

# INSIST ON HELP FOR YOUR CHILD

Living with a child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or learning disability 24/7 is difficult.

I know: I had one before there even was a name for it. He is now full-grown, doing well, living in California. He has two young sons and I wonder if he will be facing the same work and worry in the future, as the problem runs in families.

ADHD didn't used to be as prevalent, or at least it wasn't identified. In the 1970s, special education laws were created delineating 13 special education categories. Many parents do not want the stigma of admitting their child into special education classes, which can contain myriad problems.

Parents may even refuse to sign the evaluation consent forms for special services at school, fearing the child or his family would appear at fault or be stigmatized, that it signals something is wrong with the child. None of these is necessarily the case.

These feelings fostered the mainstreaming movement.

But the symptoms are the same: a restless, noisy, unfocused child. A child who is constantly "acting



**Erland**

out," to the annoyance of those around him, including parents, those in the school environment or in the neighborhood.

You may feel like a bad parent, unable to control these unacceptable behaviors. I knew it wasn't me, as I had two other well-mannered children living in the same household.

Pecking order reigns. Children with ADHD difficulties are spotted by their peers and often excluded from social events like birthday parties. Deep emotional scarring can result. This should be avoided while the child is young, so consider your options today, or find a solution like I did.

Much can be done today that was not available years ago. Today, the social stigma can be prevented by obtaining, and insisting upon, services or obtaining outside help in addition to keeping the child programmed into extracurricular activities, like civic volunteering, music and sports.

There are many outside resources and solutions (see [http://](http://www.WrightsLaw.com)

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The first step is to request a psychological-educational evaluation, like the subtests of the Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Cognitive Skills Battery and Achievement. They used to be routine practice, but are seldom administered today because of the in-depth workload. These tests give a complete picture of the problem.

Then comes an individual educational plan for the school team to review the test scores and make recommendations for the child's needs, program and goals. If parents are not satisfied, they can request an outside evaluation through a private source, which the school district pays for.

You do not have to place your child in special education services, but up-front testing information will give you an idea of how far behind your child is in reading and math, and which cognitive skills areas are weak and need improvement.

Understanding the playing field is your best ally.

Jan Kuyper Erland is a consultant and writer. Her Website is <http://www.memspan.com>. She lives in Lawrence.

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## Opinion