

Review chapter 8 for additional information about ADHD children. For detailed information about special education programs, review chapter 9.

Getting Involved in Your Child's Education

As a psychologist and teacher, I know that parent involvement is a key to school success. Here are a few ways you can get involved in your child's education:

1. Highlight reading. Read aloud and discuss a wide variety of topics with your child.
2. Occasionally stop by your child's classroom to say hello and to ask how he or she is doing.
3. Observe your child's classroom behavior and discuss it with the teacher.
4. Ask for a referral and testing if you think your child would benefit from a special class placement.
5. Volunteer to be a classroom tutor for the kids who need special help.
6. Volunteer to go on a class or school field trip.
7. Bring cookies or special treats to a class party.

For more information on how parents can help to make good schools, turn to chapter 10.

ABCs of School Success by Sharpe 8 Facts about Parent Involvement

1. Families provide the primary educational environment.
2. The most accurate predictor of school success is a home setting that encourages learning.
3. Parents who participate in their child's education improve the student's achievement.
4. Comprehensive, long lasting, and well-planned parent participation is the most effective.
5. Positive benefits of parent involvement extend through high school.
6. Children from culturally and racially diverse or low-income families have the most to gain from parent input.
7. The extent of parent involvement is more important to school success than family income or education.
8. Students with parents who take an active role in their education are more likely to attend school regularly, earn higher grades, pass their classes, and graduate.¹

Parent-Child Homework Interaction

Although she has tutored hundreds of students in her career, Laurie Candelora said it was hard to tutor her own children. "Your own children want to please you so much, and want you to be proud of them. And you have such an emotional investment in seeing them do well that communications can break down in frustration, and result in anger and tears," said Candelora. Parents need to be patient and step away when necessary.

Candelora advises students to get through their most challenging homework first, when everyone is still fresh. Parents should maximize listening and minimize talking, she adds, and admit that they are not perfect and have experienced difficulties as well.

Here are a few suggestions to keep your parent-child relationship positive during homework sessions:

by Ronald Dietel

SUPPORT GET SMART! HABITS AT HOME 143

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- Review your child's material first, make sure you understand the assignment *and* the content, and *then* provide assistance if necessary. Trying to teach your child something you don't understand can be a quick way to frustration for you and your child. With math assignments that I know will be difficult for one of my children or where I am rusty, I often do the entire assignment by myself before I try to act as a tutor.
 - Proceed at your child's ability, not your own. Better to do fewer math problems, write a shorter essay, or select an easier book report assignment than to lead your child to a path of stress and possible failure.
 - Avoid the temptation of doing an assignment for your child simply because you can do it faster or better. Remember that their pace may not be your pace and that their quality, especially at a young age, probably will not be your quality.
 - Use someone else for support. Sometimes your spouse or an older child has a better homework rapport with a younger child than you do. Don't be afraid to step away and let someone else take over.

Get Extra Help When You Need It



Does this describe you?

Ariel finds math easy. He never has to study it. On Friday, the teacher covers a math concept that will be on the standardized test in June. Ariel doesn't understand it. "I always do so well in math," Ariel says. "But I can't learn this on my own. I know I need to know it to do my best on the standardized test at the end of the year. What should I do?"

Ariel should get extra help.

If you don't understand something in class, get help right away.

Always start by asking your teacher.

List the topics that you don't understand. This will help the teacher help you. Bring your notes and books. Go over your notes, so your teacher can see if you copied something down incorrectly.

Next, you can ask your parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters for help. Your parents may know a lot about the subject. Your brothers and sisters may be able to explain it clearly to you, too.

Finally, get a tutor. Many schools have a tutoring center. It may be called a "Resource Room." You can ask teachers other than your own for extra help as well. Some schools will get you a tutor for free. You may even want to hire a tutor to go over the material with you a few times until you master it.

No matter who you ask for extra help, remember that you are asking for help. You are not asking them to do your work for you. That's not helping you at all!

LEARNING STYLES & YOU

You are what you are! Each individual naturally functions and learns in a particular manner. Although your brain usually functions as a "whole," it actually is divided into two hemispheres. Both hemispheres act and react, think and process, and solve problems in very specific ways. Each is quite different from the other, and one is usually dominant. The best "brain power" is a result of both hemispheres integrating with almost equal balance.

You learn primarily through three basic modalities which use your senses: visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), and kinesthetic (feeling, doing). Just like left or right hemisphere brain dominance, one modality is usually predominant.

In order to learn "how to learn," it is very important to learn how you presently take in and process information. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of your individual learning style will allow you to make adjustments so that you may reach your fullest potential in whatever you wish to do or learn. Assessing your learning style is the first step toward achieving maximum use of your "brain power."

