

Hyperactive Kids from an Ayurvedic Perspective



With this article Leela Mata Foundation for Enlightenment wants to provide insights into the serious situation of many hyperactive children from the viewpoint of Ayurveda.

Leela Mata gives various valuable suggestions how the situation of those kids can be substantially improved. We hope you make use of this ayurvedic perspective and encourage you to give us a feedback about your experiences following Leela Mata's suggestions.

For feedback or questions, please write to: leela@leelamata.com

How can the system of Ayurveda be of help for families with hyperactive kids?

This question was raised by Dr. med. Regina Kunze, during an introductory lesson, given by Leela Mata in Bad Neustadt-Salz, Germany, in April 2003.

Dr. Regina presented the situation of hyperactive kids who were sent far away from their families, to a special facility, where they are kept with little hope for themselves and their family. Then she asked what we could do about this. Could those children ever be normal again? Leela Mata replied:

These children are very special. It is sad that we do not understand them, but we can be grateful that there is great hope and there are practical methods for helping and healing this situation. Hyperactive kids need a lot of love and care. Separating them from the family cannot help, but rather creates further trauma to both, the child and the parents.

In these children the mobile quality of Vata (air and ether elements) is aggravated and therefore the children reflect this in their behaviour of aggressiveness, for example disrupting the classroom. We say they cannot be quiet, they have too much energy! But what if we can help them to channel those energies in a constructive way, to transform this energy into creativity?! Different aspects have to be considered here:

The symptoms of aggravated Vata are collapse, spasms, piercing pains, numbness, depression, breaking, striking and biting pain, constipation, cracking of the joints, contraction, retention of waste materials in the body, excitability, thirst, trembling, roughness of the skin, porosity of bones, dehydration, agitated movements, stiffness, astringent taste in the mouth, dark or reddish brown discoloration. These are, according to Ashtanga Hridayam, the expressions of the drying, mobile and disruptive qualities of the wind. When Vata is low it causes lassitude of limbs, deficiency of speech and enthusiasm, confusion of perception as well as increase in phlegm and the production of toxins. Now one may begin to understand why such children would be aggressive and disruptive in the classroom.

In a balanced state Vata gives mental and physical balance, serenity, adaptability, comprehension, joy, clear perception and the ability to communicate and form healthy relationships. Now, how can we help our beloved children to return to this healthy state and not condemn them to some kind of helpless and abnormal existence?

(1) The simplest and very effective method is warm oil massages. After a warm bath, the child should be massaged with warm sesame oil. This practise should be done with love and attention to the sound of calm, peaceful and enchanting music. Before going to bed warm almond or Bramhi (gotu-kola) oil should be applied to the head, navel, and soles of the feet. A gentle foot massage will be very relaxing and beneficial. These actions will calm, settle, and soothe the erratic movements of Vata. Also, the nervous system will be nourished and strengthened.

(2) Essential oils, such as sandalwood, are helpful in promoting calmness and peace. Basil, myrrh, frankincense, sage or mint will clear the channels and enhance perception. Incense like rose, sandalwood and jasmine can be used to cleanse the aura and purify the emotions.

(3) Color can be an important therapy for hyperactivity. Dark colors, like blacks, greys and browns should be avoided, as they tend to be depressive. Pastel colors, as yellows and oranges are best as they are calming to the nervous system and evoke healing emotions. The use of flowers can also be enriching to the spirit, promoting tenderness, love and compassion.

(4) Foods should be warm, moistening and nourishing. No junk food, stale food or microwaved food, as these are depleted of Prana or life energy. No dry, rough or cold foods, as these aggravate like qualities of Vata. Spices such as fresh ginger, cinnamon, cardamon, coriander, tumeric, cumin and basil are good as they help to regulate metabolism and improve digestion.

(5) Reduce TV watching and definitely no violent or horrifying movies. These can disrupt the vital sheath of the body. Computer games should also be limited. Encourage creative activities.

(6) Vata children should be kept in close contact with the earth, avoiding too much travelling in fast speeding vehicles and flying. The earth energy is very supportive and grounding the Vata people.

(7) Soothing sounds are very comforting and relaxing. Loud noise or heavy music disturb the nervous system and promotes aggression.

(8) The environment must be calm and peaceful. The use of flowers in the environment can be enriching to the spirit, promoting tenderness, love and compassion.

(9) Warm milk, with a little nutmeg, is a mild sedative and brings relaxation and sound sleep when taken at bed time.

(10) It is important to get children habituated to a healthy routine. "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise" is not only a good saying but is a most important practice. Yoga and meditation should have a prominent place in one's daily routine. Sowing the seeds of yoga and meditation at an early age will give life long benefits. By learning to harness the body, mind and breath even in playful ways can bring about drastic changes in the personality. Meditation can be made appealing through nature walks or lying on the ground and observing the moving patterns of the clouds. The meditation CD for children "Journey into the elements", available from New Age Kids Inc., is an excellent exercise before falling asleep.

Drugs disrupt and suppress the life force and should be used only when inevitably necessary. Ayurvedic preparations, like Chavanprash (which is a powerful tonic rich in Vitamin C), Bramha Rasayan prepared with Bramhi (gotu-kola), Ashwagandha ghee, Bala ghee, Calamus ghee and just plain ghee are wonderfully nourishing substances that could be used to awaken vitality and clarity in body and mind. Remember, the child is a perfect soul expressing itself through the body-mind equipment. All we are trying to do in Ayurveda is to make the body-mind equipment healthy, so that the spirit can express its true nature - love, peace, truth, joy and creativity - expressed in yoga as Sat Chid Ananda, absolute existence, knowledge and bliss. May the blessing of God and Guru empower your righteous efforts.

Om Shanti
Leela Mata

