

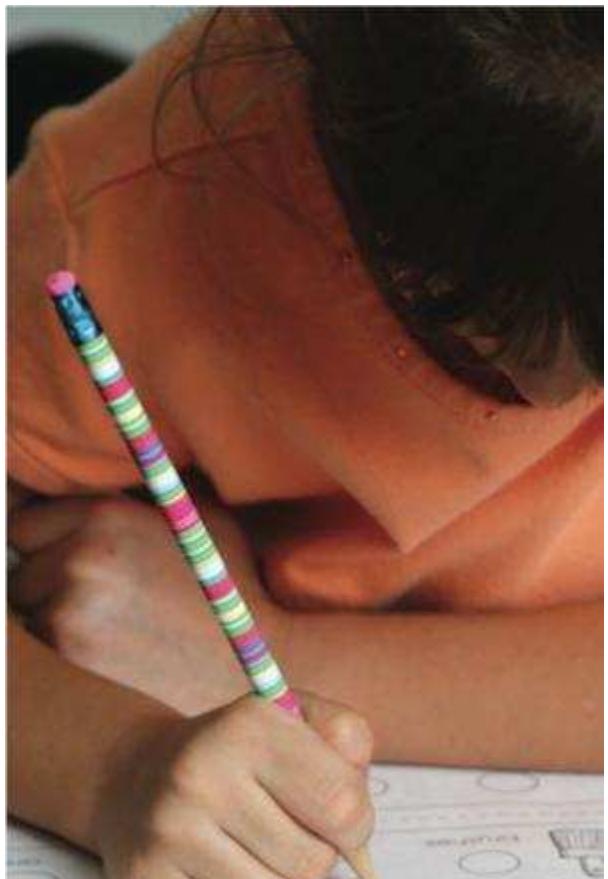
TOKYO families

FEB 13, 2013

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Question: My child has ADD, what special learning needs will they have?

By Dr. Douglas Berger, M.D., Ph.D. | ASK THE EXPERT



Dr. Berger : This will depend on the type and severity of ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) that your child has. There are mainly three types of ADD, mostly inattentive, mostly hyperactive, and mixed inattentive and hyperactive (the last two are called Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD).

If your child has a very mild case of the inattentive or mixed form, they may just need some coaching on study habits, i.e., keeping lists of study tasks to be done by what date, to make summaries of topics of study, lists of items they have not yet committed to memory, etc., and maybe some tutoring in subjects that are tough for them. If they have some hyperactivity and like to move around, best to let them study in short periods that they can tolerate staying still.

For more severe cases, in addition to the lists of tasks and items to learn, they need to be given more time to study and take tests if they are inattentive, and to break up study and test time into small pieces if they are hyperactive. These children may be extremely bright, but if not given the extra time to take a test if inattentive, or not allowed to take test in piecemeal fashion, they may not show their real strengths.

If a child is taking medication for ADD/ADHD,



it is imperative to allow the child to study or take tests during the periods of the day that the medication is active, usually in the morning and early afternoon. Some children need a small booster dose in the early afternoon to get them thru until evening. In

either case, parents should not expect or push their children to do much schoolwork when the medication has run out in the late afternoon as that will just cause conflict and maybe rebellion from the child.

Most children have decreased hyperactivity and improved attention as they get into late adolescence, but there are usually residual symptoms lasting throughout most of adulthood requiring some kind of intervention as described above to function with minimal effect of the disorder.

Dr. Berger and his staff at the Meguro Counseling Center in the Shibuya-Ebisu area provide mental health care for individuals, couples, and families, in both English and Japanese. www.megurocounseling.com

The discussions herein are meant as general information and advice only. Each person needs to make their own personal life decisions and to contact a mental health professional for consultation if deemed appropriate. Send your comments to: editor@tokyofamilies.net

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