



### Welcome to the 2nd Issue of the Every Day with ADHD Newsletter

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#### A word from Kerry

#### Happy New Year

Thanks to all those who have contacted me regarding the first edition of our Newsletter. I received so many encouraging comments - thank you.

2010 is going to be a very busy year. My husband, Steve and I are embarking on a national tour (anybody have a spare motor home we could hire for a while??) We have decided to travel by motor home so we can more easily access regional areas. We won't be able to visit everyone this year, there just isn't enough time. If you look at the workshops/seminars page on our web site you'll see how busy we are. So, it will be a once off for each area.

The Practical Behaviour Management workshops and the Train the Trainer course have been well received so these will continue.

We are moving along with the web topics - keep watching the web site.

Also this year, we are starting membership based support. The support will involve you receiving additional practical tips every week along with access to a blog which will allow you to discuss ADHD matters with others. My hope is that it will become an on line support group which I think will benefit many people.

Again, because we have so many people interested, the web site will have the most updated information.

Teachers have been extremely well represented at all of the workshops and requesting in services. If we have the opportunity to create a separate blog for teacher support, that may happen this year as well.

It looks like it may be a great year for ADHD.

Have a wonderful Easter but don't forget to plan and prepare ahead, taking change and boredom into consideration.

Regards,

Kerry Cooney

#### Support our Teachers

I am both encouraged and discouraged by the number of teachers who are participating in all of the workshops. I have also heard their frustrations at the education system under which they are required to operate.

Firstly, I believe, it is important that we acknowledge the difficult circumstances in which most teachers find themselves. When being trained as a teacher, students are not required to learn behaviour management - in general, let alone management of any and all groups of children who present with challenging behaviours. Students are not required to study disabilities including the most serious issue of Specific Learning Disabilities.

The students then find themselves 'qualified' and placed in front of 20+ students. 40+ parents looking to them for direction in a school which has few support networks in place - funding does not allow for it. It is no wonder that many teachers are stressed and feel overwhelmed at the thought of introducing another concept or expectation into their day.



### Did you know?

It is possible to be a genius and be almost illiterate.

However, it is heartening and a credit to those teachers who search out learning and information for the areas in which, through lack of training, they feel inadequate. I am pleased to be of assistance to you. It is also encouraging that many schools are taking up the opportunity to in service all of their staff.

It has been suggested (often) that I introduce myself to the decision makers within each state and sector of education. I intend to do just that this year.

Parents, remember when your child was first diagnosed? How confused and overwhelmed you felt?

Parents, think of now and how confused and overwhelmed you are?

Both parents and teachers need to recognise that neither one has all the answers. However, each one is responsible for doing the best they can. As parents learn and teachers learn there needs to be a sharing between both parties. Parents cannot solve the problems at school any more than teachers can solve the problems in the home.

The education system speaks often about parent /teacher partnerships. Usually it is mentioned in terms of parents doing school work with their children at home. To me that is not a required partnership. The partnership that benefits students, teachers and parents is one that occurs when all parties have each other's interests at heart and is based on honesty and mutual respect. Working together on a plan and realistic behaviour management strategies based on knowledge and understanding of the issues is the way to move forward.

If no mutual respect partnership exists or interest in learning is not present then:

Parents, after reviewing your expectations, perhaps it is time to change schools: or

Teachers, after reviewing your expectations, remind yourselves that you may be the best thing that could ever happen to that child.

## Homework-for the Parent

I am not a believer in children having a large amount of homework – especially in primary school. A small amount of revision of the week's work and reading – yes- but projects that specifically require parent's assistance – no. Children need free time just to be children and parents have enough to do!

So my opinion on homework for the child with ADHD will come as no surprise. The smaller the amount and the less complicated the task the better. Parents have enough to teach the child with ADHD without including their education. For the child with ADHD with a specific learning disability, homework is almost torture.

If the child is being tutored in addition to homework, I would consider whether there is too much time being focused on the weaknesses and not enough on the strengths. Perhaps the homework could be done with the tutor.

However, homework is a fact of life. The following may aide in your survival:

### Strategies:

1. **Communicate with the teacher.** The teacher may be totally unaware of the problems homework is causing for the family. Explain the situation and the amount of homework you think your child can cope with. Inform them of your homework procedure and the expected results. This way the teacher will know that your child is putting in an effort.
2. **Be realistic with the quantity.** The amount of homework attempted should be minimal. For example, not 10 spelling words a week but four; not 10 sentences but four etc. It takes as much effort for these children to achieve a smaller amount of work than it would others. To expect more is to expect too much.

