

More than medication

Are you looking for something more than medication to help improve an ADHD child's behavior? The Center for Children and Families (CCF) offers an award-winning comprehensive treatment program for children's behavioral, emotional and learning problems. Designed for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and related problems, this program incorporates a set of evidence-based treatments into an eight-week therapeutic summer day camp. The Summer Treatment Program (STP) has a proven track record of results for thousands of children and families. The program runs from late June through mid-August, weekdays from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Based on its success, the STP has been featured on national television news and in national magazines. The STP has also been used in clinical trials conducted under the auspices of the National Institute of Mental Health and has been named a Model Program in child and family mental health by the divisions of Child Clinical Psychology and Children, Youth and Families of the American Psychological Association.

Summer Treatment Program

The program provides treatment tailored to each child's behavioral, emotional, and learning difficulties. In the context of a camp-like setting with a broad treatment focus, both group and individually designed treatment plans are implemented by paraprofessionals under the supervision of experienced senior staff members.

Children are placed in groups of 12 with children of similar age and five clinical staff members. These groups stay together throughout the day so that children receive intensive experience in functioning as a group and in making friends. Each group spends two hours daily in classrooms conducted by special educators. These specialists carry out behavior modification programs designed to treat children's problems in a classroom context. Individualized and computer-assisted instruction is also provided. The remainder of each day consists of recreational group activities. During these periods, which include age-appropriate sports and activities, an integrated variety of treatment components are implemented.

Desired outcomes

We use a social learning approach to focus on achieving the following goals:

- Developing the child's problem-solving and social skills, and helping the child gain the social awareness necessary to enable him or her to get along better with other children
- Improving the child's learning skills and academic performance
- Developing the child's abilities to follow through with instructions, complete tasks that he or she commonly fails to finish, and comply with adults' requests
- Improving the child's self-esteem by developing competencies in areas necessary for daily life, such as interpersonal, recreational, academic, and other task-related areas
- Teaching parents how to develop, reinforce, and maintain these positive changes
- Evaluating, if appropriate, the effects of medication on the child's academic and social functioning in a natural setting

Treatment includes individually adapted reward and response-cost programs, and strategies for using time-out and a daily feedback system. The CCF staff continuously monitors treatment plans and strategies and modifies them as necessary. A final report, which includes detailed information regarding the effects of these interventions and recommendations for future treatment, is sent to parents and referring professionals at the end of the program. While the STP is highly structured and emphasizes treatment, most children enjoy the program tremendously.

Parenting strategies groups

In addition to the child's involvement, parents participate in evening meetings. While covering basic information on ADHD and its treatment, these groups enable parents to cope more effectively with their children's behavior and help their children improve. The sessions help parents work with their children to change unacceptable behavior at home, reduce noncompliant and disruptive behaviors, improve homework task skills, and improve relationships with parents and siblings. The goal of the parent sessions is to extend the gains made in the STP to the child's natural environment and to ensure that these gains continue once the STP has ended.

What parents and professionals say about the Summer Treatment Program...

"The STP is the best treatment program in the world. You know the old saying, 'imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.' I modeled my own program on the STP."

*James M. Swanson, Ph.D.,
Director, Child Development Center
and Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry,
University of California at Irvine*

"The STP is a remarkable program – all encompassing, thorough, and incredibly integrative – that targets those skills and problems most in need of remediation in youngsters with ADHD. Staff, families, and children themselves are quite taken with the strides that are made in the eight-week period – all in all an impressive behavioral program that I heartily endorse."

*Stephen P. Himsbaw, Ph.D.,
Professor of Psychology,
University of California, Berkeley*

"The greatest thing about the Summer Treatment Program, and the greatest thing for us to see, is how happy and enthusiastic he is coming here. He looks forward to it, he is eager, he plays hard, he has fun, he learns, he succeeds, he feels better. We can see his growth and we see him feeling better about who he is."

Mother of an 8-year-old boy

"The Summer Treatment Program is a very positive experience for kids, but it is also a positive experience for the family because you come and get positive reinforcement from the counselors, from the supervisors, and the child is not beaten down every day by his peers. It just goes across all the lines of your life, from family and home to being out socially."

Mother of a 10-year-old boy

"I feel like I'm seeing light at the end of the tunnel for the very first time. It's a long tunnel but no longer a dark one."

Mother of a 7-year-old boy

"It was a real turning point – the best summer of our family's life!"

