



## GUIDELINES

### ASSISTING VET SCHOOL BOARDS IN DELIVERING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH AD/HD



*Different needs but equal rights*

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## Index

Acknowledgement.....	2
Teaching students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder .....	4
Teaching guidelines .....	6
The principals .....	6
Teaching arrangements.....	10
Strategies to address specific behaviour issues .....	12
Dealing with oppositional defiant disorder.....	14
Workplace Strategies for VET students.....	15
Introduction.....	15
Tips for job coaches/mentors/tutors .....	16
References.....	21
Internet Resources .....	22

## Teaching students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

How might the child with AD/HD present in class?

Look out for the child who, to a significant and inappropriate degree...

- ✓ Is often off-task
- ✓ Doesn't finish their work
- ✓ Makes careless mistakes
- ✓ Appears lazy / disinterested
- ✓ Daydreams / appears not to listen
- ✓ Misses instructions / asks for things to be repeated
- ✓ Can't seem to focus
- ✓ Is unable to maintain effort over time
- ✓ Is forgetful / disorganised

and / or

- ✓ Talks excessively
- ✓ Shouts / blurts out answers
- ✓ Interrupts / intrudes on others
- ✓ Can't wait their turn
- ✓ Doesn't wait to hear instructions
- ✓ Is restless / fidgety
- ✓ Is frequently out of their seat
- ✓ Is always "on the go"

When we understand the types of difficulties students with AD/HD have to cope with, we can imagine how tough school life can be for them. Students with AD/HD have difficulty:

### **Screening out unwanted stimuli**

Everything screams for the attention of the child with AD/HD: the hunger pangs in their stomach, the noise of the distant lawn mower, thoughts about the football match, the pencil dropped by the child behind them. The teacher's voice is only a small distraction! Imagine yourself sitting in an important lecture trying to concentrate on the speaker's voice while two of your favourite films are showing at full volume in the conference room, your mobile is ringing, your friend is waving through the window and the person next to you keeps chatting

to you. This might help you to imagine how the distractions of a normal classroom affect the child with AD/HD.

Too often we forget that  
discipline really means  
to *teach*, not to punish. A  
disciple is a student, not  
a recipient of behavioral  
consequences.

- Dr. Dan Siegel, *The Whole-Brain  
Child*

### **Monitoring and regulating their own behaviour**

Students with AD/HD are poor self-monitors. They often require high levels of feedback to let them know what they are doing right and wrong. When these students hear, “Stop that!” they may not actually know to which behaviour the teacher is referring.

### **Inhibiting inappropriate verbal and physical responses**

It’s not that the child did not know it was a bad idea to throw the paper aeroplane; it’s just that they knew it after they threw it! The mechanisms that allow us to think before we speak or act are affected in AD/HD.

### **Knowing how much concentration is needed for a task**

We know that it requires greater effort to read an academic journal than it does to read a magazine and we allocate mental effort accordingly. This is difficult for the child with AD/HD.

### **Sustaining attention for prolonged periods**

Students with AD/HD may start an activity with great enthusiasm but they find this difficult to sustain. Pupils with AD/HD have learning needs that are best met through strategies for teaching and classroom management that have relevance for all pupils. Teachers will need to ensure that the learning environment and their teaching style compensates for the difficulties with distractibility, limited organisational skills and low tolerance of frustration that these students experience.

### Teaching guidelines

The following guidelines are based on current research literature and suggestions about models that have been found to be useful in working with students with AD/HD. The decision to use a particular strategy must be based on an understanding of the individual child's educational, behavioural and emotional needs. The professional judgement of individual teachers is valued. Their skill in recognising pupil need and in managing an effective learning environment with conflicting demands is recognised.

### The principals

- 1. Rules and instructions provided to students with AD/HD must be clear, brief, and often delivered through more visible and external modes of presentation than are required for the management of students without AD/HD.**

Stating directions clearly, having the child repeat them out loud, having the child utter them softly to themselves while following through on the instruction, and displaying sets of rules or rule-prompts (e.g., stop signs; big eyes, big ears for “stop, look, and listen” reminders) prominently throughout the classroom are essential to proper management of AD/HD students. Relying on the child's recollection of the rules as well as upon purely verbal reminders is often ineffective.