If the teacher is uncooperative, then I suggest you set the amount and type of homework for your child, for example, if my son was sent home with 10 words to write in sentences, I would have him do three, write a comment on how well he had worked and sign it. Any queries made to my son I would clear up the next day. Many teachers are responsive to the lesser homework request knowing that you are assisting him



Edison  
Einstein  
Gates  
Smith  
and many more



3. **Homework sheets need to be modified.** The sheet needs to appear simple, plain and brief. If the child views what appears to him as a mountain of work, then the situation seems unmanageable. (He thinks he is going to be there until he is 35 years old!) Choose only one or two questions to be answered at a time.
4. **Be prepared.**
  - a. You know the child will not find the homework sheet – so have your copy
  - b. The child will not know where the pencil case or ruler is – so have spares

In other words, be organised for your child. Keep a drawer or shelf for homework supplies only. In that draw keep your copy of the homework sheet, pencils, eraser, ruler, scissors etc. Then when it is time for homework everything the child needs will be there. This will relieve frustration as well as teach the child effective organisation strategies.

5. **Routine.** Form a habit with the child that homework is done at the same time each night. You and your child can discuss when that time may be – perhaps just after dinner. Do not expect your child to come inside halfway through a playtime to attend to homework. Choose a time when the child would be inside or doing nothing else of importance anyway. Work in the same place every time.
6. **Set a time limit.** When your child sits down to do homework all she sees is a mountain of tasks to be completed. It's overwhelming so she decides to throw a tantrum instead. I suggest that you:
  - Set a limited amount of time for your child to attend to homework. I would make the amount of time very short, particularly in the beginning – perhaps 10 minutes.
  - Explain to the child that he only has to work for 10 minutes and then he can stop. However if he does not try hard for that 10 minutes then he will have to restart the time. When he begins working, set a timer for 9 or 10 minutes. Expect that for the first couple of nights he will be more interested in the timer than the work but as long as he is applying himself fairly well you can accept this – only for the first one or two nights though. He needs to test the process.
  - When the timer sounds at the end of the 10 minutes state that he is finished doing his homework. There is no need to further complete any task – unless he wants to, of course.



The goal here is success. It is important that the amount of time chosen is achievable for your child, that is, that he can concentrate for at least that long. Set the timer for a minute or two less than you consider he can sustain his attention. This helps promote success and confidence. Your child should stop dreading homework as well. The time can be increased every six months or so if you feel the need or as he nears secondary school.

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EDUCATION

## A Key Prepare

As knowledge and understanding of ADHD grows we become more aware of when and why a situation may occur and of the child's reaction. Therefore, being forewarned can mean being forearmed.

If we know that every day after school our child is likely to have an outburst then we may recognise the reasons for this

1. Fatigue, hunger and thirst
2. Battling all day with peers and teachers
3. Feeling stupid all day through not being able to do the work
4. Being constantly confronted with not knowing how to change or improve any situation
5. Feeling scared and anxious

We may guess that a person in this frame of mind does not want to have a pleasant conversation with anyone and certainly will not react well to further frustration from siblings.

Understanding all of this, we can prepare for this time of day by:

1. Taking food and drink with us in the car or having it ready on arrival home.
2. Not asking questions about the day
3. Allowing 30 – 45 minutes of calming down time where the child is busy with a favourite activity

Keeping the siblings away for that calming time

The same process can work for any number of reoccurring events. If you find yourself saying, "Oh no, here we go...", or, "Every time we ... then he....." try preparing a strategy ahead of time.

## Homework - for the Teacher

Homework - every teacher's dilemma, a source of anger for every child with ADHD and every parent's nightmare.

As a teacher consider your goal for homework. Below are a few common responses and reflections on each.

1. To review the work for that day or week?

Reflection:

This student is *painfully* aware of the work he has already attempted.

Repetition:

- Plain facts is the best way to eventually reach and teach this child
- Facing a huge deficit all day and then at night might instil a negative response to learning in general

Thought:

This answer may require tasks to be short, modified and only consist of the major points.

2. Further learning, in support of class work?

Reflection:

The ADHD and SLD student does learn by repetition. That is, repetition of the same information or concept. Not something new at night. It is a great challenge to keep this child's mind stimulated while teaching basic living skills such as the 100 most used words.

Thought:

Perhaps the child could choose whether any extra learning activity is undertaken. Less pressure may encourage more learning.

3. To establish discipline and good work practices?

Reflection:

The discipline of following through and doing extra work after hours is not an outcome we could easily expect from the majority of these students. The discipline of not giving up and battling through your weakness?

