

ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

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[Assignment: Write an essay defining a word or concept being careful to verify that your facts are accurate and that your definition is limited sufficiently for the needs of your thesis.]

Sara is thirteen years old. She has very few friends and she hates school. Although her family loves her very much, she has a very difficult time getting along with them. In her mind, she is not the reason for the problems she is having at school or at home. Everyone is against her.

There are reasons Sara hates school. She cannot sit in a classroom and remain interested in her work. Her mind wanders to all different places, and there are so many interesting things to look at around the room that she often misses the directions that are given out by the teacher.

At home, things are a little bit different. She is very argumentative, and she often adds a lot of stress to the environment. She is often very loud, and says and does inappropriate things. Her actions often embarrass her siblings or her parents.

Obviously, Sara is not an average thirteen-year-old. What causes all these abnormal behaviors? Attention Deficit Disorder, accompanied by hyperactivity. These are two disorders that Sara has been born with and they will never go away. There are stages in her life when they will affect her more than during other stages, but they will never be non-existent.

As a child, she appeared simply to have more energy than another child her age. She was often up much earlier in the morning and her "terrible two's" were worse than most. Her behavior became more abnormal as she got older and it was very obvious when she entered school that she was not like everybody else. The older she got the more her A.D.D. and hyperactivity affected her life and the lives of those around her.

What caused this disorder? There are many theories. Like many personality disorders, A.D.D. with hyperactivity can be passed on through families. It can be carried in chromosomes and can be passed on directly, or it can skip generations. Excessive alcohol or drug intake during pregnancy is a definite cause of this disorder, as well as problem pregnancies that cause a baby to go without oxygen for a period of time. Severe injury to the head can also cause symptoms that are identical to those of hyperactivity and A.D.D.

What can be done to correct this disorder? Unfortunately not much. There are medicines that children can be placed on such as Ritalin. Ritalin acts as a stimulant to most people, but in children who have hyperactivity and A.D.D., it slows down their behavior and increases their

attention span. This drug is not usually effective once a child reaches puberty because of all the chemical changes that take place at that time.

For Sara and her family, the road is long and it is going to be hard. It will probably get worse before it gets better. Often, children who suffer from this disorder develop a very low self-esteem because of how often they are ridiculed on a social level. They are so different from other children their own age because they are typically two years behind emotionally, so that in many cases they find themselves in an unhealthy group of friends simply because they find acceptance nowhere else.

There are ways to make life easier for a child with this disorder, and ways to teach a child with this disorder how to avoid a self-destructive lifestyle. The most important remedy for a child in this position is a very supportive and loving family that is willing to educate themselves on what they need to do. It is often very difficult to be supportive and helpful to a child with this disorder, because these children add a lot of stress to the family and it is so much easier to allow them to become the scapegoat of the family. Children with this disorder need a place where they can be totally accepted and since this place is rarely school, or social interaction, it needs to be at home. Home is the most essential remedy.

There is no easy road to raising a child who has A.D.D. and hyperactivity but there is a way to make the road a little bit shorter. To lessen the length, increase the love, and, at times of heavy stress, remember what life is like for that child.