

# Other than the Sharper Minds® Program, what can I do for my child who is struggling with paying attention (especially my 4 or 5 year old)?

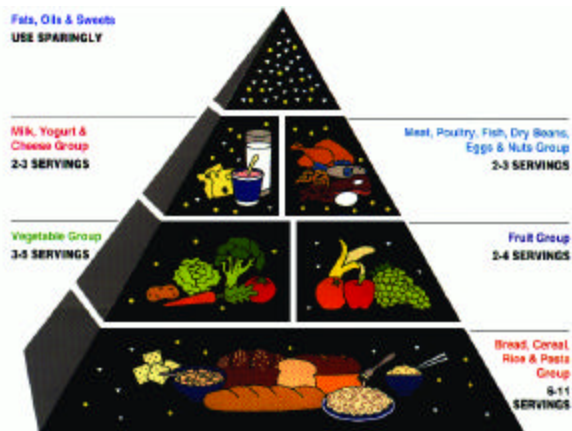
Besides the Sharper Minds® program, there are several areas that we recommend that you as a parent can control and change for a younger child (some of these apply to older kids too).

- Diet
- Entertainment
- Delay
- Parenting and Discipline Techniques

## Healthy Diet:

Often times, diet affects a younger child more so than an adult. Eliminating or minimizing the use of: sugar, white flour, simple carbohydrates (highly processed or refined foods), and dairy products can be helpful. Why is this true?

**Sugar** frequently comes in the form of empty calories. The food may be tasty and filling for a short while, but it doesn't take long for the body to burn it up. The rebound affects afterwards can be irritability and distractibility as the child moves into a hypoglycemic state. Eliminating soft drinks is a good start (this can minimize or eliminate calcium leaching and discourage cavity formation as well). Substitute filtered water, which can taste much better than tap water (some of the best filters are the Brita System [low volume] or the Amway Water Treatment System [high volume]). Do not switch to "Diet" drinks containing Aspartame such as Nutri-Sweet® or Equal® as chronic high usage may lead to Multiple-Sclerosis-like symptoms or Lupus (an autoimmune disease). When Aspartame enters the blood stream, and warms up, it breaks down into several components which include methanol which cannot be made nonpoisonous. Some people cannot secrete this methanol effectively (especially in volume), with the resultant poisoning effects.



**White flour** mixed with water, as any school age child will know, turns into glue. Ingested, white flour turns into glue in the stomach. (Compare this result vs. mixing water with whole wheat flour. Glue is NOT formed.) The intestinal glue can clog up food absorption for a short while until it is broken down. And then it breaks down into sugar which gives energy for a short time, but then disappears, giving the eater a hypoglycemic "let down".



*A healthy diet is important.*

**Simple carbohydrates**, frequently the main component of highly processed foods such as donuts, "kids" cold cereals, Pop-Tarts and common jams, again break down very quickly into sugar in the body. Hypoglycemia happens too soon and restlessness and distractibility take over.

Allergic reactions and sensitivities to **dairy products** are very common, especially among the African-American, Oriental and Hispanic populations. These sensitivities can often lead to the distractible symptoms that people call ADD/ADHD. Totally remove dairy products from a child for 6-8 weeks and then slowly reintroduce products, such as milk, to see if you get an adverse or behavioral reaction. A milk sensitivity has been implicated in a high number of childhood diabetes cases. The body forms antibodies against the bovine albumin (milk protein) which has a very similar structure to the cells composing the Islets of Langerhans which produce insulin. These antibodies then wipe out the insulin producing cells. Calcium can be obtained elsewhere such as through green leafy vegetables, calcium-enriched orange juice, TUMS® or many soy based drinks/milks. In fact, some studies have



shown that the protein in milk may cause a greater loss of calcium than is gained and can play a role in osteoporosis.

#### Recommended foods:

Especially for **breakfast**, we recommend a good whole grain food such as hot cereals (steel-cut oats, cornmeal, brown rice, etc.), whole wheat bread with peanut butter and a low sugar jam, substantial low-sugar cold cereals such as a granola, brans, or Cheerios®, and orange juice (with the pulp). Whole wheat pancakes and waffles with fruit are a tasty alternative. If you are trying to minimize milk usage, substitute a rice or soy-milk product such as Rice Dream®, Soy Good®, or Better than Milk?®.

