

Initial Discussions with school

Before beginning a medication trial, we suggest you discuss the following issues with your school. It is much easier to sort these issues out at this time.

Monitoring the effects.

Because the medication will wear off while your child is at school, you need good quality observation data from the teacher and others working with your child in order to know whether the medication is effective. Let them know how long the trial will be for.

Duration of effect.

Make sure your teacher knows that you want feedback from them ONLY during the time that the medication is working. If it wears off during the school day, make a note of that time. However, the information about how well the medication works should only come from observations of when it is working.

Support for your child

This is the most important discussion. Medication alone is not going to help your child very much. If the medication does help, this is only the beginning. By helping with your child's self control, the medication creates a 'window of opportunity' to help your child that may not have been possible otherwise.

There is a danger that if the problem settles down with the medication, everybody at school may 'back off' on the belief that the problem is fixed. For this reason, there should be a plan of how your child is going to be helped if the medication does work.

Make sure the school understands this, and get their commitment to how they will help your child if the medication is effective. In addition to schoolwork, this can include, social skills, behaviour, physical skills and any other area where your child could benefit from developmental assistance. Have this discussion, and get their agreement BEFORE you start the medication trial.

Stigma.

It is very important that your child is not stigmatized because of their medication. In most cases they will not be taking it at the school, so as few people who know about it the better. We suggest you make your concerns very clear. Some parents go so far as to indicate that if the teacher says anything in public (in front of the other children), or the other children are teasing the child about the medication, they will stop using it (because the consequences of stigma may be worse than the benefits of the medication). You should negotiate with the school specifically:

Continued monitoring.

Even before the trial, get the school's agreement that if you decide to continue the medication, they will assist in monitoring it for the entire time you choose to use the medication.

In summary

Initial Trial

Will they take the time to provide you with this information?

Duration of effect.

Do they understand the difference between a trial (to find out) and treatment?

If the medication works

What will the school do for your child if the medication is successful?

Potential Stigma

- Who will know about the medication?
- What you will do if there is any stigma from the teaching staff.
- What you will do if the other children find out and tease your child.

Continued support

Do they agree to continued communication and support so that you can get the best out of the opportunity created by the medication?

This Document has been written for general information purposes only. It is not intended to be used in individual circumstances without the guidance and assistance of a professional.