuals often are 'spacey' and spend time daydreaming when they lose attention to the assigned task. They often have difficulty completing assignments, forgetting to prepare for tests or projects, and not turning in work on time. Unfortunately, sometimes these persons are labeled unmotivated or lazy.

The more typical type of Attention Deficit Disorder is accompanied by increased activity level or hyperactivity. This type has been described as a learning disability. However, it is rather a performance disorder. These persons have difficulty in completing required work whether at school or in the workplace. Approximately 20-30% of persons with ADHD also have a learning disability.

Regardless of the type of problems relating to attention you or a family member may be experiencing, it is important that a complete and thorough assessment be performed to determine the appropriate course of treatment. Therapy techniques have tremendous impact on the lives of those with these difficulties. Seek appropriate evaluation and intervention as soon as possible.



Carmen Pagan, Misty Standard and Jennifer Griffith —founding partners, Milestones

Does my child have ADHD?

The cause of ADHD is not exactly known but various influences may be responsible – toxins, environmental deficits, diet, injury, heredity, unidentified developmental issues.

Are you concerned about your child's performance in school? Does he/she often neglect to bring home textbooks and folders? The following information may help you determine if you should seek further evaluation for you or your family member.

There is conflicting opinion and research on the subject of Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder but in order to more easily communicate about the topic, we will use terms most generally familiar and typically used in medical circles.

The cause of ADHD is not exactly known but various influences may be responsible – toxins, environmental deficits, diet, injury, heredity, unidentified developmental issues. Some research indicates that ADHD is a function of the brain and therefore, anything influencing brain development may lead to this problem. The research conflicts in many areas; however, it is mostly felt that although environmental and developmental variables may impact the final outcomes of the disorder, genetics plays a large role in the occurrence of ADHD.

The most commonly held view is that ADD/ADHD is a neurological disorder involving a cluster of behaviors including problems with concentration, attention, impulsivity and often an excessively high level of motor activity



that emerges early in a child's life and persists over time. The American Psychological Association has developed its guidelines for identifying children and adults whom it believes should be assessed further for a diagnosis of ADHD/ADD:

- 1) often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work or other activities
- 2) often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
- 3) often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- 4) often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork or chores
- 5) often has difficulty organizing tasks or activities
- 6) often avoids or is reluctant to engage in activities that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork or homework)
- 7) often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (toys, school assignments, pencils, clothing...)
- 8) often is distracted easily by extraneous stimuli
- 9) often forgetful in daily activities

If a child/adult has at least six of the nine

items listed above, he/she should receive full medical testing and nutritional analysis. A medical doctor can be consulted for further evaluation. Pediatric therapy practices are also highly skilled at recognizing these types of difficulties and can educate parents with regard to successful treatments not solely based on medication.

TO MEDICATE OR NOT TO MEDICATE?????

Although recent publicity about the use of medication to improve attention in children and adults has fueled the 'to medicate or not' controversy, your family has many other alternative treatments to consider. All of the following treatments can be performed without the use of medication and have shown to be effective in addressing short attention spans:

- 1) **Interactive Metronome** is a computerized auditory protocol that couples sound with motor response to impact sequencing and timing; this has been well-researched to make changes in attention and school performance. This technique, which was originally developed to enhance performance of professional athletes and musicians, has surprisingly been shown to remediate attention and learning. See www.interactivemetronome.com
- 2) **Therapeutic Listening** is a specific program of filtered music developed by an Occupational Therapist to impact modulation, attention, focus and interaction. A program, recommended by a trained professional, is ideally used as part of a home/school program on a daily basis. See www.vitallinks.net
- 3) **Listening Fitness** is musical intervention encompassing a specific program of 'gated' and filtered music coupled with exercise that impacts processing of auditory information and voice. A trained professional selects and modifies the program for the protocol to best meet the needs of the child. See www.listeningfitness.com

Tips and Tricks

1. Organized?

Often children with problems with attention are very disorganized, misplacing items and becoming frustrated with unknown routines. Encourage them by having them place their backpacks in the same place each evening, picking clothes for the next day and having a written or photo schedule routine posted where they can see it.