The balance between teaching this child and maintaining a positive view of learning is difficult to find. This student spends five days a week confronted with his academic incapability and the stress and embarrassment it causes.

Thought:

What is the long term goal for the student? Only an open mind will learn.

A little time  
in thought  
can save  
a long time in  
stress.

Keep what we expect realistic and achievable for the child

#### 4. Preparation for more senior years?

##### Reflection:

Some of these students may go on to tertiary education. However, the immaturity level of the child with ADHD possibly gives many years before it could be confidently expected that this student may embrace added work.

##### Thought:

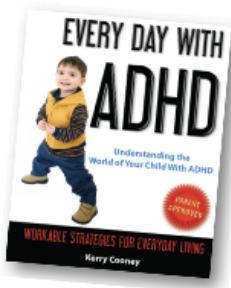
Less pressure may encourage a positive hunger for learning. Some basic suggestions are:

- Lessen the quantity of homework required. (every 10 mins can be painstaking for this child and family)
- Check that the child has correct and detailed information, in writing, regarding work required (this assists the child and the parents)
- Remember, success is the goal

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## From The Book Approaching the Teacher



It is important to set up strong communication links with the school and your child's teacher. In reality, it's not usually long before they all know you anyway! So why don't you begin the process.

Keep in mind that at the beginning of the school year, every parent wants to meet their child's teacher and tell that teacher all about their child. At this point, any person would feel overwhelmed so be prepared for a teacher simply ducking out of the way. This situation may be improved if you have met the teacher prior to school commencing.

Certainly, the teacher needs to know who you are and feel comfortable with you. Your approach will assist the teacher feel either positive or negative about contact. I suggest a low key approach.

##### **Strategies:**

1. A friendly welcome – smile
2. An attitude of 'we are in this together'
3. An attitude of 'I don't expect you to know exactly what to do with my child'. Many teachers feel inadequate and embarrassed to admit that they do not always know the best course of action.
4. Ask the teacher if they would like you to pass on any helpful information
5. Acknowledge that the teacher has a difficult task but it can be managed
6. Offer the teacher the opportunity for frequent contact – personal or written
7. All information provided to the teacher needs to be able to be read and understood quickly and easily. At this point, it is perhaps easier for everyone if you can establish a procedure for information sharing.

This could include the following:

- A method whereby you can obtain a copy of all school notices and information. Many now use fax or email.

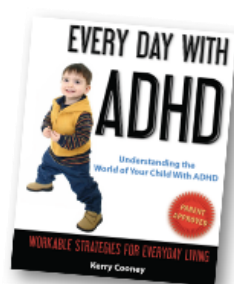
Children grow and learn from success and breaking through on a challenge

Not an impossible task.

- Use the same method for homework sheets. In secondary this could present a problem as most teachers expect the student to write down their homework in a diary. This, of course is good training but it fails to acknowledge the issues related to ADHD and a specific learning disability. In short, at the end of a class, the student is in a hurry to move (**hyperactivity**), is **distracted** by all the noise and activity, has by now forgotten what the homework was (**short term memory**) can't spell well enough to write it (**SLD**) and is too **anxious** and **embarrassed** to do anything about it. The reality then becomes that no one in your family knows what the homework is or when it is due. This issue will never cross the student's mind again, until he gets into trouble for not doing it. Your child is not just naughty and avoiding homework. However, because of the emotion attached to this constant problem, your child's attitude could be very negative, defiant and aggressive. Keep in mind that this occurs 4-6 times a day.
- Perhaps the teacher could jot the information down and quickly tape it to the student's diary on his way out.
- I am not convinced that communication books serve a positive purpose. The books can become a diary of negatives about the child– attitudinal and behavioural; it may encourage the teacher to be overly conscious of the child; at the end of the teacher's day she is reminded of what 'went wrong'; at the beginning of your evening you then feel as if you need to concern yourself with the child's activities at school; the child knows that she is being written about and read about – this is very invasive and could be anxiety provoking. Any established procedure will, no doubt, need to be reviewed and constantly encouraged. The process will then have to be repeated with every new teacher.

In the section of 'Strategies to assist at school', there is a sample student profile which can be used as a guide to easily pass on personal information to your child's teacher. Also, in the 'For the Teacher' section, you will notice that information and strategies are contained in a user friendly format. Feel free to pass these on to your teacher. Perhaps the teacher would also like to read this book.

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## From The Book

## Approaching the Parent

It is also necessary to consider the parent teacher relationship. Teachers, particularly of Secondary School students, have often stated that they struggle with forming a cooperative relationship with a student's parents – frequently the mother. To gain an understanding of why this may be so, it is important to recognise that most parents of a child with ADHD feel overwhelmed and inadequate. From the time that the child was very young parents have struggled with feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and judgement. Their child may have been unwelcome at playgroups, embarrassing at shopping centres, social functions and family gatherings. Trouble at school was soon to follow.

