



ADHD in Early Childhood Education

Emma Draper



Introduction

- Interdisciplinary Studies major with a concentration in early childhood education



What is the Problem?

What makes my research question interdisciplinary?

- Pulls from disciplines including psychology, psychiatry, sociology and education.

Thesis

How can educators in early childhood education create an understanding of how students with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) function within a classroom setting and how they can be best accommodated within that setting?

What is there to learn?

1. What is the scope of this problem?
2. What is ADHD?
3. What are preexisting classroom management strategies?
4. What changes can be made to schoolwork and lesson plans in particular to help teach neurodivergent students?

Scope of the Problem

Why is this topic valuable for all early childhood educators?

Article by E. Arcia, R. Frank, A. Sánchez-LaCay, and M.C.Fernández “Teacher Understanding of ADHD as Reflected in Attributions and Classroom Strategies”

<i>CTRS-HY</i>	<i>Schoolwork</i>	<i>Learning</i>	<i>Classroom Functioning</i>
• 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard time paying attention • fidgets a lot • moves constantly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [kindergartner] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • likes to pick on other children • yells at the top of his voice when awakened
• 46* • (none above threshold*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaves well (suggested to mother to discontinue medication, then recanted)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • she is not eager to learn* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no problems, doesn't even talk*
• 73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focusing on a task • very short attention span • distracts easily • very mobile in second-grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tested poorly in math, but likes it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doesn't act out
• 50 • (none above threshold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wild, jumping, running, just couldn't sit still, out of his seat; a completely hyper child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is learning well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no, keep him under control
• 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attention problems • sad child, cries if he loses at a game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor self-esteem • learning disability • poor memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no, special education class of 10 students
• 69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can't sit still • when eyes are not on him, he loses it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he is all over the place • low-reading group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no, he's not a mean vicious kid
• 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of attention • unable to focus on task • fidgety • becomes distracted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possibly interferes with his learning, if I see he is lost I go back to his desk and re-explain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no, he's not disruptive
• 55 • (daydreaming = 79)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daydreaming, spacing-out • he's in his own little world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paying attention long enough to really focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sometimes I need to stop teaching to be sure he is on task, but not disruptive
• 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very short attention span • loves to talk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not completing her work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not disruptive, just talkative

ADHD behaviors listed in the DSM-IV include:

- Difficulty paying attention and organizing tasks and activities
- Easily distracted and forgetful
- Often fidgets and struggles to stay in their seat
- Often talks excessively and blurts out answers
- Has difficulty waiting their turn and shows excessive movement at inappropriate times.

CTRS-HY**Schoolwork****Learning****Classroom Functioning**

• 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard time paying attention • fidgets a lot • moves constantly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [kindergartner] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • likes to pick on other children • yells at the top of his voice when awakened
• 46* • (none above threshold*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaves well (suggested to mother to discontinue medication, then recanted)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • she is not eager to learn* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no problems, doesn't even talk*
• 73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focusing on a task • very short attention span • distracts easily • very mobile in second-grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tested poorly in math, but likes it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doesn't act out
• 50 • (none above threshold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wild, jumping, running, just couldn't sit still, out of his seat; a completely hyper child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is learning well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no, keep him under control
• 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attention problems • sad child, cries if he loses at a game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor self-esteem • learning disability • poor memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no, special education class of 10 students
• 69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can't sit still • when eyes are not on him, he loses it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he is all over the place • low-reading group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no, he's not a mean vicious kid
• 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of attention • unable to focus on task • fidgety • becomes distracted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possibly interferes with his learning, if I see he is lost I go back to his desk and re-explain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no, he's not disruptive
• 55 • (daydreaming = 79)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daydreaming, spacing-out • he's in his own little world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paying attention long enough to really focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sometimes I need to stop teaching to be sure he is on task, but not disruptive
• 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very short attention span • loves to talk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not completing her work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not disruptive, just talkative

ADHD behaviors listed in the DSM-IV include:

- Difficulty paying attention and organizing tasks and activities
- Easily distracted and forgetful
- Often fidgets and struggles to stay in their seat
- Often talks excessively and blurts out answers
- Has difficulty waiting their turn and shows excessive movement at inappropriate times.

Analysis

Why don't teachers recognize these behaviors as ADHD?

- 4 out of 21 reference ADHD, 2 reference hyperactivity
- 2 teachers said their student with ADHD did not have ADHD because they were not disruptive
- There were a variety of reasons why teachers did not label their students as having ADHD

What's left?

- How can teachers best work to understand ADHD in the classroom?
- Continuing to learn about classroom management strategies
- How to rework lesson plans to support neurodivergent students

Sources

Arcia, Emily, et al. "Teacher understanding of ADHD as reflected in attributions and classroom strategies." *Journal of attention disorders* 4.2 (2000): 91-101.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV-TR (Text Revision). American Psychiatric Association, 2000.