

ADHD: Adults' fear of frightened children*

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SUMMARY: Adults fear frightened children

KEY WORDS: ADHD, fear, school phobia, educational psychology, war.

In the early 1960s I worked as an educational psychologist in Sydney, Australia. My title was Specialist Counsellor for Emotionally Disturbed Children. If school principals were concerned about a particular child they would ask me to visit the school. I didn't have an office. I kept my files and my tests in the boot of my car. I interviewed the teachers and children at school and I often saw families in their own homes. My first visit to a child's home may have been arranged through a phone call but after that I often just dropped in because I happened to be passing. This may have been convenient for me but it also provided me with an understanding of the family that formal meetings in an office or an arranged meeting in the child's home could never have given. There was a nine-year-old boy, Peter, who persistently refused to go to school. He would set off for school each morning only to get as far as the school gates when he would panic and flee home. Nowadays he would be given a diagnosis of school phobia but, as I discovered, school had very little to do with his fear. It was not until I went to his home that I found that there were more people in the family than Peter and his parents. In the back bedroom was Peter's aged grandmother. She seemed to be very fond of Peter and he of her. I

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