



**RECOMMENDED PROCESS  
FOR IDENTIFICATION OF  
STUDENTS WITH  
ATTENTION-DEFICIT/  
HYPERACTIVITY  
DISORDER**

## **BACKGROUND**

Children who have Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are more active, less attentive, and more impulsive than most other children of their age. About 3 % of children exhibit ADHD. More boys are diagnosed than girls.

Characteristics of ADHD include fidgeting or squirming, having difficulty remaining seated, being easily distracted, having difficulty waiting to take a turn, having a short attention span, shifting from one uncompleted activity to another, talking excessively, interrupting others, and engaging in physically dangerous activities without thinking of consequences.

Sometimes children are not hyperactive but are distractible and have a short attention span. This condition is more subtle but can interfere with functioning. It is called attention deficit disorder, predominantly inattentive type.

Attention problems may also result from conditions other than ADHD, therefore a careful assessment is important.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following outlines a recommended Howe Sound School District procedure for identifying and supporting students who have ADHD.

- 1 The parent(s) and teacher discuss their perception of the child's problem. If they agree that attention may be a problem, they proceed to the next stage. In the event that the parent first approaches the physician, the physician directs the parent back to the school.
- 2 The teacher approaches the school-based team and requests a screening assessment for learning difficulties. The parent has the child's hearing and vision tested to rule out any sensory problems.
- 3 The screening data is shared with the school psychologist, who then administers a behavior rating scale (one to be completed by the parent, and one to be completed by the teacher). The psychologist may also conduct a classroom observation, interview parents and teachers, review student records, etc. A full psychoeducational assessment is not considered necessary at this point unless there is evidence of a learning problem; however, a referral to Special Services is required.
- 4 The school psychologist prepares a written summary of the screening information, behavior rating data, and any other information which has been obtained. The summary is shared with the school and the parent.
- 5 The parent takes his/her child to a doctor to rule out any health problems that may contribute to attention difficulties. The parent gives a copy of the psychologist's summary to the doctor.

Recommendations (continued...)

- 6 If, after reviewing the available information, the physician considers a diagnosis of ADHD is appropriate and prescribes medication, he/she notifies the school and requests feedback concerning medication effectiveness and/or adverse reactions. In more complex cases, a referral to a child psychiatrist or clinical child psychologist may be in order.
- 7 Concurrently, the school implements an intervention plan to address student needs and monitors the child's progress. The school may consult with the psychologist regarding intervention strategies.
- 8 If the medication and/or intervention appear to be unsuccessful, alternative courses of action might include additional medical assessment or further consultation with the school psychologist, school-based team, district itinerant teacher for behavior disorders, other clinical specialists, and *community agencies*.

Prepared by Special Services, School District #48 (Sea to Sky).

**Symptoms of ADHD**

**Hyperactivity:**

- a often fidgets with hands and feet or squirms in seat.
- b often leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected.
- c often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate (in adults and adolescents).
- d often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly.
- e is often "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor".
- f often talks excessively.

**Impulsivity:**

- g often blurts out answers before questions have been completed.
- h often has difficulty awaiting turn.
- i often interrupts or intrudes upon others.

**Symptoms of ADHD  
Predominantly Inattentive Type**

- a often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities.
- b often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities.
- c often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
- d often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace.
- e often has difficulty organizing tasks or activities.
- f often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort.
- g often loses things necessary for tasks or activities.
- h is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli.
- i is often forgetful in daily activities.

**Recommended Process for Identification  
ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY  
DISORDER**

