

How To Help Struggling Students Go From Sinking To Soaring!

By DeAnne Joy Experts estimate that 6 to 10 percent of the school-aged population in the United States is learning disabled and approximately 3 to 10 percent of the population as a whole is diagnosed with ADD. This growing problem impacts many areas of society and there is a growing need for effective solutions.

Parenting or teaching a child with ADD or learning difficulties can, no doubt, be an enormous challenge. It requires patience of you that you may not have thought you had; persistence that you may frequently have to call upon; and consistency that you may be learning along the way. Here are some tips to assist you in providing the best possible environment for your child to experience success both at home and at school.

Young people with ADD (like all of us) are doing the best they know how to do with what they have to work with. When they have more options available to them, they will make better choices. You, as the adult, are the teacher, which means that your child will model you. If you are flexible and open to learning new ways of thinking and behaving, your child will be open as well.

There is positive intention behind every behavior, no matter how hurtful or how bizarre the behavior may seem. In other words, there is a need on some level that is being met by doing what they're doing. If we can look for what the purpose is behind the behavior or what need is getting met, then we can find other more constructive solutions to meeting that need. Always look for the positive intention behind behavior.

Step into their model of the world. Imagine, for instance, what it would feel like to drive in the rain without windshield wipers and how challenging it would be to simply keep everyone in the car safe, let alone maintain any sort of emotional balance (this is what it feels like in the mind of a person with ADD). When you communicate with them, see the communication through their eyes and through their model of the world rather than through yours; they will be much more open to what you have to say if you do.

Understand that young people with ADD operate in a world of images, so verbal and auditory communication is often the least important mode of communication to them. Words are very slow and difficult to process. Whenever you give a young person with ADD instructions, have him overlap the words into pictures in his mind and have him feel his body following the instructions. For instance, if you want him to do the dishes and then pack his backpack for school, have him SEE and FEEL doing the dishes and then packing his backpack.

Visual learning is the best way to learn academic subjects. Make sure they learn visually by making pictures in their mind of doing academic tasks like spelling words, vocabulary words and math facts. When they are reading, make sure they overlap pictures with the words they are reading. Using a visual learning strategy is more interesting, more effective, takes much less time and it's just more fun.

Celebrate and appreciate what makes them unique. One of the biggest hurdles that young people with ADD or learning challenges face is the belief that they are "stupid", "weird" or just "don't fit in". The truth is that they are often a step away from brilliance and have the ability to see the world in ways that most of us simply can't (think Albert Einstein, J.F.K., Cher and Robin Williams who all had learning disabilities) . Consistently looking for and recognizing their uniqueness and value will go a long way in overcoming this belief and raising their self-confidence.

About the Author

DeAnne Joy is a speaker, trainer, coach and licensed therapist in Southern California. She is the founder of D. Joy Enterprises and is dedicated to teaching young people and adults world-class learning and success strategies. For more information on how to help a child struggling with ADD or other learning challenges, contact DeAnne Joy at 661.310.7981 or info@deannejoy.com, or visit <http://www.deannejoy.com>.

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