



I'M NOT NAUGHTY



Newsletter of the
Society for the Promotion of
ADHD Research and Knowledge

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New Developments



Two members, Patrick Fernandez and Katherine Wong, were elected honorary auditors for a two-year term at our 7th Annual General Meeting held last month. I would like to thank them for agreeing to take on this duty for the society. My thanks and gratitude too to all 32 members who turned up at the AGM; members of the Executive Committee who were re-elected for another year, and our previous auditors, Tonia Tsjeng and Grace Sim for their services. A summary of the President's Report can be found on the next page.

By the way, a summary of the two-part talk I gave in January and February on "50 Ways to Improve Your Child's Behaviour and Attention Span Without Drugs, Labels or Coercion" can be found in the rest of this newsletter, presented in a slightly different format. Visit our website for more details.

There are two other new developments. We have finally produced a Chinese version of our ADHD brochure for outreach to parents who can only read Chinese. So get some from us if you need them for your children's Chinese language teachers. And we have decided to run the ADHD Behaviour Management Workshops twice a year, in June and November.



Bella Chin, President

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The President's Report for 2006

Annual Year-End Party

Around 50 children and parents turned up for our annual party that was held on November 25, 2006 at West Coast Park. A special highlight of the occasion was a *wushu* performance by students of Xin Ying Wushu Training Centre. A special thanks to Mrs Cynthia Yeung who contributed \$200 for the party, and Mrs Kwa Mei Lin and Ms Ivy Tan for taking the effort to organise this event.

Membership Update

At end December 2006, we had the following number of members:
Life Members: 42
Paid Up Ordinary Members: 48

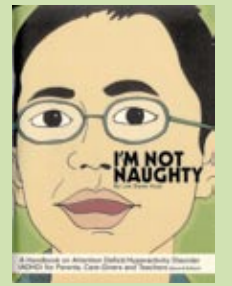
ADHD Awareness Outreach

New Edition of Spark ADHD Handbook

A second edition of the ADHD Handbook was released in December 2006.

Talks to Schools on ADHD

A talk on ADHD was given by Mrs Bella Chin to the ACS Barker Primary School Parent Support Group on 16 August 2006.



ADHD Handbook (2nd Ed.)

Participation in Public Seminar on ADHD

Mr Sannath Ee (a pioneer member of Spark) shared his experiences as a parent of an ADHD child in a public seminar on ADHD organized by Dr Ken Eng of Adam Road Hospital jointly with Janssen-Cilag on 16 September 2006. Dr Ng Koon Hock (our Vice President) who chaired the seminar, spoke on what ADHD is all about. A booth table was also set up to promote our educational materials on ADHD.

Subsidizing parents to be "Parents-As-Mediators"

To encourage SPARK parents to take up the Parents-As-Mediators (PAM) programme conducted by Touch Learning Support Services, we offered members a 50% subsidy on the course fees. A couple of parents took up the offer.

Parent Support Group (PSG) Meetings

The monthly Parent Support Group meetings at Child Guidance Clinic on the first Saturday morning of each month continued to be the core activity of the society. These meetings have helped many new parents who joined us to understand ADHD better and learn coping strategies and management of their ADHD children.

Talks arranged for the meetings in 2006 were as follows:

- Jan 7** How I got my son through PSLE by parent-member Tan Wang Joo (the wife of our honorary secretary Edmund Wee).
- Feb 4** Sensory Modulation in ADD/ADHD Children by occupational therapist Yael Sasson.
- Mar 4** Our Experience Working with Special Needs Children at Round Lake Camp, USA in Summer 2005 by youth volunteers Gerald Chow and Soh Dan Wen.
- Apr 1** Parents-as-Mediators (PAM) Programme by Nikki Tay of Touch Learning Support Services.
- June 3 & 10** ADHD Behavior Management Workshop by Child Guidance Clinic psychologists Carolyn Kee and Shannon Peh.
- Jul 1** Communicating Effectively with Your Child's School by parent volunteer Katherine Krummert.
- Aug 5** Majoring in Major Things by NIE's Associate Professor Low Guat Tin.
- Sep 2** Auditory Integrating Training (AIT) by June Webb of Focus on Individual Learning.
- Oct 7** The Five Love Languages of Teens by Patrice Lee, director of Family Life Education, Hope Worldwide Singapore.
- Nov 4** ADHD Behavior Management Workshop for New Parents by Bella Chin, president of Spark, Lee Swee Huat, Spark committee member and CGC psychologist Shannon Peh.

50 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENTION SPAN WITHOUT DRUGS, LABELS OR COERCION

Thomas Armstrong, author of the book *The Myth of the ADD Child: 50 Ways to Improve Your Child's Behaviour and Attention Span Without Drugs, Labels or Coercion* says Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is not a neurological-based disorder due to biochemical imbalances in areas of the brain responsible for attention, planning and motor activities.

To him, ADD is a social invention, the result of a short-attention-span culture, a reflection of normal gender differences, or simply people with different ways of learning.

