

HELP! MY CHILD IS
DRIVING ME CRAZY!

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HELP! MY CHILD IS DRIVING ME CRAZY!

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO MY FOUR BEAUTIFUL BOYS

UMR SMITH – 28 OCTOBER 1998
NAIM SMITH – 6 OCTOBER 2000
MUHAMMAD-IDRIS SMITH – 13 JANUARY 2004
HASAN SMITH – 5 JANUARY 2006

This book is only possible due to your existence.
You have inspired me to seek the knowledge on how to improve my
life. I discovered so many new things – thanks to the four of you.

Your curiosity and honesty gives me reason to constantly keep myself
in the learning process.

I have learned that life can be fun.
I have learned that laughing about the little mishaps is far more
beneficial than getting stressed out about it.
I have learned that when I listen more and talk less I can achieve more.
I have learned in order to have well-behaved children I need to be a
well-behaved mom.

You are my biggest teachers in life.

Thank you for teaching me who I am and who I can be.
Thank you for being patient when I tried and failed.
Thank you for playing along when we tried and tested all the
different games.
Thank you for accepting me the way I am.
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn about who you are
and how I can help you grow into the successful individuals
you wish to be.
Thank you for loving me unconditionally.

I love you guys!

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FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to write the foreword for this first book by Leila Benelli on ADHD.

ADHD is a complex condition that is frequently misunderstood and misdiagnosed by parents, teachers, and even some medical professionals. It is both abhorrent and tragic that a complex condition that is the most common mental disorder in children is reduced to one word – *Ritalin*. Medication is a vital component of the most effective multi-disciplinary treatment methodologies.

Ms Benelli steers clear of this controversy, and instead provides excellent and practical advice and exercises that are so beneficial for all who have ADHD; children and adults alike. The family structure is of vital importance in any successful treatment program as 4 out of 5 children with the condition have at least one parent with the condition. Ms Benelli has focused on this often overlooked and undervalued element of the multi-disciplinary treatment.

On a personal note, I have known Ms Benelli for some years now, and am so proud of her progress in terms of managing her ADHD and her boys. This book reflects her passion for the condition, and her lively and bubbly personality – a trait all too seldom recognized in ADDers. (My name for those of us living with ADHD).

The exercises and advice given in the book are a culmination of her personal experience with her own children, and of course her own personal journey, which has now become a burning quest to assist others with the condition.

Congratulations on a wonderful first effort. I have no doubt many will benefit from reading this book, and applying the advice into their lives.

Dave Pughe-Parry
Founder of Living ADDventure™
Pinetown, South Africa
April 2010

PREFACE

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) is a complex condition which requires a multi-disciplinary approach.

Even when an ADHD child uses medication to help with concentration, special attention should be given to diet, supplementation, physical wellbeing and behaviour modification for optimum results.

Every parent experiences a certain amount of upset and concern when receiving the news that their child has ADHD.

This is a practical workbook for every parent struggling with their child's behaviour. It gives a basic understanding of what ADHD is with specific focus on certain behavioural problems parents struggle with daily, plus practical solutions that work instantly. The exercises and methods can be used for any child and adapted to work for any age.

Although there are many books on the market about ADHD, it is different in that it's written by an ADHD mother of four boys of whom two children are ADHD.

Her aim with this book is to provide parents with practical methods that will give quick results. She has tried and tested all of the methods with her own children and shares her knowledge and experiences she gained over a period of twelve years.

When a child receives love, understanding and support from their parents he/she can live a very happy, successful life regardless of any physical or mental challenge.

INTRODUCTION

Parenting is without doubt the most difficult job ascribed to mankind. So if you are a parent or thinking of becoming a parent, well done for taking on such an enormous task.

You might have discovered that the idea of having a baby is far different to that of actually raising a child.

Most parents – including myself – have at some point thought: “What was I thinking when I decided to have children?” This is most often said out of frustration when dealing with a difficult situation.

I don’t think there is anything that could ever prepare us for the day when we are told that the child, for whom we had so many dreams, now has a problem.

