

Getting Your ADHD Child Working Independently

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by Hoe Bing

Today's article is prompted by a question from a concerned parent.

The question was simple and direct, asking 'Why can't an ADHD child work alone?'

In my experience and the experience of many child psychologist as well child psychiatrist, an ADHD child can very much work by themselves. Of course it takes a lot of effort and energy to cultivate the self restraining habit but nonetheless it is not only possible but doable.

A child with ADHD is gifted with many talents. One of them is hyperfocus. Hyperfocus is a state of focus whereby they are so absorbed into the things that they are engaged in that it literally shuts down their perception of all else happening around them. This blessing like any other is a double edged sword. Let me give you an example.

Suppose you are looking after an ADHD child who is playing soccer with his/her friends. The match is an intense one and you can see that he/she is really getting absorbed into it. One of the other kids make a mistake and the ball goes hurtling towards the road. The ADHD child's eyes are totally focused on the ball. All his/her energy forces him/her to maneuver and pursue the soccer ball despite whatever obstacles may be in their way. As the ball bounces towards the busy street, he/she runs with all his/her might with the sole purpose of getting the ball. They enter the hyperfocus state and literally shut out all external perceptions. In their mind, there is only them and the ball, and they are going to get it.

The above scenario happens not just with ADHD children but also with normal children. The only differentiating factor is that the ADHD child will have more hyperfocus events. Imagine what would happen if the ADHD child could harness their hyperfocus and apply it to studying. What would happen if they applied it to learning music? Or perhaps physics, like Einstein?

So let me get back to the question, 'Why can't an ADHD child work alone?' There are a few very important implied meanings that we as parents, guardians and teachers must be aware of. The question assumes that an ADHD child cannot work alone. That is of course not true. It is simply in the early stages, they need to learn to develop the habit of doing things themselves. Notice that I said they need to develop the habit of doing things themselves, this involves dressing themselves, eating themselves, cleaning themselves etc. All the basic chores that we as humans are required to do must be mastered by the ADHD child first.

Often times the problem starts not because the ADHD child isn't able to work alone, it is that they have never had to work alone before. Think about how

their lives are organized. Usually the parents are the ones who have to get them out of bed, perhaps coerce them into getting dressed. Then beg them to eat and finally persuade them to get on the car to go to school. All their whims and wishes are tended to immediately, there is no chance for them to learn to become independent.

So can we do to help the ADHD child?

The answer is very simple. Learn to communicate in their language and help them love the process of learning. Many ADHD children have short attentions spans so we are told. The truth is that they are easily distracted. This means that in any given situation you have to create the ideal environment that minimizes distractions. One where they are comfortable enough to be in but not so comfortable that they feel bored.

Next match their learning preferences by interacting with them. This usually takes the form of playing. Play to the ADHD child's preferred sense. If they are kinesthetic move about more, hug them, kiss them, use their arms, legs, head etc. If they are of auditory preference then talk to them, use language such as listen, hear, talk etc. The same goes for the ADHD child that loves to use their visual sense. Get them to use their eyes, make pictures in their heads, use words like see, picture, imagine, pretend etc.

The whole learning process is easy when they are having fun. So the goal to get an ADHD child to learn something and do it by themselves is to get them to like the subject or better yet love it and then own it.

Many parents I see cannot bear watching their child struggle for a short time while learning and I fully understand. But here is the catch, if you as the parent, guardian, teacher do not have the patience to allow the ADHD child to learn at his/her own pace then I'm afraid the implicit assumption that an ADHD child cannot work alone will become a self fulfilling prophecy.

Be strong, be kind, be fun and learn to communicate the joy of learning to your ADHD child. You will find that once they understand the value of learning and start to love it, everything else will become easy too.

My best wishes to you and your children.

If you have any questions, simply write to me at questions @ the adhd specialist . com (without all the spaces in between, this is to decrease the possibility of junk getting into my mailbox :P)

For more information, simply head over to www.theadhdspecialist.com

Warmest regards,

The biomedical researcher/ ADHD specialist

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End article 'Getting Your ADHD Child Working Independently'

The biomedical researcher/ ADHD specialist Hoe Bing is a graduate of The Melbourne University. He complete Biomedical Science and was also granted honours in Science the following year. He has been heavily involved in research and is now a student doctor with a keen interest in children. Hoe Bing has integrated many principles to understand ADHD from a holistic view point.

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