

Helping Children with ADHD to Learn the Boring Things such as Spelling, Reading, Times Tables and Bonds

Games are a wonderful way to learn skills such as spelling, reading difficult words, times tables and bonds. Studying can even be made fun through the use of games. Games are, however, not only useful to teach these skills but are also invaluable for the repetition necessary for developing automaticity and, therefore, fluency and speed of these skills. Repetition is BORING and most children are not motivated to learn in this way, particularly those with barriers to their learning. This is especially true of children with ADHD who lose focus easily and who need lots of variety and novelty to keep them stimulated. If something is fun and interesting it will hold their attention for a lot longer than something that they find boring. Learning by rote can be very boring but certain things need to be drilled in order for us to learn them. How we drill these skills, however, does not have to be boring. Learning one's spelling words by seeing them over and over again whilst playing a game such as Snap or Bingo or revising the times table by playing with dice or a pack of cards is definitely not boring. In fact, children will often play these types of games for longer than the adult supervising their homework ever dreamed was possible. Games not only allow for effortless repetition by also enhance the relationship between children and their parents and teachers; something that rote learning can never do.

There are numerous benefits to learning through games. These include:

- ◆ Improving planning and strategizing skills;
- ◆ Developing auditory perceptual skills;
- ◆ Developing visual perceptual skills;
- ◆ Depending on the activity, underlying simultaneous and successive processing skills can also be developed;
- ◆ Curbing impulsivity;
- ◆ Improving accuracy and speed of recognizing / processing information which will improve overall school-based performance;
- ◆ Improved tolerance as work is done co-operatively;
- ◆ Developed sense of turn taking in a social situation;
- ◆ Improved ability to follow instructions;
- ◆ Attention to the importance of rules;
- ◆ Winning and losing graciously;
- ◆ Reduced anxiety;
- ◆ Improved motivation and participation; and
- ◆ Frequent opportunity for a weaker learner to experience some feelings of success and mastery.

Imagine achieving all of the above and seeing an improvement in a child's reading, spelling and mathematical skills. This is possible through the medium of games.

Ideas on how to adapt games that are already available in most homes and/or classrooms in order to make them more educational will be demonstrated during this workshop. These include:

- ◆ Board games (such as Snakes and Ladders or Ludo);
- ◆ Snap;
- ◆ Pick Up Pairs (Pelmanism);
- ◆ Bingo;
- ◆ Dice;
- ◆ Cards;
- ◆ Dominoes;
- ◆ Pick Up Stix;
- ◆ Battleships;
- ◆ Fishing game; and
- ◆ Fortune tellers (also known as chatterboxes)

As well as playing games, it is important to introduce lots of colour and different mediums to enhance children's learning. This will also be discussed during this workshop. Stock up with many different coloured pens, pencils, khokis, wax crayons and magnetic numbers and letters and watch the children enjoy writing on various surfaces such as:

- ◆ Coloured paper;
- ◆ Blackboards;
- ◆ Whiteboards;
- ◆ The fridge (using magnetic numbers and letters or non-permanent pens);
- ◆ Flour in a tupperware container;
- ◆ Sand or salt in a tupperware container;
- ◆ Velvet material; and
- ◆ Their own bodies (especially on their arms or backs).

The end result will be children that are not only learning but having fun whilst doing so and building their self confidence and self-esteem at the same time.

HAVE FUN.

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