

When We

Fail

Our Children

Introduction by Sam Goldstein, Ph.D.

THOMAS EDISON WROTE, “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.” The articles in this issue of *Attention!*® were written with the goal of helping parents and professionals recognize and successfully act upon the often well-meant mistakes made in our efforts to help children with AD/HD. We fail our children not when we make these mistakes but when—for whatever reasons—we are unwilling, unable or incapable of recognizing and learning from them.

We fail our children when, as Edison wrote, we give up. Failure is to rigidly adhere to erroneous beliefs; to resist accessing new knowledge as it becomes available; and to allow bias and misperception to guide our behavior as parents and professionals. To some extent we are all guilty of failing our children with AD/HD. For example, how many times have we admonished them to “try harder,” failing to recognize that their struggles are not the result of lack of effort but lack of ability?

What is your mindset about failure and mistakes as a parent raising a child with AD/HD? Or as a teacher educating such a child? Or as a professional dedicated to providing medical and mental health services? How much of what you do each day is guided by belief, by knowledge, by experience or by frustration during difficult times? Parenting or, for that matter, even clinical practice, need not be solely guided by double-blind, placebo controlled research. However, when we

stray from parenting and professional activities guided by knowledge and tempered through our hearts, we open the door to fail our children. We open the door for our actions to be guided by frustration, bias or misperception.

Even more importantly, when our pride or ego prevents us from recognizing these failures, understanding and accepting our mistakes and learning from them, we do our children with AD/HD a great disservice. It is our hope that as you read the articles in this issue of *Attention!*®, you recognize some of your mistakes but more importantly use this information to guide your future behavior to raise happy, healthy, resilient children with AD/HD. ■

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