Avoid the use of white or mostly white flour breads for **lunch**. Use only whole grain breads.

For **supper**: potatoes, vegetables, salad, a meat or protein dish can be good. Pastas are also a good source of complex carbohydrates. Minimize desserts during your discovery phase. Have dinner earlier in the evening so that the child's stomach is empty by the time he or she goes to bed. This will make them hungrier for breakfast the next morning, so hopefully they will eat more and be less picky breakfast eaters.

#### Entertainment:

We are not only what we take in through our mouths, but also what we take in through our eyes and ears (and the senses in general). *Too often, we as parents overlook what our children are ingesting mentally, not realizing the long term impact this can have on a child's actions and their relationship to their parents and others.*

Minimize passive entertainment such as TV viewing! Watching television does not require the physical response to a mental stimuli that is required for proper robust brain "wiring". Physical actions are key to developing the critical left-right brain coordination. Activity can also satisfy the child's desire for movement, burns energy and can help them sleep better.

TV programs that develop questionable attitudes and disrespect for adults and especially parents should be eliminated. Computer games that promote violence (which many of the target shooting games do), wizardry or sorcery (magic) and a disrespect for life and especially women should be eliminated. Watch what your children are watching. Ask yourself, "Are these programs promoting respect and proper behavior, or the opposite?" Better yet, disconnect the TV's antenna or cable. You will have more valuable family time.

Many kids that struggle, need physically ACTIVE sports. Have your child participate in sports that involve the major muscle groups on BOTH sides of the body. This includes swimming, soccer, walking or running. Single-sided sports such as tennis, ping-pong and badminton are less effective in developing overall coordination, but are



better than nothing. Try hiking or camping in the rain for the ultimate family bonding experience (bonding takes place the best by working through hardships).

Reading to your younger children has several benefits. Besides the quality bonding time with your child, it helps the child develop their grammar and vocabulary, hearing discrimination skills, and mental visualization abilities. Kinesthetic or touch preferring children will enjoy the extra closeness as they sit on your lap or next to you as you read to them.

### Delay:

Even though our society recommends that all kids start kindergarten by five years old, and first grade by the age of six, not all children, especially boys, are really ready for school at that age. They may be sharp and intelligent, but their emotional foundation may not be ready.

Especially for children with attention problems, it may be best to wait until a child is 7 or 8 years old (again especially for boys). There are several advantages to this:

**It allows the eyes to stabilize.** Forcing young eyes that have a genetic predisposition to near-sightedness (myopia) to engage in close work, can cause those eyes to become near-sighted. Moreover, conventional correction techniques (single prescription glasses), can actually cause the eyes to become more myopic as the eyes try to compensate for the overcorrected near vision while the child is doing close work. Use bifocals for young children if they need glasses. Correct for distance vision only; near vision should be uncorrected. Note: a shortening of the eyeball by only two paper thicknesses (.010") will produce a need for glasses with a correction of ~9 diopters. Waiting until the child is 8 to 10 years old before much reading takes place allows the eyes to stabilize and it is possible that the child will not need glasses until the aging process sets in around 40-45 years of age.

If there has been a divorce or other physical or emotional trauma in the family, the child may be several years behind in his or her emotional development. Waiting a couple of years, with the child growing in a loving and encouraging environment, may help that child bloom. There should be no rush to get the child into the rat race of life. Children usually will easily catch up to their grade level once placed in the school environment.

**Consider home schooling.** This is easier than many

parents think and it does not need to be time consuming. Studies have shown that home-schooled kids often do better on the standardized tests, as well as better overall in college. We personally recommend the Moore Foundation as a good source for home schooling information and materials. You may contact them at Box 1, Camas, WA 98607, or call them at 360-835-5500; Order line: 800-891-5255. Waiting until a child is more mature to enter the competitive world of their peers can also help a child's self-esteem. Instead of being the "klutz" in the class, they may be more coordinated than others. Other kids look up to them. As the parent, you can look forward to parent-teacher conferences, knowing that your child is doing well and they may ask you to accelerate your child.