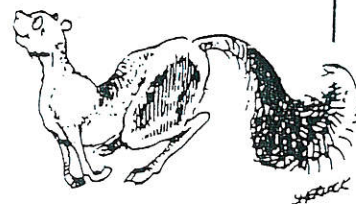
Self-assessments in the areas of brain ability and modality strengths, as well as specific attributes of each, may be found on pages 17-20. This information will be invaluable to you as you continue your journey toward more effective and efficient learning.



LEFT/RIGHT BRAIN SELF-ASSESSMENT

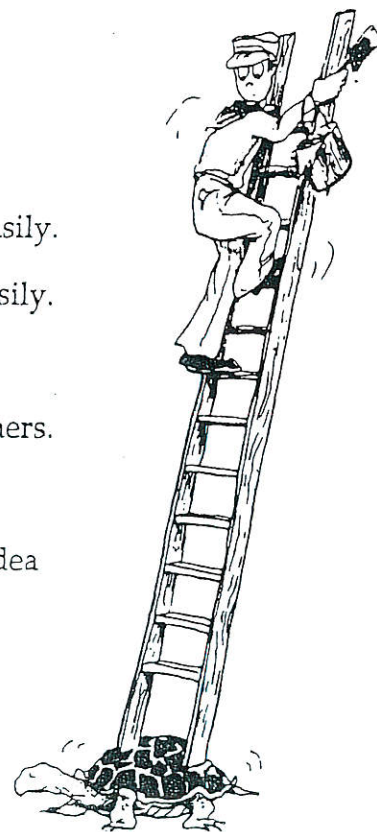
Read the following left and right brain characteristics and circle the most appropriate answers. The scoring table at the end of the list will help you determine your "dominance." You may find that you are fairly balanced between the two hemispheres.

1. I have no trouble making decisions about the correct thing to do.
2. I see problems or pictures as a whole rather than in parts or details.
3. I follow written directions best and prefer to write and talk.
4. I often think of many things at once rather than thinking through one idea at a time.
5. I'm usually aware of the time.
6. When I'm introduced to someone for the first time, I pay particular attention to the person's face. I later forget the person's name, but I remember his or her face.
7. I attack most problem-solving activities analytically and logically.
8. When comparing things, I usually look for ways they are alike rather than ways they are different.
9. I'd rather take a true/false, multiple-choice or matching test than an essay test.
10. Most often, I use my imagination and I think in an abstract manner.
11. If I have a problem, I break it down into smaller, more manageable parts in order to arrive at a solution.
12. I seem to learn best if I can observe a demonstration or read the directions.
13. Generally, I like to be in control of a situation and I do not like to take too many risks.



LEFT/RIGHT BRAIN SELF-ASSESSMENT *continued*

14. I like assignments that are open-ended rather than more structured assignments.
15. I learn best by seeing and hearing.
16. I learn best by touching or doing.
17. I usually think in concrete patterns and solve problems with a step-by-step approach.
18. If I try to remember information, I generally picture it in my mind.
19. Although I sometimes get upset, I am a rational person.
20. I don't mind trying anything once; I take risks when it is necessary.
21. Sometimes I talk to myself in order to think or learn something.
22. I can let my feelings "go." I am considered to be somewhat emotional.
23. I solve problems on an intellectual basis rather than an intuitive one.
24. People have told me that I'm creative.
25. I prefer to think of one thing at a time.
26. I like to act in a spontaneous manner.
27. I prefer to plan things and know what's going to happen ahead of time.
28. I can easily remember melodies and tunes.
29. I am usually in control of my feelings.
30. I do well in geometry and geography.
31. I usually can recall information I need quickly and easily.
32. I enjoy reading and ~~writing poetry~~; it comes to me easily.
33. I can really concentrate when I want to.
34. When I work in a group, I can "feel" the moods of others.
35. I understand mathematical concepts.
36. When solving problems or taking tests, I rely on one idea leading to another in order to come to a conclusion.
37. I can learn new vocabulary words easily.



LEFT/RIGHT BRAIN SELF-ASSESSMENT *continued*

38. When I plan a party, I "hang loose" rather than plan all of the details.
39. I usually can learn easily from any teacher.
40. In class I'm generally aware of what everyone is doing.
41. I notice and remember details.
42. I can easily see the whole picture when only a few puzzle pieces are in place.
43. I don't mind practicing something repeatedly in order to master it.
44. I communicate best with someone "in person" rather than on the phone.
45. I can remember jokes and punch lines.
46. I have trouble concentrating when I know I should.
47. I can write directions in a clear and logical manner.
48. I sometimes rely on my intuition when making decisions.
49. I basically have a day-to-day routine.
50. I sometimes can remember things according to where I "saw" them on the page.

SCORING TABLE	
_____ even numbers circled	= RIGHT BRAIN ABILITY
_____ odd numbers circled	= LEFT BRAIN ABILITY

- Remember, this inventory is only an informal indication of which hemisphere is probably dominant for you. Both sides work together and cannot be totally separated.