So his advice is to use medication as a last resort and not as a first choice or only treatment. Better solutions lie in behaviour modification (cognitive, social, behavioural & psychological approaches); structured classroom setting (educational, ecological and physical approaches) and parent training and counselling involving these approaches.

Over two talks on Jan 6 and Feb 3, 2007, Spark president Bella Chin shared the 50 strategies recommended by Armstrong. A questionnaire in the new edition of the book will guide the reader as to which strategy is more suitable for your child.

The strategies can be divided into the following approaches.

COGNITIVE APPROACHES

- ♥ Teach self-talk skills: especially if your child talks a lot.
- ♥ Teach your child to visualise: when your child has good imagination or has the ability to picture things in his head.
- ♥ Help your child with organisational skills: especially if your child has problems organising his personal belongings and/or school assignments and materials.
- ♥ Teach your child to appreciate the value of personal effort: when your child blame others or circumstances outside of himself for his successes and failures.
- ♥ Teach your child focusing techniques: train attention the same way you build muscles, in a moderate manner with repetition.
- ♥ Teach your child problem-solving skills: especially when you child have difficulty getting along with peers, or when your child has difficulty thinking through a problem or solving a practical situation.



EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

- ♥ Promote a strong physical education program in your child's school: when your child receive little or no physical education at school.
- ♥ Discover your child's personal learning style: when your child enjoy information presented in a graphic way through images or pictures, or when you child has special hobbies or interests. The 7 key areas of intelligence include:
 - i) linguistic – intelligence of words,
 - ii) logical-mathematical – intelligence of reasoning,
 - iii) spatial – intelligence of pictures and images,
 - iv) bodily-kinaesthetic – intelligence of physical skill,
 - v) musical – intelligence of melody, tone and rhythm,
 - vi) interpersonal – intelligence of getting along with other people,
 - vii) intrapersonal – intelligence of self-knowledge.
- ♥ Provide a variety of stimulating learning activities: especially when you child has special hobbies or interests.
- ♥ Use incidental learning to teach: when your child seems to learn new things by absorbing information that is all around him.
- ♥ Support full inclusion of your child in a regular classroom: when your child has a label in school like ADD or learning disabled.
- ♥ Consider alternative schooling options: when your child seems to learn more at home than he does at schools. Alternatives include international/private schools, home-schooling [2 home-schooling agencies in Singapore are Teach Asia and Victory Life Christian Training Agency].

- ♥ Provide hand-on-activities: when your child enjoy working with his hands.
- ♥ Provide appropriate spaces for learning: when you child like to engage in outdoor activities.
- ♥ Provide your child with access to a computer: when you child likes working with computers.

SOCIAL APPROACHES

- ♥ Spend positive time together: especially when your child spends little or no quality time with you. For a young child, love is spelled T-I-M-E.

♥ Use touch to soothe and calm: human touch can calm a child whose energy is off-track.

♥ Help your child develop social skill: especially when your child have difficulty getting along with peers.

♥ Use effective communication skill: especially when your child react negatively to things you say to him, or enjoy it when the whole family gets together.

♥ Hold family meeting: family meetings empower children to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

♥ Have your child teach a younger child: especially when your child enjoy hanging around children who are younger than he is. One who teaches, learns. Also helps the child develop maturity and responsibility.

BEHAVIOURAL APPROACHES

♥ Give instruction in attention grabbing way: especially when your child has difficulty paying attention to things you ask him to do around the house.

♥ Provide immediate feedback: especially if your child appears to benefit from receiving clear and immediate feedback about the behaviour.

♥ Use time-out in a positive manner: when your child lacks a special place to go when he feels upsets or out of control.

♥ Contract with your child: especially when your child seems to be capable of following through on commitments that he makes to you.

♥ Discover and treat four types of misbehaviour, attention-seeking, power struggles, revenge, inadequacy: when your child is frequently locked up in power struggles with you or your spouse, or seems to thrive on negative attention.

♥ Establish consistent rules, routines and transitions: when your child appear not to know the rules for appropriate conduct around the house and/or at school.

♥ Use natural and logical consequence: when your child seems to benefit from life's natural lessons.

PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES

♥ Find out what interests your child: especially when you child has special



hobbies or interests. Your child is probably Motivation Deficit, rather than Attention Deficit. Also a person with ADD is also less sensitive to consequences such as rewards and punishments.

♥ Enhance your child's self esteem: when your child have a negative self-image.

♥ Activate positive career aspirations: when your child seems to have a negative view of his future.

♥ Provide positive role models: if your child seems to lack positive role models in his life.

♥ Channel creative energy into the arts: especially when your child has nowhere at home to be hyperactively creative.

♥ Consider individual psychotherapy: when your child appears to be anxious or depressed, or exposed to serious stress during the past year.

♥ Take care of yourself: especially when your child drives you up the wall frequently.

♥ Consider family therapy: when your child appears to be anxious or depressed, or when there are also marital issues to be resolved, or if your child is exposed to serious stress during the past year.



