

POINTERS FOR PARENTS

Choosing Appropriate Toys for Children with ADHD

by Dr. Harry Verby

(NAPSA)—Choosing just the right toy for any child can be difficult. But the challenge is magnified if you are looking for the perfect gift to give one of the 4.4 million children affected by attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Children who have ADHD may have special play needs, so I urge parents of my young patients to buy toys that help their children focus, gain self-confidence and learn to socialize and interact appropriately with other children. The following suggestions may be helpful:

- **LEGOS/Building Blocks:** Children with ADHD often have trouble completing lengthy tasks because they become frustrated and discouraged. LEGOS and building blocks are hands-on toys that are simple to use and have only a few pieces so children can create a single structure in a relatively short period of time, which may help build their confidence.

- **Chapter Books:** Books with short chapters help your child focus and stay attentive. Read aloud one or more chapters each night or have your child read to you.

- **Dress Up:** All children, but especially kids with ADHD, can benefit from dramatic play and artistic expression, which allow



It's important to consider a child's strengths when choosing toys.

them to be creative and express feelings in a fun and nonjudgmental environment. So give them a box of costumes, puppets or a playhouse. Watching a play is a great way for family members to connect with a child and provide lasting memories. It is important to also keep in mind that people with ADHD are often intelligent, friendly, creative and determined. These strengths should be encouraged from an early age.

- **Easel and Paint Set or Play-Doh:** Art supplies such as paint and clay give children with ADHD an opportunity to express themselves in a nonverbal way. Art supplies also help children gain self-confidence since there is no

right or wrong way to use them.

- **Floor Puzzle:** Giving children something simple to do, such as a floor puzzle, helps build confidence. Choose a recognizable pattern or shape that won't intimidate them. Ideas include the solar system and the alphabet.

- **Swimming, Skating, Martial Arts or Music Lessons:** Physical activity is encouraged for children who have ADHD. Sign them up for lessons in a structured sport or hobby, which can provide a valuable outlet for all their energy.

There is no "cure" for ADHD, but there are effective ways to manage this condition once diagnosed. Medication may be part of a treatment plan designed to control your child's ADHD symptoms. Currently, stimulant medications such as Adderall XR are considered a first-line treatment option for ADHD. The active ingredients in these medications have been used medically for nearly 70 years.

To learn more, visit www.adderallxr.com

Dr. Harry Verby is the medical director of the Behavioral Medical Clinic in San Mateo, Calif., and specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of attention-deficit disorder and related co-morbid conditions in children, adolescents and adults.

Important Safety Information: Adderall XR was generally well tolerated in clinical studies. The most common side effects in studies included: *children*—decreased appetite, difficulty falling asleep, stomachache, and emotional lability; *adolescents*—loss of appetite, difficulty falling asleep, stomachache, and weight loss; *adults*—dry mouth, loss of appetite, difficulty falling asleep, headache, and weight loss.

Adderall XR may not be right for everyone. Patients should speak with their doctor if they have a history of high blood pressure or any heart conditions, glaucoma, thyroid problems, emotional instability, mental illness, or a known allergy to this type of medication. Abuse of amphetamine may lead to dependence. Misuse of amphetamine may cause sudden death and serious cardiovascular adverse events. These events have also been reported rarely with amphetamine use.

If you are currently taking or have recently taken a type of antidepressant called a MAO inhibitor or have a pre-existing structural heart abnormality, you should not take Adderall XR. There is a potential for worsening of motion or verbal tics and Tourette's syndrome. A patient should report any new psychological symptoms to his or her physician.

For Full Prescribing Information, please visit www.adderallxr.com or call (800) 828-2088. For more information, consult your physician.