

Coaching ADD with Sharon

Newsletter

Raising Successful and Happy Kids with ADD

November 20, 2006

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Dear Friend,

Welcome to the second **Coaching ADD with Sharon Newsletter** with information for adults and kids with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), also referred to as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and their friends and relatives. I am a practicing coach and graduate of the ADD Coach Academy and have a degree in Mental Health Psychology. Please refer to my web site at coachingaddwithsharon.com for additional information about me.

ADD can affect adults and children and usually runs in families. Coaching can be a positive component of a multi-modal treatment plan. I invite you to read the information below, use it and share it with a friend or family member who may be dealing with the frustrations of ADD.

I recently gave a workshop on **Raising Successful and Happy Kids with ADD** at a local school and was overwhelmed by how eager parents are for information to help their children. Each child is different, because ADD affects people in different ways. Because school has been back in session long enough for you to know if your child is doing well or having difficulties, my first three newsletters will be about **Raising Successful and Happy Kids with ADD**. This is the second section about **Developing Structure in School and at Home**. Section three will be on **Keeping Yourself Under Control**. If you missed the first installment, **Focusing on Strengths**, it will be available soon on my website.



Developing Structure in School and at Home



My last newsletter talked about focusing on your child's strengths. In order to develop those strengths you need to establish structure in their lives, at home and in school.

Developing Structure in School and at Home. Kids with ADD usually have a harder time paying attention and maintaining organization. They can often be hyperactive or

impulsive. These behaviors can lead to frustration and failure in school. The best way to help is to provide the structure necessary to develop the patterns that help them learn. We all need structure to make the most of our time, but ADD kids and adults need it even more.

Let me share some ways to make this happen:

- **Set Up Routines.** At home, homework should be at the same time and in the same

place as much as possible. Keep their learning modalities (see Newsletter #1 for information on modalities) in mind when doing this. Do they need a quiet place to work or do they need some background noise like music in order to concentrate. Do they need to be able to move around while working or to have something to fidget with? Meals, chores, outside activities and family time should also be scheduled with as much regularity as possible in order to maintain a sense of routine, organization and time management. If there isn't time for your child to do everything that is scheduled, eliminate the least important things. At school, enlist the teachers to suggest ways that structure can be maintained for your child during the school day and ask for their help. It could be as simple as quietly asking your child at the end of the class if they wrote down the homework assignment. Book bags and lockers can be organized to minimize disorganization and frustration with color coding. Ask for an extra set of books for the home if your child forgets to bring them home.

-Use Charts and Rewards. Create charts for homework, chores, etc. and establish rewards for consistency. For example, if your child has trouble remembering to bring home their homework assignments or to get the assignments handed in at school, keep a chart and do something special with your child when they have done it consistently for a week. Remember that this is not about the reward. It is about creating learning patterns in your child's brain that will help them to succeed.

-Take Small Steps. Don't try to change everything at once. That will only create more chaos. Change one thing at a time. You might start by helping your child organize their work space to make homework more efficient. (Remember, don't organize it for them, organize it with them so it works for them.) The next step might be to color code their school books and their notebooks by subject.

-Set Rules and Stick to Them. Create rules for homework, chores, room cleanliness, etc. and stick to them. If you, as a parent don't provide the structure of sticking to the rules, you can't expect your child to do so. Making rules and sticking to them is one of the best ways to help your ADD child create the brain patterns that will help them be successful. As I mentioned above, don't try to change everything at once.

-Be Patient. Change takes time and this is even more so when dealing with ADD kids. So be patient if the charts don't work right away or the homework assignments are still being forgotten. It takes time and patience to establish new routines, but it will be worth the wait.

-Praise Your Child. Take every opportunity to praise your child for even the smallest positive change. This is the best way to reinforce the behavior and encourage your child to continue.

-Be Flexible. I don't mean be flexible about routines and structure. I mean if something doesn't seem to be working, be prepared to change. If doing homework after school doesn't work and your child works better after dinner, try it. Always be willing to work with your child to create routines that provide the best result.

-Be Consistent. I have saved the most important for last. Once you have established routines that work, be consistent! You cannot create strong patterns for your child if you are not willing to maintain consistency for them. Be consistent with support, praise, rewards, etc.

Does this sound like a lot of work? It is, but what is at stake is your child's future. Isn't that worth the effort? If you need help, ask for it from teachers, tutors, coaches, or other parents who are dealing with the same issues.

Good luck! If you think you might be interested in hiring a coach, you can call or e-mail

me. And don't forget to contact me with a question or a suggestion that might help others. My e-mail address is below.

Next time I will discuss *Keeping Yourself Under Control*

Getting Help



If you know or suspect your child has ADD, dealing with it alone can be very difficult, I know, I have been there. Teaming up with a coach that is trained to deal with ADD issues is one approach that can help. Visit my web site www.coachingaddwithsharon.com. If you feel I can help, contact me.

I'm Interested in Hearing From You!

I am interested in hearing from you! As part of my bi-weekly newsletter, I would like to know if you have questions or experiences to share. Other readers can benefit from answers to the questions or situations you have successfully dealt with. Please e-mail me at sharonh75@optonline.net and I will try to include your questions and/or situations anonymously in future newsletters.

Sharon Howell

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