

The brain, thinking, and behavior in autism: attention

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Abstract

The focus of this article is on attentional issues in children with autism. There are two issues discussed: (1) attention and mental energy, and (2) attention and processing of information. In the mental energy section, issues presented concern impact sleep/wake cycle and dietary sensitivities on attention. In the processing of information section, attention is broken down into areas which include: selective/focused; shifting; working; sustained, and joint. Case examples are provided in order to illustrate the concepts presented and how they relate to children with autism. Suggestions are made with regard to assessment of attentional issues. Discussion of the development of a transdisciplinary team approach to evaluate and address attentional issues is included. Recommendations are made regarding how to collect baseline data in order to determine sleep and eating patterns. There are also interventions that may be used in the home and in the school setting.

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