Common Symptoms Associated with Attention and Learning Problems

Pediatric Attention Deficit Disorders and Learning Disorders are biologically-based conditions associated with subtle disturbance of the central nervous system (brain). These conditions can affect attention, speech, language, sensory, motor, memory, mood, social, and executive/organizational behavior. Symptoms can be demonstrated in the presence of average to gifted intellectual ability and are not caused by faulty parenting or faulty teaching. Pediatric Attention Deficit Disorders and Learning Disorders can be treated and have very favorable prognoses using treatment plans incorporating medical, psychological, environmental wellness, educational, and social interventions.

This symptom checklist is a guide in recognizing the possible existence of these conditions. These guidelines should not be used as sole determinants of Pediatric Attention Deficit Disorders or Learning Disorders. Just as with any condition, a variety of symptoms exist. Some people have a few symptoms, others have many. If you note symptoms, especially in several behavioral categories, a pediatric neuropsychological evaluation, is recommended.

Today’s Date______________________ Parent______Teacher______

Child’s Name____________________________________

Date of Birth_____________________ Age_________________

School_________________________________________

Grade_________________ Type of Class______________

Extra Services _____________________________________

Teacher Comments:
# ATTENTION:

- Distractibility, with hyperactivity
- Distractibility, without hyperactivity
- Looks under-aroused/ "hypoactive"
- Difficulty switching attention: cannot let go of ideas or action affecting transition
- Difficulty organizing work
- Excessive stares or daydreaming
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Excessive sleepwalking
- Excessive sleeptalking
- Excessive Nightmares
- Night Terror (yells out at night with little response to calming down)
- Enuresis (wetting, day or night)
- Encopresis (soiling, day or night)
- Easily forgets assignments
- Incomplete assignments
- Difficulty following directions
- Much repetition needed
- Heightened sensitivity to sound/touch/smell/light
- Forgetful in daily activities
- Can seem "out of sync"
- Sensory sensitive: auditory-visual-tactile
- Sensory seeking-much movement
- Difficulty with transitions

# MOOD

- Decreased self-esteem/self-confidence
- Heightened emotional sensitivity/moody
- Easily frustrated
- Heightened anxiety/stress
- Crying or temper outbursts/meltdowns
- Impulsivity
- Withdrawal/avoidance behavior
- Heightened routines
- Frequent mood changes
- Heightened anxiety/fears
- Somatic (body) symptoms (i.e., stomach aches, headaches, constipation)
- Decreased sense of pleasure
- Excessive worry
- Shows little facial expression
- Decreased energy level
- Sleep/appetite disturbance
SPEECH/LANGUAGE and AUDITORY AND VISUAL PERCEPTION: (variance in the reception, expression, and/or analysis of auditory and visual stimuli)

- Delayed speech/language
- Irregular eye movements
- Poor articulation
- Eye movement (eyes have difficulty following a stimulus and jump around)
- Skips words or phrases when reading
- Letter/number reversals
- Decreased oral reading rate, fluency, accuracy, or comprehension
- Decreased silent reading rate, fluency, accuracy, or comprehension
- Uses finger for guidance when reading
- Holds head close to paper
- Paraphasias (words that sound alike, or has similar meaning to another word)
- Difficulty with verbal expression
- Difficulty with written expression
- Poor handwriting
- Spelling dyspraxia (difficulty with spelling)
- Dyscalculia (difficulty with math)
- Difficulty understanding concepts (smaller than-larger than)
- Fast pace when speaking
- Decreased word recognition
- Confuses similar letters
- Confuses similar sounds
- Right-Left confusion
- Poor copying skills
- Difficulty telling time on a clock
- Word-Find problems
- Confuses the spatial positions of numbers and letters
- Decreased sequencing, auditorily and visually
- Difficulty understanding body parts

MOVEMENT: (Sensory-Motor)

- Early age difficulty coordination with head/neck
- Early age difficulty coordination with lower/upper body
- Difficulty turning from side to side- delayed crawling/walking
- Incoordination (clumsy or awkward movements)
- Looks clumsy/incoordination
- Delayed riding a bike
- Awkward body positions
- Decreased muscle tone or strength
- Irregular eye movement/ eye-hand coordination
- Poor pencil grasp
- Tight pencil grip
- Repetitive behaviors (i.e., shoulder shrugging, lip licking, lip smacking, eye blinking, vocal/phonic outbursts, repetitive ideas/actions affecting transition. These behaviors may be possible nervous habits and/or tic behaviors
- Excessive thumb sucking or fingers in the mouth
- Excessive drooling (infant/early childhood)
- Excessive motor movement
- Poor articulation of speech
- Poor melody of speech
- Poor handwriting
- Difficulty with recognition by touch
- Poor balance
- Poor skipping ability
- Sensory sensitivity: auditory-visual-tactile
- Sensory seeking behavior: much movement
- Sensory integration delays
MEMORY

- Seems to need much repetition of information
- Decreased verbal spontaneity
- Decreased spontaneity when writing
- Slow reaction times
- Decreased comprehension (oral/written work)
- May recall past memories yet have difficulty following day to day directions
- Incomplete assignments
- Global difficulty memorizing information
- Decrease in word-finding skills
- Heightened forgetfulness

SOCIAL

- Can have a pleasant demeanor, however fluency of interaction is affected
- Better on a one-to-one basis
- Difficulty staying on task with play activities
- Difficulty awaiting turn when talking or playing with friends
- Seems to have difficulty understanding “facial expressions”
- Seems to need much supervision
- More comfortable with those younger or older
- Social withdrawal (i.e., plays by self)
- Impulsivity

All these behaviors: attention, mood, movement, speech/language, auditory and visual perception, memory, and social affect executive/organizational skills. Evaluating and treating the “whole-brain/whole child” results in your child’s healthy development and learning