

# ? Attention

Paying attention is something that many of us take for granted, because day dreaming or being distracted will be an occasional break from the norm. But for people with attention problems, staying 'switched on' in any given situation can prove difficult, particularly if the situation demands that a lot of information is taken on board (or the subject is not that interesting).

For someone who struggles to pay attention, the school environment can prove particularly challenging. A person can be trying to focus on what a teacher is saying, whilst filtering out other distracting noise, stimulation and information . . . such as the noise and activity of class mates, what's happening outside the class room, or down the hall. Given all this competing information, its hardly surprising that some people struggle to sort everything out and then organise and prioritise their thoughts and make the appropriate responses

## So what's the problem?

Paying attention is really about the brain's ability to take in, group and order sensory information and to 'filter out' things that aren't important. Some people think that those with attention problems struggle to take information in at all – but that's not really right... people with attention problems take everything in, they just struggle to sort it all out in a meaningful way.

With all this confusing information jostling for attention, it's clear to see how people with attention problems may also have difficulties with organisational skills. And because these skills are so central to our way of life, attention problems can end up having knock on effects on behaviour and social skills.



## Signs that someone is struggling

Although everybody can be distracted at different times and in different situations, medical experts have come up with a set of criteria for when these distracted behaviours are excessive and could prove problematic. The medical term for these difficulties is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and some of the signs of this difficulty include:

- ✓ **Becoming easily distracted by irrelevant sights and sounds**
- ✓ **Missing the details and making careless mistakes**
- ✓ **Struggling to follow instructions carefully and completely**
- ✓ **Repeatedly losing things like toys, pencils etc. or anything you might need to complete a task**



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Doctors have identified that the signs of inattention outlined overleaf, often go hand in hand with hyperactivity habits such as:

- Restlessness and fidgeting
- Dashing about and climbing in situations when you're expected to sit still and be quiet
- Blurting out answers without hearing the whole question first
- Getting really frustrated if you have to wait in line or queue

## What help is available?

Because of the types of signs associated with attention deficit, it is a condition that is frequently mis-diagnosed. Parents, teachers and clinicians have to be keenly alert to whether signs are demonstrated across a number of situations or are isolated to a specific subject area – which might indicate a much more specific learning problem. In order to gain a formal diagnosis, Doctors will be looking for evidence that certain behaviours were demonstrated early in life (before the age of 7). There are a number of early warning signs to be on the look out for. They include:

- Having problems shifting focus from one subject to another
- Having a poor sense of time and time management
- Having trouble concentrating and complaining frequently of being tired and bored
- Waking up 'still tired'
- Being overactive and fidgety, particularly when sitting and listening



Arriving at a formal diagnosis for ADHD can often be a long-winded and frustrating process for parents. And because poor concentration often affects progress at school, problems can be compounded with the passing of time as a child feels to be falling further and further behind. But help is at hand.



## The Dore Programme

Unlike a lot of other treatments or Programmes out there, Dore doesn't just tackle the symptoms of poor concentration. Instead it tackles the root cause, stimulating the brain in a way that improves the efficiency of information processing. For many of the people who take up the Programme, it is like someone flicks a switch and concentration and attention improve dramatically and quickly. For others progress is gradual, but over time our clients tell us that their ability to focus on the task in hand improves dramatically.

It's worth noting that the Dore Programme is not a soft option. It requires plenty of dedication and commitment. You have to do your exercises for 10 minutes, twice a day... for around a year! On top of that, we recommend that you do additional activities that require your concentration... because people have told us that that is how they see the biggest improvements!

