

News You Can Use

And Things You Might Remember

ADHD, Friendships, and Relationships



Students with ADHD Often Have Social Difficulties

- Students with ADHD are more likely than other students to have problems making and keeping friends.
- Although this is not true for every student with ADHD, many students with ADHD have fewer friends than other students. Often, students with ADHD are rejected, ignored, or even bullied because of their social difficulties.

Why?

- There are several characteristics unique to children with ADHD that can isolate them from their peer groups:
 - Missing social cues and drifting off in peer conversation.
 - Interrupting others or “nosing in.”
 - Bragging or showing off to gain peer acceptance.
 - Being a bad winner or loser in games or sports.
 - Dominating an activity and having difficulty sharing.
 - Being unable to manage conflict appropriately.
- These difficulties can push away other children and result in the child being ignored or rejected at school.

Is there a long-term impact?

- For many children with ADHD, social difficulties can result in negative labels or reputations that can ‘stick’ for long periods of time.
- If children are consistently excluded, ignored, or rejected, they are more at risk for outcomes such as school dropout and drug and alcohol abuse later in life.

The Importance of Teachers

A positive student-teacher relationship...

- Helps to regulate a child’s social and emotional world and exerts a positive influence on their ability to succeed with peers.
- Shapes the way students see themselves.
 - Research has shown that having even just one positive relationship with an important adult can make a difference in that student’s future outcomes.
- Impacts how students view each other.
 - Your interactions are a model for the class. When children see another student receiving praise, they increase their opinion of that student. When children see another student being criticized, students decrease their view of that student.

In this Issue:

Learn how you can help children have more successful social interactions

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What Can I Do?

1. Greet children when they enter the classroom - it shows that you value each student.
2. Highlight the strengths and/or positive characteristics of students with ADHD in front of their peers. This can counter the development of negative reputations.
3. Use a “buddy” system.
 - Try pairing the student with ADHD and social difficulties with other students who are likely to be inclusive and positive social models.
4. Schedule planned social opportunities.
 - If a student with social difficulties has problems playing with others, try giving that student shorter group opportunities. It can be easier for some students to use their social skills in small doses.
5. Reward positive behaviors.
 - When student with social difficulties achieves success, reward them with socially desired, public positions (e.g., line leader, announcement reader).



Putting the News to Use

Sean has trouble making friends. During free time he is often sitting by himself and playing in the corner. When he does try and play with other children, Sean is bossy, loud, and doesn't share well. This has caused some children to tell Sean they don't want to play with him, or to just avoid him during play situations.

Based on the information on page 1, what strategies would you use to handle Sean's behavior?

What could you do to help Sean succeed in social interactions?

Sarah is easily 'riled up.' Some children avoid her on the playground because she tends to play too rough and gets overly excited when playing with the group. This leads students to avoid her. Others tease her for her “tantrums” and “intense” behavior. She seems to know how she *should* act if she wants to play with others, but she just gets “caught in the moment” and gets emotional.

Based on the information on page 1, how could you help Sarah be more accepted by her peers?

Discuss your ideas with a colleague