Father of an 8-year-old boy

The Children's Summer Treatment Program



*State-of-the-art treatment for
children with Attention
Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
and other behavioral disorders*

Center for 
Children & Families

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Buffalo, NY 14214
<http://wings.buffalo.edu/adhd> • (716) 829-2244

Medication evaluation

If medically indicated, the CCF staff will evaluate the effectiveness of a child's medication. We conduct comprehensive and carefully controlled evaluations that cover the major areas of the child's functioning which could be affected by medication treatment, such as social behavior, academic performance and productivity, and self-concept. Evaluation during the STP allows us to determine the effectiveness of combining medication with other forms of treatment. Following assessment, we'll provide the referring physician and parents with a report detailing the child's response to medication and we'll make specific recommendations regarding the possible usefulness of psychoactive medication for continued treatment.

Eligible children

Children ages 5 to 15 are eligible to participate in the program, with enrollment limited to those who meet certain criteria. Our program staff will perform an initial screening and psychological testing to determine a child's eligibility, but recent testing from other sources may be acceptable in some cases. Typically, we evaluate children with ADHD, oppositional disorders, aggression, learning problems, or children with mixed behavior and learning problems. Referrals can be made by school personnel, mental health professionals, physicians or parents.



Program staff

The program is implemented by highly-trained undergraduate paraprofessional therapists, students pursuing advanced degrees in psychology, and educational specialists. Supervision and oversight are carried out by highly experienced staff members who have been conducting treatment programs for ADHD children for more than 20 years. Doctoral-level psychologists supervise the psychosocial and behavioral aspects of the program, while developmental pediatricians and/or child psychiatrists supervise the medical aspects of the program. In general, there are five staff members for every group of 12 children. In the classroom, children are supervised by a teacher and a developmental aide.



Program evaluation and investigation

The CCF is committed to learning about the underlying causes and nature of behavioral problems affecting children in order to provide the best clinical care. The STP uses only treatments that have been well-documented and shown to be effective through research. However, our program staff continues to carefully evaluate treatment effectiveness, both at the individual level and for the program as a whole. Our staff gathers data using a variety of techniques, including observational, psychometric, and neuropsychological rating measures. We then evaluate our findings to determine individual and group responses to treatments.

To help further the understanding of behavioral problems in children, we gather information from the children enrolled in the program and their families. Our staff may ask the children to participate in a variety of programs that measure different aspects of learning, such as attention, memory, and interaction during competitive task situations.

In addition, parents may be asked to complete rating scales or be observed in controlled settings that measure different aspects of family functioning thought to be important in understanding their child's problems. Prior to their child's participation, we ask parents to sign consent forms that describe each project. Please be assured that we maintain strict confidentiality.



STP effectiveness

The STP has been continuously evolving since 1980 as a clinical research, treatment, and training program. Many of the instruments and techniques employed in the program have been shown to be reliable and effective through more than 100 studies conducted in the STP.

The immediate response to the STP was evaluated in a large group of ADHD children over a period of five years.* Parent and staff ratings of effectiveness were uniformly positive. More than 95% of parents responded that both they and their children had benefited from the STP and said they would send their children to the program again if given the opportunity. A full 99% of the parents said they would recommend the program to other parents, and 96% said that their children not only improved but also liked the STP. These positive evaluations undoubtedly contribute to the very low dropout rate (only 3%) that the STP averaged over the five-year period.

Parents who have tried other treatment programs have told us that the STP is unique in the positive impact it has on their children, themselves, and their families. These responses along with countless success stories demonstrate an impressive record for dealing with a disorder that has typically been unyielding to treatment.

The STP has been replicated at many sites around North America, in both community and academic settings. All sites have reported the same positive clinical results and parental satisfaction that have characterized our program. The STP has been a component of psychosocial treatment for children in clinical prevention trials funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute for Drug Abuse, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, with similar positive results.

FeES

Fees for the STP are established in recognition of the cost of offering such a service. Typically, parents are responsible for the cost of the STP. Sometimes research grants underwrite partially or entirely the cost of the STP. Health insurance plans may cover portions of the cost of this program; however, payment levels vary among plans. During the application and screening process, each parent has the opportunity to meet with a representative from the Center for Children and Families, who can answer questions concerning STP fees.

How to apply

To learn the dates of the upcoming program and to initiate the application and screening process, interested parents or professionals should call the Center for Children and Families at **(716) 829-2244** or visit our Web site at **<http://wings.buffalo.edu/adhd>**. Enrollment is limited, and parents are encouraged to apply as early as possible.



* Pelham, W.E., & Hoza, B. (1996). Intensive treatment: A summer treatment program for children with ADHD. In E. Hibbs & P. Jensen (Eds.), *Psychosocial treatments for child and adolescent disorders: Empirically based strategies for clinical practice* (pp. 311-340). New York: APA Press.