2. Overwhelmed with easy tasks?

Seemingly easy, routine tasks are sometimes overwhelming to those who cannot keep their attention on the job at hand. Help your child by breaking down tasks into smaller steps. You might give them a portion of the task to complete within an established time frame.



3. Poor memory?

Many adults are 'list-makers' and function efficiently using these reminders. Children with ADHD often require frequent repetition of instructions. Teach them to be 'list-makers' too; if they are unable to write, have them draw meaningful pictures or symbols to help them remember routines.



4. Inconsistent?

Parental consistency is important within any family.

Families who have one or more members with attentional problems must rely on consistent communication. Parents must communicate with each other so that consequences for children's behavior and actions are dealt with as a team, so as not to conflict.



- 4) **Fast Forward** is a computer based program used to impact not only attention and focus but auditory processing, reading and language. www.scilearn.com
- 5) **Sensory Integration** is a theory of organization of sensory information from the environment to make changes in various aspects of development. It is your nervous system's ability to use the information presented to it in a meaningful way. Use of these techniques by an experienced practitioner may make changes in all areas of daily function.
- 6) **CranioSacral Therapy** is a

body-centered approach using specific light touch manipulation techniques to influence the flow of fluid within the body. This theory has been effectively used with many conditions including various learning disabilities and Autism. See www.upledger.com

These and other, more holistic techniques may be used in place of medication to develop attention and focus for learning and development. Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists are often trained in various interventions to enhance development in these areas.

SUCCESSSES What parents are saying...



Jacob is an active young boy who had problems completing tasks or

understanding instructions. He also had some difficulties in playing with others his age since his coordination skills were not as good as his friends. He came to the clinic two times a week and worked on a variety of things. He also completed a computer-based program called Interactive Metronome which works on reaction time, attention and coordination in time with a musical tone. After completion of 15 sessions of this program, he was better at planning movement activities and also able to listen and pay attention during school. His grades began to improve and so did his self-confidence.

Isak was what his teacher would describe as a "problem child", because he was withdrawn and often would cry or hit when others

came too close. When standing in the lunch line, he would push kids and become upset when he was crowded. In school, he was getting further behind every month, almost 2 years delayed when he first came to our clinic. When Isak came, he did not like to play with the other kids or to work with the therapist. He had many crying spells that lasted until he went home. However, over time, we started to see Isak blossom; he was just a KID trying to be one!!!! He used his great imagination to create games and tell stories. Isak doesn't come in anymore but watch for him in the grocery store, you'll see a happy little boy!!!!

Colin was like "hummingbird", going from one thing to another just as quickly, no eye contact, cluttered speech. Through lots of time and effort, his "clock" has seemed to slow down. What a cool thing it is to actually see his eyes, really "see" them and have them consciously look back at mine, long enough to grasp



humor, and explanations. Before, he seemed to be on a gerbil wheel that he could not slow down; now he interacts and laughs and plays WITH me!!!! He is sooo much happier now and is an extra delight for his family.

Jen is a maturing little girl, looking to make her way in the world of school and her family. She never made a decision for herself, even waiting for mom to pick her clothes out for the day. Struggling in school, Jen became more and more withdrawn and frustrated with herself. Her "I can't" attitude was heard 100's of times every day. Seen by a Speech Therapist to help with her speech pronunciation and then by an Occupational Therapist to work on teaching her body how to coordinate itself, she began to emerge from her shell. She asks her mom, now, to take her shopping for 'just the right' shirt for school!!!! She is choosing where her family goes for dinner and helping her mother clean the house. Jen doesn't need to come to Milestones anymore, she is really grown up!!!!

CALL YOUR PEDIATRIC THERAPIST IF YOUR CHILD: Take this simple test...

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork or chores.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Often has difficulty organizing tasks or activities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Often avoids or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require concentrated mental effort.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (toys, books, pencils).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Often is distracted easily by noisy environments.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Often forgetful in daily activities.

