

# The Challenge of the Indigo Children

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## **The Issue**

Those involved with children – parents, teachers, carers, social workers – have increasingly noted that today's children are different. This is not just the simple generational changes we have all witnessed and dismissed as a 'kids these days....' phenomenon. What has been noticed is that children often display a new and unusual set of psychological attributes and patterns of behaviour which have not been documented before.

### **A Task**

Think about the children you work with. Are there individuals in your class(es) who display (some of) these characteristics, and have been doing so for a long time?

- much less likely than the other children in class to pay attention to school work
- make seemingly inexplicable mistakes.
- appear to have much more difficulty sustaining concentration when engaged in practical or play activities.
- seem unable to listen even when spoken to directly.
- do not complete tasks which they have been given.
- unable to get hold of themselves and the set task sufficiently to organize their thoughts and plan a reasonable course of action, yet they do understand what is expected of them when questioned.
- actively avoid and clearly dislike tasks and activities that demand sustained concentration and thought.
- regularly manage to lose things – school items such as pens, pencils, but also precious personal things like toys.
- easily distracted, turning towards movement and noise. 'Over-alert'.
- forget routine tasks.
- appear restless in all situations.
- show a clear pattern of wandering around the room when the task demands that they are seated.
- take any opportunity for running around or climbing.
- do not engage in quiet play.
- seem persistently active, with little need for rest periods.
- say things which are not thought out; talk for the sake of it.
- raise hands and blurt out answers before the question is finished, and the real answer can be known.
- have real problems turn-taking.
- have weak social skills; unable to join conversations and play other than by barging in.

If your answer is yes, and you can think of children who display several or many of these attributes, it is likely that you are dealing with Indigo Children.

## **The System's Answer**

Because non-conformists are a problem in organisations, institutions and systems such as state schools, children who display such behaviours are, at best, labelled as being a nuisance, uncooperative, hyperactive, antisocial, negative, out of control. But increasingly the worst-case scenario prevails and they are labelled as having ADD (Attention Deficiency Disorder) or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder). The major answer to such behaviour by the authorities (educational, social and medical) is to prescribe psychotropic drugs based on amphetamines: Ritalin (Methylphenidate), Dexedrine (Dexamphetamine), Cylert, Tofranil, Norpamin, Prozac, Paxil and so on.

There has been a significant increase in the diagnosis of ADD/ADHD and subsequent prescription of Ritalin etc. in the past 20 years, as the following statistics indicate.

USA : In 1990 900,000 children were on Ritalin. In 2000 5 million children were on Ritalin

AUSTRALIA: 1 in every 36 boys in New South Wales, Australia takes Ritalin

UK: In 1992 2,000 prescriptions for Ritalin were written. In 2001 254,000 Ritalin prescriptions.

The system has tried to ascribe the increase in ADD/ADHD to a range of causes, from poor parenting (the hippie generation's kids), to inadequate diet (increased consumption of junk food), to environmental issues (TV/Computer abuse), to changes in parts of the brain that control impulses and concentration, and which are genetic. However, what actually seems to be happening is that we are in the middle of a visible stage of human evolution, with new generations moving onto another plane of which the establishment is completely unaware and unable to cope with.

### **Why 'Indigo' Children?**

In 1982, Nancy Ann Tappe published *Understanding Your Life through Colour* in which she classified certain types of human attributes which seemed to correlate to the colours of the electromagnetic field surrounding all living things – in the case of humans, the auric field. She found that a deep blue colour was being seen in about 80% of children born after 1980. She called this colour 'indigo'. The term was then coined by Lee Carroll and Jan Tober for their ground-breaking book (1999) on the new children. It is no coincidence that 'indigo' is also the colour at which the 6<sup>th</sup> chakra – the so-called 'third eye' - primarily spins. This is the chakra which regulates psychic phenomena.

