



**I'M NOT
NAUGHTY**



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

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Wushu With Us



Spark member Josephine's son has been practising *wushu* for some time now. According to his instructor, Valene Yong from the *Xin Ying Wushu Training Centre* at Waterloo Centre, some of the benefits he has got from learning *wushu* are:

1. The co-ordination exercises that *wushu* offers allow the left and right brain to be actively involved in a series of movement and stimulate the brain to be more proactive.
2. Performances from time to time allow the students to build up their confidence level.
3. Games played during lessons increase the alertness of the students.
4. Their programmes are designed to be fun and challenging at the same time to increase the determination of the students.

So we're inviting Valene and her students to our Annual Picnic on November 25 to put on a simple performance for our children. She will also give a short presentation of *wushu* and get our children to do some of the exercises. So remember to keep the date free and join us for *wushu* at the field next to McDonald's on the West Coast.

Meanwhile I hope you will find useful the tips on raising optimistic and responsible children in this newsletter.

Bella Chin, President

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Spark
75 Sophia Road
Singapore 228156
Tel: 62924456
Fax: 62924414
www.spark.org.sg

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2006–2007
President
Bella Chin – chinbella@hotmail.com
Vice President
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Honorary Secretary
Edmund Wee – edmund@epigram.com.sg
Honorary Treasurer
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Lee Swee Huat – lsweehua@singnet.com.sg
Violet Tan – violetan@singnet.com.sg
Dr Alefiya Nomanbhoj – links@positivelinks.net
Goh Kui Hwa – virgogoh63@hotmail.com
Regina Lau – bttb@pacific.net.sg

Ten Ways to Have More Responsible Children

We'd all like our kids to develop into responsible people. How can we help to ensure that our kids learn the lessons of responsibility? Here are some ideas:

<p>1. Start them with tasks when they're young.</p> <p>Young kids have a strong desire to help out, even as young as age 2. They can do a lot more than you think if you're patient and creative. This helps build confidence and enthusiasm for later tasks in their life.</p>	<p>2. Don't use rewards with your kids.</p> <p>If you want your kids to develop an intrinsic sense of responsibility, they need to learn the "big picture" value of the things they do. They won't learn that if they're focused on what they're going to "get."</p>
<p>3. Use natural consequences when they make mistakes.</p> <p>If they keep losing their baseball glove somewhere, let them deal with the consequences. Maybe they have to ask to borrow one for the game. Maybe they have to buy a new one if it's lost. If you rescue them every time they screw up, never learn responsibility.</p>	<p>4. Let them know when you see them being responsible.</p> <p>Specifically point out what you like about their behavior. This will make it more likely to continue to happen.</p>
<p>5. Talk often about responsibility with your kids.</p> <p>Make responsibility a family value, let them know it's important.</p>	<p>6. Model responsible behaviour for your kids.</p> <p>This is where they'll learn it from. Take care of your stuff. Try to be on time. They're watching you very closely.</p>
<p>7. Give them an allowance early in their life.</p> <p>Let them make their own money decisions from an early age. They'll learn their lessons in a hurry. Don't bail them out if they run out of money.</p>	<p>8. Have a strong, unflinching belief that your kids are responsible.</p> <p>They'll pick up on this belief and they'll tend to rise to the level of expectation. And keep believing this even when they mess up!</p>
<p>9. Train them to be responsible.</p> <p>Use role play and talk to them about exactly what kind of behavior you expect from them. It's hard for kids to be responsible when they don't know what it looks like.</p>	<p>10. Get some help and support for your parenting.</p> <p>It's hard to know sometimes whether you're being too controlling or too permissive as a parent. Talk to other parents, read books, join parent support groups, whatever will help you feel like you're not alone.</p>

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STEPS TO RAISING OPTIMISTIC CHILDREN

BY TONY FIORE

I had just completed a session with 17-year-old Julie who suffered from severe depression. Julie believed she was a total failure and would never be able to change anything in her life. Julie also felt all her shortcomings were her own fault. Where, I ask myself, did such a young person acquire this negative and fatalistic thinking?