- 2. Consequences used to manage the behaviour of AD/HD students must be delivered swiftly and more immediately than is needed for students without AD/HD.**

Delays in consequences greatly degrade their efficacy for AD/HD students. The timing and strategic application of consequences with students with AD/HD must be more systematic and is far more crucial to their management than in normal students. This is not just true for rewards, but is especially so for punishment, which can be kept mild and still effective by delivering it as quickly after the misbehaviour as possible—Swift, not harsh, justice is the essence of effective punishment.

- 3. Consequences must be delivered more frequently, not just more immediately, to students with AD/HD in view of their motivational deficits.**

Behavioural tracking, or the ongoing adherence to rules after the rule has been stated and compliance initiated, appears to be problematic for students with AD/HD. Frequent feedback or consequences for rule adherence seem helpful in maintaining appropriate degrees of tracking to rules over time.

- 4. The type of consequences used with students with AD/HD must often be of a higher magnitude, or more powerful, than that needed to manage the behaviour of other students.**

The relative insensitivity of them to response consequences dictates that those chosen for inclusion in a behaviour management program must have sufficient reinforcement value or magnitude to motivate students with AD/HD to perform the desired behaviours. Suffice to say, then, that mere occasional praise or reprimands are simply not enough to effectively manage students with AD/HD.

- 5. An appropriate and often richer degree of incentives must be provided within a setting or task to reinforce appropriate behaviour before punishment can be implemented.**

This means that punishment must remain within a relative balance with rewards or it is unlikely to succeed. It is therefore imperative that powerful reinforcement programs be

established first and instituted over 1 to 2 weeks before implementing punishment in order for the punishment, sparingly used, to be maximally effective. Often students with AD/HD will not improve with the use of response cost or time out if the availability of reinforcement is low in the classroom, and hence removal from it is unlikely to be punitive. “Positives before negatives” is the order of the day for students with AD/HD. When punishment fails, this is the first area which clinicians, consultants, or educators should explore for problems before instituting higher magnitude or more frequent punishment programs.

- 6. Those reinforcers or particular rewards that are employed must be changed or rotated more frequently for AD/HD students than for those without AD/HD, given the penchant of the former for more rapid habituation or satiation to response consequences, apparently rewards in particular.**

This means that even though a particular reinforcer seems to be effective for the moment in motivating child compliance, it is likely that it will lose its reinforcement value more rapidly than normal over time. Reward menus in classes, such as those used to back up token systems, must therefore be changed periodically, say every 2 to 3 weeks, to maintain the power or efficacy of the program in motivating appropriate child behaviour. Failure to do so is likely to result in the loss of power of the reward program and the premature abandonment of token technologies based on the false assumption that they simply will not work any longer. Token systems can be maintained over an entire school year with minimal loss of power in the program provided that the reinforcers are changed frequently to accommodate to this problem of habituation. Such rewards can be returned later to the program once they have been set aside for a while, often with the result that their reinforcement value appears to have been improved by their absence or unavailability.

- 7. Anticipation is the key with AD/HD students.**

This means that teachers must be more mindful of planning ahead in managing students with this disorder, particularly during phases of transition across activities or classes, to insure that the students are cognizant of the shift in rules (and consequences) that is about to occur. It is useful for teachers to take a moment to prompt a child to recall the rules of conduct in the



upcoming situation, repeat them orally, and recall what the rewards and punishments will be in the impending situation *before* entering that activity or situation. *Think aloud, think ahead* is the important message to educators here. As noted later, by themselves such cognitive self-instructions are unlikely to be of lasting benefit, but when combined with contingency management procedures, they can be of considerable aid to the classroom management of AD/HD students.

**8. Students with AD/HD must be held more publicly accountable for their behaviour and goal attainment than other students.**

The weaknesses in executive functioning associated with AD/HD result in a child whose behaviour is less regulated by internal information (mental representations) and less monitored via self-awareness than is the case in normal students. Addressing such weaknesses requires that the AD/HD child be provided with more external cues about performance demands at key “points of performance” in school, be monitored more closely by teachers, and be provided with consequences more often across the school day for behavioural control and goal attainment than would be the case with other students.

**9. Behavioural interventions, while successful, only work while they are being implemented and, even then, require continued monitoring and modification over time for maximal effectiveness.**

One common scenario is that a student responds initially to a well-tailored program, but then over time, the response deteriorates; in other cases, a behavioural program may fail to modify the behaviour at all. This does not mean behavioural programs do not work. Instead, such difficulties signal that the program needs to be modified. It is likely that one of a number of common problems (e.g., rewards lost their value, program not implemented consistently, program not based on a functional analysis of the factors related to the problem behaviour) occurred.

