The Importance of Communication Between Parents and Teachers

by BRENDA VANTA

Parent Teacher Communication

If you are the parent of a child with ADHD, you understand better than anyone else how challenging it can be to keep your child on track. Your child may have difficulties staying on track with day-to-day activities and his/her emotions and behavior. How can you help the teacher understand your child's special needs? The best thing to do is to schedule an appointment and have a friendly discussion. Here are a few tips for clear parent teacher communication and to help you prepare for that meeting:

First Impressions Are Important

Pay attention to how you dress and your attitude when meeting the teacher. Dress professionally to be at the same level as a teacher would dress. For example, wear a dress or shirt and blouse if you are a woman or wear a suit with a tie if you are a man. Avoid casual clothes such as jeans or T-shirts.

Have a positive, confident attitude. Be open to communicate with the teacher, be polite and smile. Although the teacher may not know your child, he is an expert in his field and received training on how to educate any child who has difficulties focusing or hyperactivity.

Set a Plan

Write down all the topics you want to cover during the meeting and all the questions you may have.

Bring with you all relevant documents such as the grades of your child, his progression over the years. A picture is worth one thousand words; therefore, it is a good idea to include a few photos of your child, too.

Tell the teacher the most challenging situation you had – for example issues related to learning disabilities or temper tantrums. Explain how you learned to manage them. Ask how the teacher would handle these problems and how much experience he has teaching children with ADHD.

Bring Your Partner with You

The teacher will get the idea that you are serious about the meeting and develop a solid plan for your child. If you are a single parent, you can bring a friend, or one of your parents. This second pair of eyes and ears would also be helpful if the teacher is not too responsive to your suggestions or appears to not be interested in talking to you.

You may wish to bring up this subject indirectly by caring a booklet with you, rather than telling the teacher you are aware of your rights and he should follow the rules. By law, students with ADHD may be eligible for special accommodations in the school or special education services: for example section 504 of the rehabilitation act (1973) protects children from being discriminated based on their disability (if the symptoms are severe enough to limit their ability to learn). IDEA (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) guarantees the right to a free and

appropriate education for children with disabilities; children with ADHD may be covered by this law if the symptoms have a significant, negative impact on the educational performance.

Stay Involved

Ask the teacher for weekly updates via email and regular meetings in person. Explain to the teacher how important this feedback is for you and also for the doctor, who may adjust the treatment plan based on his feedback. Be persistent if you notice unresolved or partially resolved issues. Look for solutions and if necessary, involve other persons-such as a school counselor, psychologist or child advocate.