Home schooling also allows for **more bonding time** with your child. Use that time for field trips to museums, to historical sites, to the beach or mountains. Go to the park. Visit seniors in a nursing home. Help feed the homeless. Pick up trash in your neighborhood. Enjoy educational computer games together. Read fun books together. Make learning fun! Do NOT waste these precious years on watching TV. Teach responsibility and consequences for decisions made.

Use these formative years to **strengthen your ideals** in your child's mind. A child's personality is nearly fully formed by the time they turn seven. Why shouldn't **YOU** be the one to form it for good, for the long-term benefit?



## Parenting Techniques and Discipline:

As parents, we can all use better tools and skills to improve our parenting abilities. There are effective methods that we can use to lovingly guide a child into the behaviors that we consider desirable. This is not manipulation, it is a parenting mandate.

As a start, we recommend that you read the book, *Parenting with Love and Logic* by Jim Fay and Foster Cline, as well as *Making Children Mind Without Losing Yours* by Dr. Kevin Leman. There are excellent, yet simple techniques in those books that if used, will help you as parents with energetic children.

As a parent, it is important to be consistent with disciplining your children. Guidelines should be clearly delineated, rules and the punishment for breaking those rules clearly defined as well. These become the protective fence in which your child will thrive. If rules and discipline for breaking them are inconsistently defined, children will continually test the limits.

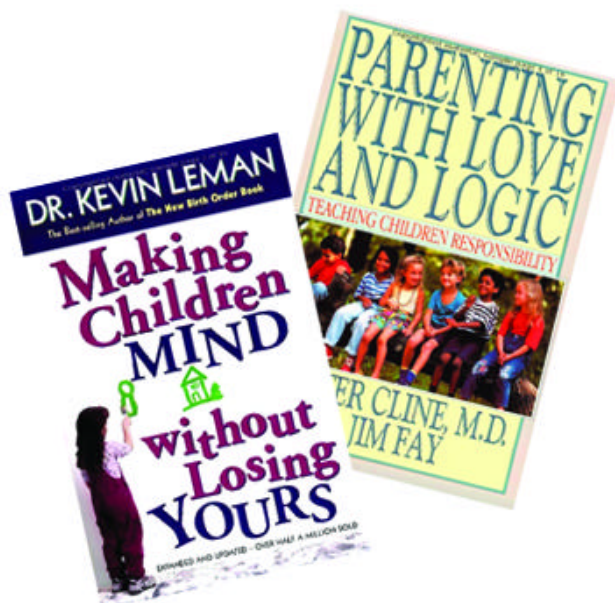
For example, if a child breaks a rule one time and the parent looks the other way, the child is much more likely to try it again, reasoning that part of the time at least, he or she will get away with the behavior and thus be in control. A child who is in control often becomes an insecure adult later on, for as a child, he or she doesn't have the knowledge, experience or maturity to make good decisions.

Never medicate or drug a child because of your own short-comings, anger, addictive behaviors, intolerance or impatience. You will reap the consequences many times over the long term. Learn to overcome the issues that you are struggling with, with appropriate counseling, how-to books and courses. If a parent struggles with thoughts, feelings and behaviors which have left them with fear, anger, sadness, or feelings of worthlessness (often due to a traumatic history) visit the website [www.ItsFixable.com](http://www.ItsFixable.com) for an excellent program to overcome these issues and improve your entire family's atmosphere. Parenting is not something that we were taught. But it is something that we can all learn more about.

Active children can be a blessing if they understand loving discipline and thus in the long term become able to discipline themselves. Active children can become the next generation of leaders, in business, in society and in relationships. Energetic people have the stamina to keep going and accomplish things when others have fatigued and faded out. Activity should not be suppressed just for the sake of peace and quiet.

## Summary

If after you have applied the above steps, and your child reaches the ages of 6 or 7 and still exhibits cognitive and behavioral issues, then most likely he or she has one or more of the various forms of dyslexia, True Attention Deficit Disorder, or has problems with one or more of the critical mental processes. Our offices specialize objective testing as well as a breakthrough neural-cognitive therapy program that is very effective in overcoming these conditions. We offer a variety of program options to meet your family's needs and financial abilities. We would be happy to work with you and your family for your family's long term success.



**Sharper Minds™**

Call us at 1-866-HELP-A.D.D. or  
Portland area: 503-641-5707

[www.SharperMindCenters.com](http://www.SharperMindCenters.com)

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