



## ADHD #8 - Parents

Lincoln Stoller, PhD., 2012

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Parents are polarized in their attitudes about ADHD in ways that reflect their segregation into education-oriented camps. On the one hand child-focused education enables kids who would otherwise be labeled as ADHD, on the other hand compulsory education sees ADHD behavior as a biological dysfunction. Parents find themselves committed to the approach advocated by the schools to which they send their kids. They either conform to the options their educational institution provides, fight an uphill battle for individual treatment, or find another approach to education.

An article titled "[ADHD and Parental Behavior](#)", published by Inflexion, a therapeutic support company, reports:

*"ADHD has a huge effect on a parent's emotional state. Studies show a connection between a child's ADHD and parental stress. The more problems a child's ADHD is causing, the greater the stress. Parental depression is also linked to a child's ADHD. Both stress and depression can alter the parents' view. This can actually change how parents behave."*

"[Ritalin: robots on parade](#)" describes the effect of the ADHD diagnosis this way.

*"Recently, doctors have begun to warn parents that the long range outcome for children who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is not good unless they receive treatment. These doctors mention studies showing that boys diagnosed with ADHD will suffer from a higher incidence of criminal behaviour and other problems in young adulthood. To any parent of a young boy who displays hyperactive, impulsive or inattentive tendencies, this is a frightening prediction. It's enough to pressure parents into accepting long term Ritalin for their children."*

In this context it's natural that support groups form to advocate for parents and their interests. These groups exist as much to manage the system as they manage the parents who enlist as members. These groups include Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD), [ADDitude](#), and [Attention Deficit Disorder Association](#). A list of English speaking and international ADHD support groups is listed [here](#).

CHADD is the largest of these groups. The CHADD web site says the organization "has over 16,000 members in 200 local chapters throughout the U.S. Chapters offer support for individuals, parents, teachers, professionals, and others... CHADD was founded in 1987 in response to the frustration and sense of isolation experienced by parents and their children with ADHD."

What it does not say, but what is true, is that CHADD was created with a grant of 3/4 million dollars from Ciba Geigy (now Novartis). As of 2009 over 1/3, approximately 1.5 million dollars, of the organization's annual funding comes from pharmaceutical companies, most of it through donation and the rest through advertising.

These groups advocate both for ADHD individuals and the diagnosis itself. The two are inseparable: benefits only accrue to a group when the group is justified. Articles like "[ADHD Schooling: The Best Education for Your Child](#)," published in 2011, paint a picture of the tragedy and prejudice of ADHD with such histrionics as:

*"(I) sobbed like a baby after I got in my car (and said) 'Why can't she be like everybody else? Is this what her life's going to be like?'"*

My friend Tom Collura, now president of the International Society of Neurofeedback Research, recounts the openly hostile reception he received when he summarized neurofeedback as an alternative to pharmaceutical for CHADD officials. Despite promising research results on the use of neurofeedback in treating ADHD in 2002 (see: [The effects of stimulant therapy, EEG biofeedback, and parenting style on the primary symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.](#)) CHADD [continued to shun neurofeedback](#) until 2009 when [it finally called for increased funding](#) to research this approach.

The Citizen's Committee on International Human Rights calls CHADD a [psycho-pharmaceutical front group](#) quoting the Drug Enforcement Agency as saying "the depth of the financial relationship with the manufacturer was not well known to the public," and quotes a spokesperson for Ciba who stated, "CHADD is essentially a conduit for providing information to the patient population."

## Escape from Schools with ADHD

The 2009 article "[Homeschooling goes boom in America](#)" reports a 74 % increase in number of families teaching their own children from 2003 to 2007. The reasons reported were:

- Lack of safety in the school environment – 88 %
- Religious or moral instruction – 83 %
- Dissatisfaction with academic instruction – 73 %
- Nontraditional educational approach – 65 %
- Children with special needs – 21 %

A 2010 article in [ADDitude Magazine](#) says that [Consumer Reports 2009 survey](#) of 934 parents

*"indicates that the second most effective approach is having a child move to a school better suited to children with ADD/ADHD. Many kids benefited from a fresh start and another chance to succeed academically."*

Susan Raber's [At Home and At School blog](#) reports that each year there are roughly 3,000 new homeschoolers.

