

## To Empower! Not Control! A Holistic Approach to ADHD

Written by Thomas Armstrong, PhD

Monday, 01 September 2008 00:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 05 February 2014 09:42

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Thousands of studies tell us what children with ADHD can't do, but few tell us what they can do. This article presents holistic strategies for helping children with ADHD succeed at home and in school by building on their interests, learning styles, and many talents.

Eight-year-old Billy, in the front row, will have nothing to do with my demonstration on new techniques for teaching spelling. During my visit to his elementary school classroom in upstate New York, Billy is out of his seat during most of the lesson. Instead of sitting at his desk, he is sitting on the floor, using his hands to visualize the



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### Looking at the Whole Child

Most ADHD researchers and practitioners see children labeled with ADHD in terms of their

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Finally, interventions need to go beyond strategies such as smiley faces, points, and medications, and reflect a full sense of the child's true nature. Here are a few approaches for

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Find the time when the child is most alert. Mornings are usually best for focused work (e.g., seat-work, lectures, etc.); afternoons are best for open-ended activities (e.g., projects, arts, cooperative groups, etc.)

Provide a balanced breakfast. Research suggests that balancing protein with carbohydrates (e.g., eggs and toast) is better in helping foster focused activity than simply a carbohydrate breakfast (e.g., pastries and orange juice).

## *Emotional*

Provide positive role models. Study the lives of great people who had difficulty with behavior in school, including Winston Churchill, Florence Nightingale, and Louis Armstrong.

Identify talents, strengths, and abilities. Find out which combination of Howard Gardner's eight intelligences (linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesesthetic, musical, naturalist, interpersonal, intrapersonal) best describes the child.



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