I went through the same frustration and would love to give you a quick glimpse of why I decided to write about Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder.

In the first week of my eldest son attending formal school, I was told that he had ADHD. His teacher recommended that I put him on medication. I was so unprepared to hear this news that I yo-yo’d from disbelief to denying that there was anything wrong with my son.

I was outraged by the audacity of some teacher telling me that my son had a problem and needed medication.

My first reaction was to blame the teacher for not being able to cope with him in class...

“She doesn’t know how to work with my son.”

“He’s fine – he just needs a little understanding.”

And so my ADHD journey with my son began...

My first initial question was:

“So what is ADHD?”

Over the last few years, many people have asked me,

- ▶ “Leila, what is ADHD?”
- ▶ “How do I know if my child has ADHD?”
- ▶ “What can I do to help my child?”
- ▶ “How can I change my child’s behaviour?”

You are probably faced with similar questions, so keep reading as I share all the wonderful ways which I discovered that can help your ADHD child.

You may have heard many different opinions on ADHD, from it not being a real condition to it all being about making money and big business in the medical industry.

I remember feeling lost when faced with the mountain of information about ADHD and had no idea where to begin and who to believe. I have spent years collecting what I believe to be the most important information and techniques for changing a child’s behaviour and have included them in this easy to read, hands on manual.

“So who and what should you believe?”

You might also be wondering why you should believe me and what makes my opinion different to all the other reports, books and articles you may have read.

Firstly, I am a single mother of four boys, two of whom have been diagnosed with ADHD.

Secondly, I myself have also been diagnosed with ADHD and have lived with it for many years and will continue to live with it until I die. I explored various methods and tried and tested techniques until I found those that worked for me.

Just like you, I only want what's best for my children. Just like you, I want to be the best parent I can be. Above all, just like you, I want to feel that I am able to cope with anything my children are facing and help them conquer their fears and struggles and grow up to be healthy successful adults.

Through using the same techniques and information that I am about to share with you, I helped my children to go from being...

- ▶ fidgety and restless, to calm and relaxed.
- ▶ close to failing their grade, to passing with good marks.
- ▶ continuously making excuses for their misbehaviour, to taking responsibility for their actions and learning from it.
- ▶ continuously hurting and teasing their siblings, to getting along with each other – most of the time (kids are still kids and some things will never change no matter what we do).
- ▶ being lazy and not willing to help, to doing their chores without me having to nag them.
- ▶ unwilling, to do their homework to actually completing it every day.
- ▶ continuously getting into trouble at school to, receiving praise from their teacher.

These are only some of the benefits you can experience when implementing the easy to follow techniques in this book.

Does this sound too good to be true?

Keep reading, because I am about to share exactly how you can go from feeling despair and frustration at your child's behaviour, to feeling peace of mind – and perhaps most importantly, helping your child to grow up to be a confident, loving adult...

“You might be wondering how this book can help
YOU now...”

Below are some of the benefits you will gain from reading and implementing the techniques in this book.

- ▶ You will get your child to listen to you when you speak instead of ignoring you while he is miles away in his own world.
- ▶ You will get your child to calm down when he is bouncing around like a super-charged battery operated toy.
- ▶ You will get your child to complete his homework without arguing too much about it.
- ▶ You will be able to discipline your child without feeling the need for scolding or spanking.
- ▶ Your child will learn that he is a wonderful child and that you love him/her.
- ▶ Your child will know that you dislike his behaviour and not him.
- ▶ Your child will feel good about himself / herself
- ▶ Your child will be motivated to please you.

You are probably thinking:

“This is not possible with my child.”

Or

“I have tried everything and nothing works.”

Or

“I doubt if there are any techniques that will help me deal with my child.”

The really good news is that you can see these behavioural changes in your child too. All you need to do is implement the techniques I am about to share with you and do the exercises as given in each chapter.

Your child will surprise you with his improved behaviour.

PLEASE NOTE: In this book I will make reference to words like ‘your child’ and ‘his behaviour’. This is for ease of reading and I might not include the feminine version. So if appropriate just replace his with her.