

ASK TLC...



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ANSWERS FOR PARENTS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO STRUGGLE WITH AD/HD OR OTHER LEARNING DIFFERENCES

As a teacher, every year, it seems I have at least one student who continues to misbehave. Do you have some suggestions on things I can use in the classroom?

Part of resolving a problem situation is making sense of it. Children misbehave and seek "mistaken goals" when they do not have a sense of belonging or being valued. This is particularly true of children who have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or other learning differences. There are ways to determine the function of/reason for a child's behavior. You should also keep in mind that some children have not learned how to behave in the ways expected in schools. They may need to be taught the behaviors that you expect in your classroom --- or you might want to consider changing some of your ways to be more accepting of diversity and differences in learning.

Attention seeking behavior results when kids aren't getting the recognition they feel they deserve. If they can't get attention for their positive behaviors (e.g., being on-task, completing work, arriving on time, being nice to others), they'll seek attention with inappropriate behaviors. They may continually call out, refuse to work unless a teacher hovers over them, or they may ask irrelevant questions. Students feel import if the teacher pays attention to them and provides them with extra services. To avoid these negative behaviors, it is important to reinforce good behaviors as often as possible. If attention seeking doesn't work, children who are discourage will often

- argue, contradict or lie
- refuse to work or follow directions
- throw a temper tantrum
- use inappropriate or foul language
- behave hostilely toward you

Here are some suggestions for the classroom management of children who have issues with attention and behavior. (These may also be helpful to parents dealing with similar issues in the home.)

- Classroom environment should be highly organized and structured with clear rules – including acceptable ways of gaining attention – predictable schedule, specific quotas for productivity, and personal space (desk).
- Set up student for success and recognize his/her efforts.
- Provide frequent, immediate and physical feedback on good behavior. Give attention immediately to reinforce a raise of the hand, waiting a turn, etc.
- Ignore minor disruptions. Avoid power struggles. Seek solutions, not blame.
- Mix high and low interest tasks. Involve the student in making decisions.
- Give short assignments that require much activity and responsibility on the child's part.
- Design activities in which the student and others come to view each other positively.
- Expect resistance to your efforts at first. Persistence is required.
- Have the student self evaluate what he/she did right and wrong and develop a plan for improvement. Assist as needed.
- Anticipate problem situations.
- NEVER show your frustration as this reaction may reinforce the sense of worthlessness.

A misbehaving child – especially one with learning differences --- is a discouraged child. Taking time to connect with the student and understand their strengths, will go a long way to help them manage their weaknesses in behavior and learning. Accepting differences helps to foster a positive atmosphere of cooperation and respect.

The Learning Connections, LLC, in Easton, offers consulting and coaching services for those who struggle with learning difference, especially AD/HD. For more information and a free consultation, please send an e-mail to Beverly@thelearningconnections.net or call 410-763-7097. Send all questions to ASK TLC at PO Box 3293, Easton, MD 21601