

The Good News

AJ is a bright, energetic, sensitive, thoughtful child. He grasps complex concepts easily. He has good memory for facts and details. He loves to read. He is patient with his six-year-old sister Suzy who has Down's Syndrome.

Our Frustrations (Parents and Teachers)

AJ is easily distracted and has difficulty focusing on tasks. His organizational skills are immature. He is "consistently inconsistent."

AJ is sometimes driven to tears over his inability to get organized, find homework assignments, notes, and papers. He completes assignments, misplaces them, completes them again, and forgets to turn them in. AJ is described by teachers as "lazy, careless, uncooperative, and choosing not to complete assignments."

AJ's Frustrations

I DON'T WANT to have ADD. I want to be normal. I don't want to take medication that changes my appetite and emotions. It is embarrassing to go to the nurse's office for medication. It is obvious that I'm not normal. I've been on different medications and I've been failing school since the 4th grade.

I have three or four hours of homework a night. I don't think the teachers talk to each other because they all give long projects on the same day. When I don't understand an assignment, they get mad at me.

What AJ Needs

- 1. Please understand that ADD is a MEDICAL condition.**
- 2. A drastic reduction in written work and homework.** An average child may spend 20 minutes on an assignment that takes AJ several hours to complete. Homework is a nightmare. Teachers add to the stress by sending class work home. If AJ cannot complete the work during the school day, it is unlikely that he will complete it in the evening.
- 3. Prioritize and modify AJ's assignments.** These homework problems are preventing AJ from being a child. We arranged for him to take Aikido because it is a healthy outlet and good therapy. He must miss Aikido to do homework.
- 4. Avoid ridicule.** AJ's self-esteem is fragile. He perceives himself as a failure. Negative comments sent home or made to parents in front of him are inappropriate and ineffective. We have received one positive note and dozens of negative notes from the school. Would you want to be AJ?
- 5. Teach AJ organizational skills.** AJ needs your help to keep track of homework and assignments.
- 6. AJ is distractible.** He needs to sit in front of the class.
- 7. Value AJ's strengths.** Provide him with chances to do well in front of his peers. Catch him doing something right. *"AJ, I'm very proud of your perfect attendance. Even when school is frustrating, you don't give up. Good for you!"*
- 8. Believe in him.** Don't give up when Plans A and B fail. Try Plans C and D.
- 9. Accept our support.** We understand and appreciate your efforts. We are here to help you in any way we can.