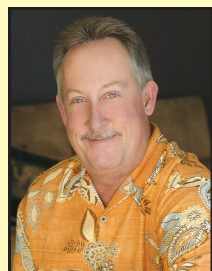


# KIDS FIRST



## Readin', Ritin', and Ritalin

Part I

It has been called by many as "Teacher's Little Helper." I'm referring to the popular drug

Ritalin which is widely prescribed to "treat" the condition ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), commonly referred to as simply "hyperactivity."

The number of children given this drug has risen by hundreds of percent in the last ten years or so, much to the delight of the shareholders of Ciba-Geigy, the drug's manufacturer. The US and Canada are leading the parade in Ritalin use, while European countries are far down the list. Maybe children across the ocean are different? Could it be marketing? Please read on.

It seems as if every child today is being labelled with ADHD. It seems to be a catch-all name given to kids who don't fit into someone's definition of how a child "should" behave. The criteria used to make this diagnosis fits almost every child encountered in

practice. According to Dr. Peter Breggin in his book *The War on Children*, ADHD tends to be a middle class diagnosis. So let's look at the factors that would label a child as having ADHD;

1. Often fidgets and squirms in his/her seat.
2. Has difficulty remaining seated when required.
3. Is easily distracted.
4. Often blurts out answers to questions before they have been completed.
5. Has difficulty awaiting his/her turn during games.
6. Has difficulty following instructions.
7. Jumps from one thing to another.
8. Often talks excessively.
9. Interrupts others.
10. Often loses things.
11. Does not seem to listen.
12. Has difficulty playing quietly.

If your child displays at least 8 of these criteria, he is a candidate for the ADHD diagnosis. (All of a sudden I'm very concerned about myself and most of my friends and colleagues!). These criteria sound like a normal, healthy, exuberant, bored, child. Many authorities feel that these children are actually quite gifted and are very right-brained, i.e., creative. These children function with two speeds;

hyperdrive and collapse. There is no in-between. They are also highly visual and non-sequential processors. In other words, they learn by pictures in a non-traditional manner.

These children, many feel, are "scanners" they scan life and the world around them in the same manner as they scan a computer screen. Some authorities also feel that they are a product of our fast-paced, overstimulated culture. To that end, I must applaud Waldorf schools and their founder, Rudolf Steiner, who frown on the use of computers in their teaching methods.

To make my point clearer, allow me to ask you the question, "what if Einstein and Edison were on Ritalin?" If they were born today, they would surely have been labelled ADHD; both had been expelled from school for disruptive behaviour.

Most parents do not realize that there are no laboratory tests for ADHD; that this "diagnosis" is made purely on observation and is most often initiated by a teacher who is having difficulty controlling the behaviour of a certain child. I am emphatic when I stress that this is NOT an attack on teachers; rather it is an observation. It is interesting to note that "good" teachers have very few ADHD children in their class while others have quite a few. These children need a different teaching method,

which is difficult as schools demand obedience and conformity in most cases.

Rather than use the term ADHD, Dr. Breggin, in his studies on this phenomenon, called it DADD - Dad Attention Deficit Disorder. He feels that a lack of parental attention and lack of discipline very often leads to the diagnosis of ADHD. I agree.

Other health professionals feel ADHD is caused by a lack of certain minerals and neurochemicals in the body. The late Dr. Robert Mendelson, M.D., one of the most respected pediatricians in North America, and a self-proclaimed medical "heretic" once told me that it is our perception which may be at fault. "Is it the child who is hyperactive," he asked, "or is it that the average earthing is no longer excited about life?" Interesting thought!

**Be sure to watch for Part II on "Readin', Ritin', and Ritalin" in 2 weeks, and come to our lecture at 7pm on Nov. 8th at Minerva's**

If you need additional information, please call me personally at 605-665-8228 and visit my website: [www.plathwellness.com](http://www.plathwellness.com)

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## Opt-Out

From Page 1

"I think the board will plan to have one or two board members at each of these forums in a hope to answer all the questions we can," he said. "We have to listen to the public and give them as much information as we can."

Williams said Monday's work session will be held to go through the data and decided on a tentative amount and length of a possible opt-out. He added that one option board members and the administration are currently considering is a 1-2 year opt-out.

"What we are talking about doing is going for a 1-2 year opt-out for about \$1.4 million per year," he said. "In addition, we would be using \$2.5 million from the insurance reserve fund. By doing that, we can reinstate the librarian assistants and keep sports intact, and at the end of two years, come out with a small general fund balance reserve giv-

ing us the opportunity to reevaluate where we are at. The librarians and middle school sports are all that would be reinstated from the cuts that were made this year."

According to data presented by Bietz at the Oct. 10 school board meeting, currently, the

per-student allocation from the state is set at \$4,389.95. The total revenue and other sources in the general fund for the current fiscal year is \$14,742,264, with expenditures projected at \$16,526,649. That would force the district to use \$1,784,385 of the general fund reserve, leaving a

balance of \$2,244,916. If the projections stay true through the next two years with no additional cuts or opt-out passage, the district would not have a fund balance with which to operate the district after fiscal year 2013.

Williams said it will be up to the public to decide if they want

to keep the district operating at the level it is at now by supporting the potential opt-out, or if they would still demand further cuts by the district.

"We hope the public does come out on Monday and listen to the process and numbers, listens to the fact that we really are

trying to find a way to lessen the impact on the taxpayers, yet keep the district functioning at the current level," he said.

Bietz said financial documents that will be discussed at the meeting are available [www.ysd.k12.sd.us](http://www.ysd.k12.sd.us).

## Gaukel

From Page 1

championship, but to watch Jade and Rosie in that competition, it looked like they were riding on a cloud, and it brought tears to my eyes," Heidi said. "It was perfect."

It was a long trail to the cloud, however.

Jade has been riding horses for at least 14 years, and that time had been spent with Smokey. She wasn't terribly excited about retiring her old friend and getting to know a new horse.

"At first, it was so hard for me to even imagine going to a different horse because I had been with Smokey since the beginning," Jade said. "I grew up riding her, and she was more of a best friend than anything. I couldn't imagine rebuilding a relationship like that."

"But it was time for my old horse to retire," she continued. "We had won just about everything that we could (in local and state 4-H competitions). As a rider, it's more difficult to go to a younger horse, and so it was the next step I needed to take to keep progressing in my riding and learning new things. Smokey and I had done everything we could do together."

This past summer, Jade began making the trip from her family's farm outside of Yankton to train five days a week with a coach in Norfolk, Neb.

"(My coach, Carol Nielsen) was a big deal to me," Jade said. "She really helped me and pushed me along to get more confident and try bigger shows."

Jade said that she and Rosie are both strong-headed, and it took time for them to figure out each other's ways.

"In the last two months of training, things clicked and came together nicely," she stated. "We became a team, and not just a horse and a rider."

Still, Jade had been skeptical of how well Rosie would perform at such a large competition.

"But she was so good," she said. "Rosie was listening to me the whole time and concentrating on what I was saying."

Now Jade is excited to begin training in earnest again next summer and attempting to become a champion at next year's Ak-Sar-Ben event.

Her coach is encouraging her to take up reining, which is an event designed to show the athletic ability of a horse.

Eventually, Jade said she would like to compete at the collegiate level.

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