## Teaching arrangements

The educational needs of AD/HD pupils are best met with good teaching and classroom management techniques that have relevance to all pupils. Pupils with AD/HD pose particular challenges to their teachers. Teachers will need to adapt the learning environment and their teaching styles to compensate for regular distractions, limited organisational skills and low tolerance of frustration in pupils within their class with AD/HD.

### **Physical arrangements**

- a) Seat student in close proximity to teacher
- b) Seat peer models with good study skills next to students showing attentional difficulties and over activity
- c) Locate the student's desk away from the doorway and windows to minimise auditory and visual distractions. When appropriate, place a physical divide between the child's desk and others to reduce visual distractions
- d) Use seats in rows, a horseshoe or a single desk at the edge of the room for the student when tasks do not require interpersonal contact to minimise the distractions of other students
- e) Reduce the visual distractions in the area of the room for the student
- f) Stand near the student when giving directions or instructions or presenting the lesson. Use visual aids wherever possible e.g. use his/her worksheet as the example when giving instructions

### **General classroom organisation**

- a) Create an organised learning environment – establish and demonstrate a regular classroom/lesson routine, particularly for beginnings, endings and transitions
- b) Be clear and consistent about when pupil movement is permitted and when it is discouraged
- c) Use a visual signal to indicate special periods of intense independent work
- d) Teach students how to organise their work, including page layout and organisation of folders. Allow time each lesson for this
- e) Differentiate tasks so they are appropriate for the pupils' abilities

- f) Divide longer assignments into manageable sections, with clear guidelines, expectations and time scales for each section
- g) Provide clear 'due dates' for the completion of assignments
- h) Ensure homework tasks are clearly written in the child's contact book – do not assume that the child has written the tasks clearly
- i) Develop a clear system for keeping track of completed and uncompleted work

### **Lesson presentation**

- a) Provide an outline and key concepts to the lesson
- b) Make explicit the relevant prior learning from previous lessons
- c) Differentiate tasks as needed to accommodate the student's attention span as well as ability level
- d) Use visual and/or auditory cues as signals prior to changing a task.
- e) Break the lesson up into segments
- f) Include a variety of activities during each lesson to capture attention
- g) Plan for opportunities for the student to make frequent responses during the lesson
- h) Where possible use multi-sensory techniques for presentation – auditory, visual, tactile, role play etc
- i) When giving instructions:
  - a. Make eye contact with the student
  - b. Actively involve the student during the lesson presentation
  - c. Use positive direction – explain exactly what is wanted
  - d. Keep instructions short
  - e. Simplify complex directions in component parts
  - f. Write tasks on the board as well as announcing orally
  - g. Discuss learning objectives with the student
  - h. Actively involve the child in goal setting
  - i. Repeat directions
  - j. Check that the student has heard and understands the instructions by asking them to repeat back task directions
  - k. Offer individual assistance

## Strategies to address specific behaviour issues

### **Inattention**

- a) Make the individual child's personal lesson objectives explicit to them. Provide rewards that have been negotiated with the child as soon after the targets have been achieved as possible
- b) Seat the student away from distracting stimuli
- c) Gear tasks to attention span
- d) Make the learning objectives explicit
- e) Highlight the component parts of a longer assignment and assist pupil in setting short-term targets
- f) Include a variety of activities in each lesson
- g) Pay careful attention to the design of worksheets – keep page format simple and avoid extraneous pictures or visual distractions that are not related directly to the task, have white space on each page, avoid hand-written text, use large type-print and a clear font
- h) Provide alternative environments with fewer distractions for taking tests

### **Excessive motor activity**

- a) Ensure the pupil has an active task within the lesson e.g. giving out books or writing keywords on the board
- b) Provide short breaks between tasks and then re-focus attention back to the work
- c) Remind pupil to check work if performance is rushed or careless
- d) Plan for transitions between learning environments, establish explicit rules and supervise closely

### **Poor organisation and planning**

- a) Break down long assignments into component parts – assist pupil in settling short-term targets for longer assignments
- b) Make the criteria for success explicit for each assignment – provide a checklist
- c) Prioritise activities for the student – make explicit the criteria influencing the level of priority

- d) Ensure the student is able to use a diary/calendar or other planning system to promote time management for scheduling homework assignments
- e) Persuade parents to use organiser trays at home with days of the week marked, so books and work for school can be put together
- f) Supervise the recording of homework tasks