All of these years included times of deep guilt and grief. The years also involved many hurtful and ignorant comments even from loved ones. Parents soon ran out of ideas about how to manage or cope with their child. After years of consultations with doctors, psychologists, schools and teachers the well of optimism soon runs dry. And that's to say nothing of the controversy and guilt about using medication. By the time the child reaches secondary school, the parent has very little left to say. In fact, many have given up. Receiving a defensive reaction from a parent usually has little to do with you – the teacher. It speaks loudly of the hopeless and helpless situation of the parent.

The following pages contain specific strategies for managing a child with ADHD.

Do not underestimate the impact that you – one teacher – can have on the lives of these students and their families. You do make a difference.

A high school teacher wrote the following regarding the practical challenges that she found in teaching P.E. (Refer to Book)

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## A Positive

## Cleverness

80% of people with ADHD have a specific learning disability, usually in the language area.

The majority of people with ADHD have an above average IQ.

The majority of people with ADHD are brilliant problem solvers.

The majority of people with ADHD have an immense ability in certain areas.

The majority of people with ADHD hold strong or intense interests.

The majority of people with ADHD get bored really easily.

The majority of people with ADHD do not stay on task.

The majority of people with ADHD have trouble remembering.

The majority of people with ADHD are difficult to teach.

Put this altogether and what do we have?

A clever person who will not learn doing boring tasks,

And,

A clever person who will focus and learn when involved in their strength and interests.

Do you know the child's area of interest or/and strength?

If so, use it.

If not, find it. How?

Ask the child;

Listen to what the child talks about most;

See what section the child heads for in the library;

What does the child draw, watch on TV;

Is the child happier during one activity or another?

Trial and error

## What People Have Said

You've given me a lot to think about. I need to change the way I view things – Teacher

Now my husband and I are both on the same page. Thank you.

This wasn't boring at all. I'd come to another one. – Father

I just wanted you to keep going, I'm learning so much.

I've already tried a couple of ideas you suggested and they do work.

I keep your book beside my bed. It encourages me particularly when we've had a not so good day.

If I had to describe your book in a couple of words they would be compassion and hope.

I have read your book and found it so very, very helpful. Also I have just read your newsletter, great tips on school holidays, as I was dreading them, but I think I might be able to get through them and enjoy them, which will be a first.

"It's great to finally hear someone speak so positively about ADHD.– Mother.





## What is on in 2010

### Underway

**Teens and young adults** – a book with sections for parents as well as the young person. It will also include an audio CD.

**Web Topics**-downloadable 30—60 minute sessions on issues such as discipline, bed times, etc

**Membership** - includes practical tips sent weekly to you each week plus access to a secure blog. One for parents and one for teachers

### Workshops

#### General Workshop **2 Hours**

This workshop is designed to provide participants with a greater understanding of the issues that impact the child's behaviour and learning. It offers practical suggestions and starting points for managing the challenging child.

Questions are answered throughout the workshop and relevant examples given.

[Read outline on line](#)

To enquire [Click here](#) or email us at [info@everydaywithadhd.com.au](mailto:info@everydaywithadhd.com.au)

#### Practical Behaviour Management Workshop **4 Hours**

**Pre requisite:** Attendance at a 2 hour General Workshop.

This workshop builds on the understandings and knowledge gained from the general workshop. It is a hands on, interactive learning session where behaviours and strategies are worked through to a personalised action plan. Each participant has the opportunity to take away a working behaviour management program that can be implemented immediately.

[Read outline on line](#)

To enquire [Click here](#) or email us at [info@everydaywithadhd.com.au](mailto:info@everydaywithadhd.com.au)

#### Train the Trainer **2 Day workshop**

**Pre requisite:** Attendance at a 2 hour General Workshop.

This workshop is designed for professionals who are interested in conducting parenting courses for parents of children with ADHD, Specific Learning Disabilities or Challenging behaviours. It is important to recognise that general parenting strategies rarely have a behaviour changing impact on these children and often leave the parents feeling all the more inadequate. The course is based on strategies proven to be the catalyst for life changing results for hundreds of families.

[Read outline on line](#)

To enquire [Click here](#) or email us at [info@everydaywithadhd.com.au](mailto:info@everydaywithadhd.com.au)

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#### Professional Development and In-service Workshops

For enquiries regarding Professional Development or In-service Workshops.