Quiz

Since it is so important to have age appropriate skills by the time they reach school age, here are a few skills that are essential to social and age appropriateness by the age of 4.

Results

If you answered "No" to any of these questions please come in for a free screening.





John S Luna, OTR

As the recently promoted Occupational Therapy Director, John, an honors graduate, began his OT career at Milestones in 2002. He takes special interest in the treatment of children with sensory processing deficits, in particular those diagnosed with ADHD/ADD. While his primary area of specialization is Sensory Integration, John has dedicated himself to improving his clinical skills for the overall benefit of his patients through many hours of continuing education. In his three short years as a therapist, he has pursued advanced knowledge in the following areas: Introduction to Hippotherapy, Evaluation and

Treatment of Sensory Processing Disorder, Listening with the Whole Body, Myofascial Release, CranioSacral Therapy, Interactive Metronome, Kinesiotaping, aquatic therapy and the European Pediatric Approach/Therasuit. In addition, he has spent countless hours in becoming certified to administer the Sensory Integration and Praxis Test as well as the Pediatric Evaluation of Disability Inventory and the School Functional Assessment.

His wonderful sense of humor and fun demeanor makes him a natural in working with patients, parents and co-workers.

Patty Munoz, MA-CCC, SLP

Patty received her Masters of Communication Sciences and Disorders in 2005 from the University of Texas Pan American. She has become particularly interested in auditory processing, articulation disorders and speech/language delays by focusing her attention on acquiring additional training in these areas including Beckman Oral Motor Assessment and Intervention, PROMPT, Vital-Stim Therapy and Pediatric Feeding and Swallowing.

In order to offer alternate ways of communicating if a child is not able to talk, Patty is experienced in using Augmentative Communication devices such as the Dynavox – a highly technological but user-friendly machine- that allows children and adults to express wants and needs. Patty also spends a great deal of time during her work week at Milestones assisting children with attention difficulties function more easily. The greatest

gift in working with these children, Patty states, is “helping the child communicate and connect with the world around him/her”. She not only directly develops new skills for social relationship development with the children but also trains families on how to direct and manage the child’s behavior to assist in this process. She believes helping children to achieve full potential is dependent on parents, therapists and other providers working as a team.

When Patty is not busy helping children communicate more easily, she enjoys spending time with friends and family and traveling.



FAQ

- Frequently Asked Questions About Pediatric Therapy

1. Does my child have Attention Deficit Disorder?

Lack of attention can be seen as a symptom of a problem but not the whole problem. You might take a few minutes to review the questions in the box below to determine if you may need to seek other opinions about your child’s development and behavior. Your pediatrician may steer you in a direction if she suspects that your child may

fall into the category of Attention Problems. A therapy clinic is equipped to assess a child’s performance in various skills including motor skills, communication, and coordination. These skills often are delayed in children with poor attention.

Need Help For Your Child?



Come and visit us for a FREE CONSULTATION

Find out how Pediatric Therapy can help you restore health and gain the Skills of Living for your child.

Call us today at 956-661-0475 for your no-charge consultation

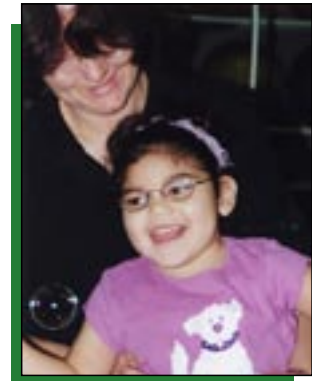
Milestones

Milestones is a comprehensive facility staffing 20 therapists – Speech, Occupational and Physical Therapists - who continually seek knowledge in their professional careers. Created in 2000 by three therapists, our focus continues to be on providing the best quality and innovative care to children with special needs.

Our new 11,000 square foot facility is equipped with optimum assessment and therapy tools to meet any need expressed to us by our loyal customers.

We are in the business of working everyday wonders, seeing faces light up with the pride of accomplishment, and helping families cope with challenge – one **milestone** at a time.

Give us a call today for your free screening at 956.661.0475.



WE CARE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR CHILD!

Call us today for a free consultation at

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Milestones

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