



Beverly H. Rohman



MOMS Finding Strengths, Support and Success – when you have a child with special needs!

“How do I parent my ADD child when I am struggling with ADD and other issues myself?” This is a question I have been asked many, many times. I typically respond by saying that “the apple doesn’t fall so far from the tree.” It is no wonder that a child with learning differences may have one or both parents with the same. It is often in learning about our child’s challenges and difficulties in school that we first recognize the same patterns and issues that plagued our childhood or school experience. The genetic factor in learning and brain development is real. Someone in the gene pool that went into the wonderful creation of your child can be found to have similar characteristics and learning styles. Equally important in understanding how to manage and cope with special needs ---- your child’s or your own --- is the impact of the environment on the child’s development and behavior. Parents set the tone in the home and are the most significant influences on a young child’s life. A parent struggling with their own ADD can not be ignored.

“Parenting is a difficult role for which few of us are trained. When Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is added to the mix, parenting becomes even more challenging.” This claim by developmental pediatrician Patricia Quinn, M.D. and clinical psychologist Kathleen Nadeau, Ph.D. led them to write the guidebook ***When Moms and Kids Have ADD*** (Advantage Books, 2004). This parenting guide provides suggestions and solutions for mothers who have ADD themselves and often feel overwhelmed by the challenging job of raising a child who has ADD or other special needs. This small booklet is filled with encouragement, support, resources and 24 guidelines that suggest ways to create an ADD-friendly family environment – an environment that minimizes the negative impact of ADD and nurtures the gifts and talents of each family member. These guidelines offer practical and helpful suggestions that will benefit the whole family. “ADD is a family affair,” say Drs. Quinn and Nadeau. “Everyone is affected when several family members have ADD, and all need to work together to create an environment in which each family member can feel and function better.” From taking good care of yourself to education, support networks, structure and strategies for success these guidelines provide ways to manage the needs of the entire family. They explore homework hassles, routines, clutter and communication. They suggest that you

“look for therapists, coaches and organizers who can work with you and your family to create a more ADD-friendly home environment.”

Unlike some medical problems, ADD touches everybody in the family in a daily, significant way. It affects early morning behavior; it affects meal time; it affects vacation; it affects busy times; it affects quiet time. We need to learn how to let each member of the family become a part of the solution to any of the problems and pains that exist. And, if you are a mom and also have ADD and are struggling, it has a special impact on the whole family. Before you can help your child with their learning issues or ADD, you need to first get help for yourself. If you are having trouble organizing your own life, how can you manage the schedules, daily activities and belongings of your children? Learning about your ADD and how it can be used as a positive force in the family is key. Finding a support system that will help you discover your strengths and talents while getting help to develop structures, skills, and strategies that are so useful not just for those who have ADD, but useful for life. Helping to discover ways to view ADD as a gift will have huge benefits for your life and your child's. Few people can match the energy and creativity that individuals with ADD possess. Always keep in mind the positive aspects of ADD -- energy, creativity, intuition, and good-heartedness. Many people with ADD do extremely well in life. When ADD seems to be sinking you and your family, remember ...things will get better.

Drs. Quinn and Nadeau confirm that “spouses, teachers, siblings, grandparentscoaches, organizers, therapists and physicians....are all part of the ADD-friendly environment necessary to ensure success for you and your child with ADD. Together you can learn to love your life and achieve great things.”

*For more information about learning differences and ADD, contact
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