



SHANE LYNCH PSYCHOLOGY

Off they go!

Children are back to school which means old and new routines, friends, teachers, and fun!

Don't forget...

School buildings may be the same, but classroom dynamics, school policies, and social pressures may look a bit different for kids today. Be curious about your child's experience.

About Shane

When my wife, middle son, and I brought our oldest to grade 1, it was an exciting morning.

As much as his mother and I were happy to see him excited and ready for something new and something familiar, there were mixed emotions throughout.

I won't forget the look of joyful anticipation on his face as he walked in through the doors completely ignoring my "Have a great day, Harold!" ...sure enough, he did.



ADHD Part One

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is fairly well known as far as childhood diagnoses go. Because it is such a large topic to address, I've decided to address it over three issues. The first two will be focused on children, and the last with adults as it is becoming more commonly diagnosed in the latter population in recent years.

ADHD has a prevalence rate in most cultures of approximately 5% of children, more boys have ADHD than girls (2:1), and about 40% of children with ADHD have a learning disability.

Enough stats. What is ADHD and how does it show up? ADHD has two essential features: inattention and hyperactivity; however, it also includes impulsivity. Inattention refers to wandering off task, lacking persistence, difficulty sustaining focus, and disorganization which, is not due to defiance or a lack of comprehension. Hyperactivity refers to excessive motor activity (e.g., running around when not appropriate), excessive fidgeting, tapping or talkativeness. Impulsivity refers to hastily acting



Tips for Dads & Moms

Homework Chains help parents and children identify where the missing link is that prevented homework completion. Here are the links you can review together:

Realize assignment has been given.

Understand what it is.

Record it/write it in notebook.

Know how to perform it.

Leave school with correct items.

Arrive home with correct items.

Begin Homework session.

Complete entire homework.

Check for completeness.

Put in special place.

Leave home with it.

Arrive at class with it & turn it in!

before thinking which could have a high potential for harm to the child (e.g., darting into traffic without looking), it may present as an inability to delay gratification, and social intrusiveness (e.g., interrupting others excessively).

Of course the question every parent might be asking themselves is: “What child *doesn't* do all of these things?” And, they would be correct, this is very common behaviour and so more specific criteria are required for diagnosis including how we define “excessive.” Diagnostics is not the point of this article, rather, what kinds of things can we do to support kids who find our Western approach to academics challenging (i.e., sitting quietly for 6.5 hours a day).

Now, think of ADHD as having 4 intervention areas in a child’s life: academics, psycho-social, sensory-motor, and physiological. The rest of this issue will focus on home-based interventions for supporting children to navigate the demands of school.

Children do well with a dedicated space for studying (e.g., chair, desk, non-fluorescent lighting). Cushy chairs, couches, or beds, are discouraged. Make sure the location is quiet. Music is okay but should be at a low volume, slow tempo, and little or no percussion.

Parents should keep records of your child’s schoolwork at various school levels as well as report cards. Make notes after parent-teacher meetings and track what approaches to learning and teaching work for your child and what doesn’t work.

Help your child maintain an organized notebook/binder. Have some kind of zipper pouch to hold pens/pencils, use coloured dividers, and attach a special pocket for homework.

Keep a monthly calendar on your child’s bedroom wall (3-month for teens) where tests and long-term assignments can be noted. Use “chunking” for daily homework assignments (e.g., 15-minutes for each subject area). Research tells us the less homework the better!

Long-term assignments need to start the day they are given, and studying for tests needs to begin the day the student is notified it is upcoming.

Lastly, use a “Homework Chain” to identify the missing link(s) that prevent homework from being done and handed in on time. See example in the “Tips for Dads & Moms” section of this issue!



Shane F. Lynch, MA, CCC, R.Psych