

## Helping the Inattentive Child Who is More Likely Socially Neglected

*This supplemental handout provides more details about how parents/caregivers can recognize and help the inattentive or inattentive, anxious child who is at higher risk of being quietly ignored by peers.*

Children with the inattentive subtype of ADHD are more likely to be socially neglected, than rejected (Linea, et al, 2012). Due to this, inattentive children might also not be noticed by adults because they are not causing problems. However, being neglected can result in feelings that peers do not like them and loneliness. This is even more of an issue of these children also have anxiety. Children with ADHD and anxiety were much less likely to have friends than other children (Mrug, et al, 2008). These children can be the silent sufferers, if the adults around them do not pay attention and assist them with their social interactions.

In addition to getting your child the interventions described in the handout regarding effective social functioning interventions for children with ADHD, there are a number of things you can focus on doing to help your inattentive child not be neglected:

- Increasing number of play dates improved social functioning (Mikami, et al, 2010), so focus on helping your child schedule more playdates!!!! You can help your child's success by setting up these playdates to be at fun places which will help them develop fun joint memories.
- Parents' friendships predicted children's friendships (Mikami, et al, 2010), so become friends with the parents of your child's friends and form friendships with people who have children of similar ages
- Parental correction predicted worse social outcomes (Mikami, et al, 2010), so when your child is doing something you do not like, be careful not to correct them in front of their friend – This is hard!!! Notice what they are having difficulty with and make a plan to help them with this after the friend has left. You can intervene at a difficult moment but make it seem unrelated (e.g., is anyone ready for a snack)
- Parents' friendships provide modeling and opportunities for children (Mikami, et al, 2010), so use your friendships to point out and teach positive social skills to your child.
- The sibling relationship provides an opportunity for practicing social interactions with more parental control.

Having a close friend is a better predictor of later functioning than overall acceptance by peers. However, not all friends help. When you are helping your child find a good friend, make sure you are reinforcing friendship with a child who is a positive influence.

## References

Linnea K, Hoza B, Tomb M, & Kaiser N. (2012). Does a positive bias relate to social behavior in children with ADHD? *Behavior Therapy*, 43(4):862-75. doi: 10.1016/j.beth.2012.05.004. Epub 2012 May 14. PMID: 23046787; PMCID: PMC3496785.

Mikami, A. Y., Lerner, M. D., Griggs, M. S., McGrath, A., & Calhoun, C. D. (2010). Parental influence on children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: II. Results of a pilot intervention training parents as friendship coaches for children. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 38(6), 737–749. doi.org/10.1007/s10802-010-9403-4

Mrug, S., Hoza, B., Gerdes, A. C., Hinshaw, S., Arnold, L. E., Hechtman, L., & Pelham, W. E. (2009). Discriminating between children with ADHD and classmates using peer variables. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, 12(4), 372–380. doi.org/10.1177/1087054708314602