It has been estimated that the 'Indigo phenomenon' has been with us for around 50 years, with the first noticeable individuals (between 1% and 5% of all children) appearing before 1964, and then with subsequent generations a higher proportion, until we have reached today's levels, which in some areas may be over 90% of children. Patterns of evolution are never uniform nor sudden.

Many adults who have identified themselves as being 'Indigo' from earlier generations, have formed groups and web chat-rooms, where they can share the problems they have faced and still face as a result of society's inability to cope with them.

### **How does it feel to be an Indigo Child?**

According to researchers, the ten most common traits of Indigo Children are:

- they have a feeling of royalty
- they feel they deserve to be here
- self-worth is not very important to them; they know their own value
- they have difficulty with absolute authority
- they simply won't do certain things
- they get frustrated with ritual-oriented systems
- they often see better ways of doing things
- they often seem antisocial
- they do not respond to 'guilt' discipline
- they tell you what they need

They are also usually headstrong and strong-willed, isolationist and easily bored. They seek real, deep and lasting friendships and bond easily with plants and animals.

### **The Indigo Child at School**

At school Indigo Children behave differently in important areas of classroom activity:

**Knowledge:** They can suck up knowledge like a sponge, especially if they like or are drawn to a subject, which makes them very advanced in their areas of interest.

**Experience:** They know that experiencing life helps them learn best, so they create the experiences they need to help them with their current problem or area where they need to grow.

**Relationships:** They respond best when treated like a respected adult/equal. If you're not playing your part of the relationship properly, they feel justified in challenging you about it.

**Learning:** They have an inherent strong determination to work things through for themselves and only want outside guidance if it's presented to them with respect and within a format of true choice. They prefer to work things out for themselves.

These characteristics invariably lead to conflict between the child and the system, which can be summed up as follows:

**Indigo Children:**

- a) live instinctively.
- b) have self-esteem and a positive self-image.
- c) need discipline which is logical and realistic.
- d) need choices and the opportunity for experience.

**Education Systems:**

- require research-based proof.
- require a socially acceptable 'self'.
- have rigid and fixed rules of punishment
- give orders and limit choice /experience

All of this means that we, as teachers, have to find new ways to work with the Indigo Children who increasingly populate our classrooms. The way forward is through the kind of attention to the individual which 'humanistic' approaches to teaching have always suggested. I list nine suggested patterns of teacher behaviour which will complement the Indigo Children's needs:

- 1) Treat them with respect
- 2) Help them create their own disciplinary solutions
- 3) Give them choices about everything
- 4) Never belittle them
- 5) Always explain why you give them instructions
- 6) Make them partners in bringing them up
- 7) Explain everything you are doing
- 8) Let them decide what they are interested in
- 9) Avoid negative criticism. Offer support and encouragement

**Postscript**

Please read the following extract carefully, and learn from the wisdom of our fathers. Then take it into your classroom and learn from the wisdom of our children.

Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and the daughters of life's longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you,  
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.  
You may give them your love, but not your thoughts,  
For they have their own thoughts.  
You may house their bodies but not their souls,  
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.  
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.  
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.  
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness.

Kahlil Gibran: The Prophet (1923)

**Some resources:**

Much of what is written above is taken from the work of Carroll and Tober, and the related web-sites.

**Books:**

- Carroll L/Tober J (1999) The Indigo Children. Carlsbad, Ca: Hay House
- Carroll L/Tober J (2001) An Indigo Celebration. Carlsbad, Ca: Hay House
- Lancaster D (2002) Anger and the Indigo Child. Boulder, Co: Wellness Press
- Virtue D (2001) The Care and Feeding of Indigo Children. Carlsbad, Ca: Hay House

**IndigoWebsites:**

[www.indigo.com](http://www.indigo.com)

[www.metagifted.org/topics/metagifted/indigo](http://www.metagifted.org/topics/metagifted/indigo) (Wendy H. Chapman)

**ADD/ADHD Websites:**

[www.netdoctor.co.uk/facts/adhd](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/facts/adhd).

[www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk)

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