The answer soon became apparent when I invited her parents into the session. They began discussing numerous life events and explaining them in ways that their children were learning. The car, for example, got dented because you can't trust anybody these days; Mom yelled at brother because she was in a bad mood; you can't get ahead in this world unless you know somebody, etc.

As a parent, your own thinking style is always on display and your children are listening intently!

The Importance of Optimism

Why should you want your child to be an optimist? Because, as Dr. Martin Seligman explains: "Pessimism (the opposite of optimism) is an entrenched habit of mind that has sweeping and disastrous consequences: depressed mood, resignation, underachievement and even unexpectedly poor physical health."

Children with optimistic thinking skills are better able to interpret failure, have a stronger sense of personal mastery and are better able to bounce back when things go wrong in their lives.

Because parents are a major contributor to the thinking styles of their children's developing minds, it is important to adhere to the following five steps to ensure healthy mental habits in your children.

How Parents Can Help

STEP 1: Learn to think optimistically yourself. What children see and hear indirectly from you as you lead your life and interact with others influences them much more than what you try to 'teach' them.

You can model optimism for your child by incorporating optimistic mental skills into your own way of thinking. This is not easy and does not occur over night. But with practice, almost everyone can learn to think differently about life's events – even parents!

STEP 2: Teach your child that there is a connection between how they think and how they feel. You can do this most easily by saying aloud how your own thoughts about adversity create negative feelings in you.

For example, if you are driving your child to school and a driver cuts you off, verbalize the link between your thoughts and feelings by saying something like "I wonder why I'm feeling so angry; I guess I was saying to myself: 'Now I'm going to be late because the guy in front of me is going so darn slow. If he is going to drive like that he shouldn't drive during rush hour. How rude.'"

STEP 3: Create a game called 'thought catching.' This helps your child learn to identify the thoughts that flit across his or her mind at the times they feel worst. These thoughts, although barely noticeable, greatly affect mood and behavior.

For instance, if your child received a poor grade, ask: "When you got your grade, what did you say to yourself?"

STEP 4: Teach your child how to evaluate automatic thoughts. This means acknowledging that the things you say to yourself are not necessarily accurate.

For instance, after receiving the poor grade your child may be telling himself he is a failure, he is not as smart as other kids; he will never be able to succeed in school, etc. Many of these self-statements may not be accurate, but they are 'automatic' in that situation.

STEP 5: Instruct your child on how to generate more accurate explanations (to themselves) when bad things happen and use them to challenge your child's automatic but inaccurate thoughts. Part of this process involves looking for evidence to the contrary (good grades in the past, success in other life areas, etc).

Another skill to teach your child to help him or her think optimistically is to 'decatastrophise' the situation – that is – help your child see that the bad event may not be as bad or will not have the adverse consequences imagined. Few things in life are as devastating as we fear, yet we blow them up in our minds.

Parents can influence the thinking styles of their children by modeling the principals of optimistic thinking.

Dr. Tony Fiore is an American psychologist and anger management trainer. Sign up for his free monthly newsletter "Taming the Anger Bee" at <http://www.angercoach.com>



Quiet Riot:

Girls with ADHD Sit in Silence

The image of a boy running chaotically around a playground is what most parents expect to see with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). But that quiet girl daydreaming her way through class may also have the same problem, and the subtlety may cause it to go undiagnosed for years longer than her male counterpart.

The difference in how girls and boys with ADHD act causes a lot of confusion for parents trying to help their child achieve their best. So what should mums and dads be looking for if they suspect their little girl has ADHD?

Dr. Martin T. Stein, professor of pediatrics and director of developmental behavioral pediatrics at the University of California, San Diego, describes how girls with ADHD typically act and the best ways teachers and parents can help them succeed.

Is ADHD more common in boys than girls?

By the criteria we use for the diagnosis of ADHD, for every girl with the diagnosis, at least three or four boys are also diagnosed. So, it's about a 3:1 or 4:1 ratio of boys to girls.

Why do boys with ADHD tend to be noticed more often?

There are three subtypes of ADHD. One type is primarily identified by hyperactive impulsive behaviors. A second type is primarily identified by inattentive behaviors. Finally, the third type combines both groups: hyperactive impulsive and inattentive.