*"Although currently only 4% of all school children nationwide are educated at home, the number of primary school kids whose parents choose to forgo traditional education is growing seven times faster than the number of kids enrolling in K-12 every year..."*

*"Until about 10 years ago, home schooling was still largely a rural and suburban phenomenon, said Brian Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute. In the past decade, urban dwellers have turned to it as an educational option."*

Mainstream educators advertize that schools provide the education necessary for social advancement and financial security, but this is being rejected by affluent parents. The [National Center for Education Statistics](#) reports that higher homeschooling rates in households earning \$25,000 to \$75,000 than from those earning less, although this may be more of a reflection of what parents can afford than what they believe. 77% of homeschoolers are white, and 90% come from two-parent households.

In an article titled "[Experiences of ADHD-Labeled Kids Who Switch from Conventional Schooling to Homeschooling or Unschooling](#)" psychologist Peter Grey reports,

*"(1) most ADHD-diagnosed kids do fine without drugs if they are not in a conventional school; (2) the ADHD characteristics don't vanish when the kids leave conventional school, but the characteristics are no longer as big a problem as they were before; and (3) ADHD-diagnosed kids seem to do especially well when they are allowed to take charge of their own education."*

He concludes:

*"Most children who had been medicated for ADHD while in conventional schooling were taken off of the drugs when removed from conventional schooling, and those who were never in conventional schooling were never medicated."*

*"The children's behavior, moods, and learning generally improved when they stopped conventional schooling, not because their ADHD characteristics vanished but because they were now in a situation where they could learn to deal with those characteristics."*

*"Many of these children seem to have a very high need for self-direction in education, and many 'hyper focus' on tasks that interest them."*

## Others Just Take the Drugs

What does the diagnosis of ADHD really provide? It provides a lucrative market for pharmaceuticals, a compliant and better performing student, social acceptance of a flawed education system, and a relieved parent. But who needs the ADHD label? The just adds prejudice so why not get rid of the label and just take the drugs! This is what is happening; people are just taking the drugs.

In a previous newsletter I'd mentioned "[Attention Disorder or Not, Pills to Help in School](#)" in the Oct.

9th, 2012 edition of the New York Times. This article documents the growing trend of prescribing Ritalin simply to enhance school performance without regard for ADHD or any other dysfunction.

Along similar lines see:

["Ritalin improves a child's academic performance, say scientists"](#) which says:

*"Children taking controversial medicine for attention deficit disorder are more successful at school than their non-medicated peers, scientists say... The youngsters taking Ritalin scored higher on academic tests and were three months ahead of their peers at reading and two months ahead in maths."*

See:

["Seeking Straight A's, Parents Push For Pills"](#) which says:

*"Parents want their kids to excel in school, and they've heard about the illegal use of stimulants such as Ritalin and Adderall for 'academic doping.' Hoping to obtain the drugs legally, they pressure pediatricians for them. Some even request the drugs after openly admitting they don't believe their child has ADHD."*

See:

["What's Wrong With 'Doping' to Get A's In High School?"](#) which says:

*"The students using the drugs are not seeking to drown their sorrows, to achieve euphoria, or to ease their comfort level in social situations. They are looking instead to fortify their capacity to concentrate hard on their schoolwork and thereby enable themselves to do well on exams. In other words, they are taking drugs to help them achieve goals that will please the authority figures in their lives—their parents and teachers."*

and

*"With the apparent blessing of the school and the law, then, some children—but not others—are taking performance-enhancing drugs in a competitive environment."*

Then consider:

["Do Ritalin and Adderall Make the Grade?"](#) which says:

*"No longer are companies looking for people who can memorize a bunch of facts in an insomnia-induced state. They are looking for creativity, productivity, and resourcefulness. "*

Which would imply that just about everything being done in conventional education, from the courses to the tests to the fictitious ADHD to the performance enhancing drugs, is a fraud and a failure.

What's a parent to do?

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