♥ Offer your child real-life tasks to do: especially if your child show more interest or ability in doing real-life practical task than artificial school tasks.

♥ Give your child choices: especially when you child have few opportunities to make choices that affect his life.

♥ Hold a positive image of your child: when your child has a label in school like ADD or learning disabled, or when your child have a negative self image.

ECOLOGICAL APPROACHES

♥ Provide a balanced breakfast: when your child becomes fidgety, unfocussed or uncooperative half an hour to 1 hour after a meal, or skip breakfast, or eat only high-carbohydrate foods such as toast, pancake, pastry and cereals.

Offer your child real-life tasks to do, the following are possible real-life tasks that can be done in school:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Water the plants | 7 Set up the audio visual equipment | 12 Supervise the computer lab |
| 2 Open and close windows | 8 Hand out worksheets | 13 Run errands for teachers |
| 3 Take notes to office | 9 Take attendances | 14 Buddy a younger student |
| 4 Arrange desks and chairs | 10 Do duties in the school library | 15 Tutor another student |
| 5 Collect books for teachers | 11 Serve as the lab assistant in the science class | 16 Be assistant to PE teacher |
| 6 Be class monitor or playground monitor | | 17 Be a student volunteer in the community |



♥ Consider the Feingold diet: when your child becomes fidgety, unfocussed or uncooperative half an hour to 1 hour after a meal, or have chronically running nose, red or swollen eyes, itching or other physical symptoms (not many families can implement this as a lot of discipline is required).

♥ Limit TV and video games: when your child spends more than 2 hours a day on such activities.

♥ Use background music to focus and calm: when your child seems to calm down when certain types of music are played.

♥ Use colour to highlight information: when your child has a favourite colour.

♥ Remove allergens from the diet: when your child becomes fidgety, unfocussed or uncooperative half an hour to 1 hour after a meal or, have chronically running nose, red or swollen eyes, itching or other physical symptoms, or have cravings for certain types of foods.

♥ Find your child's best time of alertness: especially when your child seems to have certain times of the day when he is particularly restless or inattentive.

♥ Provide appropriate spaces for learning: when your child seems to be his best thinking when he is moving around at home or school, or when your child lacks a special place at home for studying.

PHYSICAL APPROACHES

♥ Promote a strong physical educational program in your child's school: when your child receive little or no physical education at school.

♥ Enrol your child in a martial art class: if your child admires people who engage in martial art.

♥ Provide opportunities for physical movement: when your child seems to be his best thinking when he is moving around at home or school, and like to engage in outdoor activities.

♥ Teach your child relaxation techniques: especially when your child seems to be physically tense much of the time.

♥ Provide hand-on activities: especially if your child seems to clam down or focus when he has something in his hands.

♥ Use touch to soothe and calm: Human touch can calm a child whose energy is off-track.

OTHER APPROACHES

♥ Consider biofeedback training: an expensive training alternative with 50% chance of visible improvements.



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The SPARK web-site is at <http://www.spark.org.sg>
Enquiries relating to ADHD issues can be directed to SPARK through SPARK_Singapore@yahoo.com

Parent Support Group Meetings: April to June 2007

CranioSacral Therapy (CST) for Hyperactive Children

7 April. Speaker: Angie Koh

Ms Angie Koh is a certified consultant and instructor of Brain Gym with the Educational Kinesiology Foundation in U.S.A. She uses Sensory Integration and Applied/Educational Kinesiology to assist children and adults with learning and emotional challenges. As a craniosacral therapist and teaching assistant she is registered with the Upledger Institute in Florida. She uses CranioSacral Therapy (CST) to enhance general well-being, assisting clients in achieving their full potential in life. CST is used mainly to address learning challenges, hyperactivity, hearing and speech problems, dyslexia, autism, motor-coordination problems, abnormal fears, emotional insecurities, sinusitis, seizures, strabismus (cross-eye), cerebral palsy, scoliosis and many other areas of difficulties.

Home-based Brain Exercise (Neurofeedback) Programme

5 May. Speaker: Dr Kenneth Kang

Dr Kang, an educational psychologist and pioneer in the field of neurofeedback therapy in Singapore, will present the home training brain exercise programme that he has developed. The programme empowers parents to help their child at home. This lowers the cost of neurofeedback while ensuring quality training through regular reviews. It also offers convenience for users as it is done at home. He will also present the use of qEEG as a tool for determining how and where to train using neurofeedback. Dr Kang established Spectrum Learning as the first neurofeedback centre in Asia and has been providing neurofeedback as a brain exercise to clients for 12 years now.

Behaviour Management Programme

2 June. Facilitators: Bella Chin, President of Spark

A behaviour management workshop especially for new parents of ADHD children but all are welcomed.

All meetings are held from 9 AM to noon at the Child Guidance Clinic, 3rd storey, Health Promotion Board, 3 Second Hospital Avenue (Singapore General Hospital grounds). Most meetings begin with a sharing session. The talk usually starts at 10 AM and is followed by Q+A.