Most boys have a combined type of ADHD, where they have both hyperactive impulsive and inattentive symptoms. Additionally, they tend to have these symptoms for enough time to cause a functional impairment that leads to an easy diagnosis of ADHD. Many girls, on the other hand, are more likely to just have the inattentive form of ADHD.

So, do girls simply have a different set of symptoms than boys?

Boys have what people generally think of as ADHD. They're overactive. They're getting up all the time in class. They're fidgety. They're inattentive. Some of these behaviors, like touching and talking to other kids, create behavioral problems or disorder in the classroom.

So, they're more likely to come to the attention of teachers and parents earlier on.

When a child has the inattentive type of ADHD, however, they are easily distracted. They daydream. They're disorganized. They are unfocused and have trouble with concentration, particularly during learning situations. Although, in some cases, this also occurs during social interactions. In a classroom, this type can be more subtle because kids with the primarily inattentive type don't have behavior problems. These kids can be very quiet. And it tends to go unnoticed even more if the child has at least average intelligence, and they're doing reasonably well early on, when there are no huge academic challenges.

When do people tend to recognize the symptoms of ADHD in girls?

It is said that girls with ADHD who primarily have the inattentive type are likely to have a diagnosis several years later than boys. It could be as early as the third or fourth grade, when academic material increases in its level of difficulty. But in some cases, particularly when the child is a little brighter and has some strategies to get around it, girls are not diagnosed until junior high. Here, the levels of organization and classes that require greater sequencing, memory and organizational skills come into play, so that's when all these inattentive symptoms make learning – at least in traditional classroom settings – very difficult for many of the girls with inattentive ADHD.

Is it more likely that a girl with ADHD will go undiagnosed?

Yes. And if the child is underachieving, and a teacher or parent doesn't recognize the symptoms of inattention or ADHD, they might think it's a learning disability, but more commonly, they get a label of laziness.

How do these labels affect a young girl?

There are many potential outcomes to it. At the worst end, she goes through school and it's not diagnosed or attended to. The interesting thing is that these girls with inattentive ADHD will do well on standardized tests in some cases. So, parents and teachers recognize their ability, but since they're still underachieving in the classroom, they are called lazy, and it can affect self-esteem.

But these inattentive symptoms can also affect social interactions. Think about somebody who can't concentrate on social interchange and is less focused, not organized and barely getting to places on time. This can affect social interaction as well.

What should teachers be looking for if they suspect a girl has ADHD?

There are very specific symptoms for ADHD, which include poor concentration, easy distractibility, difficulty focusing on material, disorganization and forgetfulness. An example of this in school would be a girl who does the homework for class, but forgets to turn it in. At home, difficulty in organizing can be seen as a very disorganized room or it can be seen in school as not keeping a record of when assignments are due. All of these symptoms should be red flags to a teacher.

How would treatment differ in a girl with the inattentive type of ADHD?

There are really three treatment approaches to ADHD: education, behavioral management and medication.

First, a very clear education is important in helping the parent and the child understand what ADHD is. Here, we would talk about the myths of ADHD and remove misconceptions to give the family a clear understanding that this is a biological condition.

The next treatment strategy would be behaviour management, where we make some environmental accommodations for the child. For the inattentive form, treatment probably consists of accommodations more than anything else.

What accommodations can be made in school and at home?

In the classroom, we may suggest that the child sit up front, closer to the teacher. Then, the teacher can keep the child on task, tap her shoulder periodically, make more eye contact, remind the child to write assignments down and make sure she hands in the homework. Also, giving assignments in smaller parcels is sometimes helpful. And it helps if parents go over the assignments when they are completed.

At home, these girls shouldn't be doing homework in a room with a lot of distraction: Led Zeppelin shouldn't be on the stereo, the television shouldn't be on and computer games shouldn't be played. It should be quiet, fairly boring and without visual or auditory distractions. They shouldn't be doing homework in the kitchen or dining room when there are other kids around.

How do reward systems fit into behavioral management?

The basic behavioral management with ADHD is no different than with any behavioral condition in children and adults. The principles are

rewarding good behavior, giving a lot of strokes and commendations when good behavior is occurring. Good behavior could mean just turning in your homework or getting a better grade than you did last week, completing assignments or getting a star from the teacher for that day or that week. But it is important to give lots of positive feedback when it's deserved.