To enquire [Click here](#) or email us at [info@everydaywithadhd.com.au](mailto:info@everydaywithadhd.com.au)

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#### Register for Newsletter

To receive newsletters or register for workshops please visit the website, [www.everydaywithadhd.com.au](http://www.everydaywithadhd.com.au) or go straight to our [sign up page](#)

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# EVERY DAY WITH ADHD

Celebrate Abiding  
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## 2010 Workshops Term 1

### Queensland

- Townsville Tuesday, February 16th General Workshop
- Mackay Wednesday, February 17th General Workshop
- Rockhampton Thursday, February 18th General Workshop
- Gladstone Monday, February 22nd General Workshop
- Bundaberg Tuesday, February 23rd General Workshop
- Toowoomba Thursday, February 25th General Workshop

### NSW

- Armidale Tuesday, March 2nd General Workshop
- Dubbo Wednesday, March 3rd General Workshop
- Orange Thursday, March 4th General Workshop
- Wagga Wagga Thursday, March 11th General Workshop
- Albury Monday, March 15th General Workshop
- Albury Tuesday, March 23rd **Practical Behaviour Management**
- Albury Wednesday, 24th & Thursday, March 25th **Train the Trainer in ADHD Facilitation**

### ACT

- Canberra Tuesday, March 9th General Workshop
- Canberra Tuesday, March 16th **Practical Behaviour Management**
- Canberra Wednesday, 17th & Thursday, March 18th **Train the Trainer in ADHD Facilitation**

## Term 2

### Victoria

- Bairnsdale Tuesday, April 13th General Workshop
- Traralgon Wednesday, April 14th General Workshop
- Sale Thursday, April 15th General Workshop
- Sale Monday, April 19th **Practical Behaviour Management**
- Sale Wednesday, April 21st & Thursday, April 22nd **Train the Trainer in ADHD Facilitation**
- Berwick Tuesday, April 27th General Workshop
- Frankston Wednesday, April 28th General Workshop
- Dandenong Thursday, April 29th General Workshop
- Lilydale Monday, May 3rd General Workshop
- Ringwood Tuesday, May 4th General Workshop
- Box Hill Wednesday, May 5th General Workshop
- Watsonia Thursday, May 6th General Workshop
- Dandenong Monday, May 10th **Practical Behaviour Management**
- Dandenong Wednesday, May 12th & Thursday, May 13th **Train the Trainer in ADHD Facilitation**
- Ringwood Monday, May 17th **Practical Behaviour Management**
- Ringwood Wednesday, May 19th & Thursday, May 20th **Train the Trainer in ADHD Facilitation**



# EVERY DAY WITH ADHD

Celebrate Abiding  
disabilities

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## 2010 Workshops Term 2 continued

### Victoria

- Hoppers Crossing Monday, May 31st General Workshop
- Geelong Tuesday, June 1st General Workshop
- Colac Wednesday, June 2nd General Workshop
- Warrnambool Monday, June 7th General Workshop
- Portland Tuesday, June 8th General Workshop
- Hamilton Wednesday, June 9th General Workshop
- Geelong Tuesday, June 15th **Practical Behaviour Management**
- Geelong Wednesday, June 16th & Thursday, June 17th **Train the Trainer in ADHD Facilitation**
- Warrnambool Monday, June 21st **Practical Behaviour Management**
- Warrnambool Wednesday, June 23rd & Thursday, June 24th **Train the Trainer in ADHD Facilitation**

### Tasmania

- Devonport Monday, June 28th General Workshop
- Burnie Tuesday, June 29th General Workshop
- Launceston Wednesday, June 30th General Workshop
- Hobart Thursday, July 1st General Workshop
- Hobart Monday, July 5th **Practical Behaviour Management**
- Hobart Wednesday, July 7th & Thursday, July 8th **Train the Trainer in ADHD Facilitation**
- Launceston Monday, July 12th **Practical Behaviour Management**
- Launceston Tuesday, July 13th & Wednesday, July 14th **Train the Trainer in ADHD Facilitation**

### SA & WA

- We will be travelling to South Australia & Western Australia during Terms 3 & 4 so keep an eye on our website for more details

If you would like a **Professional Development** session; to organise a open workshop; or suggest your area for a workshop please contact me via: [info@everydaywithadhd.com.au](mailto:info@everydaywithadhd.com.au); or through the website [Comments Page](#).

To avoid disappointment please note: **We will not be back in these areas for at least 12 months.**

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## Next Edition

### Inclusions

- Where to start with ADHD
- Setting boundaries
- Discipline
- Times of the day
- Creating a positive environment