It is important to not make a lot of negative feedback, especially for minor things. In other words, choose your areas of concern. Don't constantly be putting the child down.

It helps to set up some kind of a token economy, where you give rewards for good behavior or, in some cases, remove privileges for negative behaviors. But these all have to be very carefully organized so the child understands the contract, and so they can be used both in school and at home.

Is the role of medications different for girls?

So far, there isn't strong evidence to support different practices for medications between boys and girls. Some individual clinicians feel that some medicines work better in girls than boys, but the scientific studies have not yet shown strong differences either in response to the medications or with regard to side effects.

Would you recommend trying behavioral therapies first before resorting to the medications or do you think they work best together?

Ideally, one or both treatment methods are used. I emphasize that both medications and behavior management have a strong evidence base to their effectiveness. Even if a parent chooses medication, I always encourage and teach the behavior modification.

Now, the behavioral management requires a lot of effort and learning on the part of the parents and teachers, so often someone to do this teaching is not available. Pediatricians, who see most of the children with ADHD, often don't have the time or training to really do very specific planning with behavior modification. A child requires some real guidance and several sessions to set up an effective system. It takes a lot of time.

What overall message do you have for parents concerned about ADHD?

I think many parents still feel that ADHD is primarily a condition of boys, because they see it as a disorder where there's a lot of hyperactivity and aggressive behavior. And it certainly does occur in girls, so I think the more teachers and parents are attuned to this, the more attention kids will get in treatment.

These kids are not bad people. They have lots of ability and talent, but they have this problem with inattention that's getting in the way of learning and social experiences.

From www.healthology.com

Parent Support Group Meetings: September to November 2006

Digital Auditory Aerobics

2 September. Speaker: June Webb, registered AIT practitioner

Hearing anomalies can affect many aspects of everyday life, especially behaviour, sensitivity to noises in the home, social interaction, speech and language development and learning.

Digital Auditory Aerobics is a sound and music programme to help remediate speech/language delays and to normalise the hearing patterns. It is an intensive non-invasive treatment for those who suffer from hearing sensitivity and distortions in hearing. It provides stimulation to the hearing mechanism, which produces more normal hearing following treatment.

It is an auditory integration training device which facilitates an individual's responsiveness to his or her surroundings, often including a corresponding increase in more attentive behaviour in the school, work and home environments. The programme may be used to remediate sound-related perceptual distortions, "unbalanced" hearing proprietary device substantially similar to an electronic stereo equalizer to play pre-recorded selections through high quality stereo headphones.

Training consists of 20 half-hour sessions. Two sessions per day are scheduled for 10 days. Some flexibility in the schedule is possible but a major delay would mean having to restart the programme.

June has set up Focus On Individual Learning to offer AIT. She trained as a neuro-developmental therapist and is a Licentiate of the Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology in UK. More information is available at www.focusonindividuallearning.com.

The Five Love Languages of Teens

7 October. Speaker: Patrice Lee, counselor

Parents play a significant role in shaping and influencing their teen's behaviour. But many parents feel they are ineffective in this and are frustrated in their relationships with their children.

This talk is an introduction to a workshop that helps parents focus effectively on how to meet their teenager's emotional need for love. The parenting skills used for a 3-year old are no longer useful on a 13-year old. Parents need new skills to help guide their teenager through the turbulent transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Using the concepts of the Five Long Language, developed by Gary Chapman, parents will be given the tools to help their teen most effectively.

Mrs. Patrice Lee has a Masters in Counselling from Monash University and a graduate diploma in Parent Education Leadership Training from Swinburne University and Family Resource Training Centre, Singapore. She is a member of the Australian Counselling Association and the American Counseling Association.

Although an American, she has been residing in Singapore for the past 18 years. She and her husband have conducted numerous marriage and parenting seminars and workshops throughout Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. Along with this, for the past four years she has done individual and family counselling in the local schools. She has three children, one in primary school and two in secondary school.

Behaviour Management Programme Workshop

4 November. Facilitators: SPARK

A behaviour management programme 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.