### **Impulsiveness**

- a) Ignore minor inappropriate behaviour
- b) Increase immediate rewards for good behaviour
- c) Seat pupil near a good role model
- d) Teach verbal mediation skills to reduce impulsive behaviour – practise a structured routine of stop, listen/look, think, answer/do

### **Non-compliance**

- a) Use positive direction to tell the student what to do, not what you don't want.
- b) Avoid personalising the problem – focus on the behaviour
- c) Negotiate the rules as much as possible, ensure they are simple and clear, review them frequently
- d) Give the student frequent opportunities to be rewarded
- e) Monitor student performance and behaviour frequently and provide frequent feedback
- f) Ensure there are pre-established consequences of behaviour which are explicit and enforce rules in a consistent manner

### **Difficulties with peers**

- a) Organise social skills training to teach concepts of communication, participation and co-operation
- b) Define the desired social behaviour target and implement a reward programme
- c) Praise pupil frequently to raise his/her esteem within the class
- d) Assign special responsibilities to pupil in the presence of peer group so others observe pupil in a positive light

## Low self-esteem

- a) Focus on pupil's talents, skills and accomplishments
- b) Praise effort as well as achievement
- c) Notice and reward positive behaviour
- d) Reinforce frequently when signs of frustration are noticed

## Dealing with oppositional defiant disorder

Oppositional Defiant Disorder is term given to describe when a child/adolescent displays a certain pattern of behaviours that includes losing their temper frequently, defying adults, being easily annoyed and deliberately annoying others.

The key elements displayed by students with ODD include the following characteristics:

Argues with teachers

Refuses and Defies

Angry and Defensive

Spiteful and Vindictive

Students with AD/HD are often very challenging individuals however some key tips are as follows:

1. Have clear expectations of academic and behaviour targets and agreed rewards and consequences
2. Make sure they are clear that they are responsible for their actions no matter "that she started it", "I'm tired" etc...
3. Be consistent in your approach and handle disruptions with a response that includes no emotion and not too much talking. Consider non aggressive body language and offer the child an escape hatch to calm down
4. Catch them doing it right. Praise to correction of behaviour in a 4:1 ratio
5. Sometimes look for the draw. Very Defiant students are into power. Let them save face by providing them with 2 options where either one is ok with you

6. Know that your job is to set boundaries but the child/adolescent's job is to test them but that discipline means being prepared to make unpopular decisions
7. Use assertiveness as opposed to aggressiveness but eliminate sarcasm and other forms of put downs
8. Don't ask "Why?" ask "What?" "What should you be doing now?" and use either/Or and
9. When/Then "Lewis either put the phone in your bag or on my desk" "Sheena when you have put the chair back under the table then you can go" If it's not working in class get to know them better. "Everybody has a price" and "everybody listens to someone" find out what motivates them and who has influence with them
10. It's not behaviour management it's mood management, their mood, your mood and the mood of the others. Analyse your own mood and don't take it personally it is not about you it is about them.

## Workplace Strategies for VET students

### Introduction

Initiatives, speed, and organization -- they are all things employers are looking for in employees and VET trainees. However for a trainee with AD/HD, it seems a big challenge to meet those demands. Questions that should be considered are:

- a) What limitations is the employee experiencing?
- b) How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance?
- c) What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
- d) What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems?
- e) Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?
- f) Has the VET trainee been consulted regarding possible accommodations? Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
- g) Do supervisory personnel and employees need training regarding job coaches?

## Tips for job coaches/mentors/tutors

This is a list of accommodations that can be used in the workplace to address some AD/HD impairments of VET trainees. It can be used as a reference for VET-students with AD/HD and employers, however for a more thorough list of potential accommodations and strategies that address

### **Difficulties with Attention Regulation**

- a) Address difficult tasks during the time of day when most alert.
- b) Reminder (visual or auditory) to draw person back “to task”.
- c) Use of a timer to define periods of concentration on a specific task.
- d) Mundane and boring tasks rotated with stimulating tasks.
- e) Use of *intrusive* reminders (that are difficult to ignore and require attention to deactivate) for meeting and appointments.
- f) Note taking for lengthy instructions.
- g) Use of audio recorder during meetings.
- h) Distribute tasks amongst employees with consideration of job requirements as well as individual strengths and interests (for example, delegate some of the more menial tasks to an employee who prefers detail orientation work).
- i) Limit continuous e-mail checking unless required.
- j) Scheduled blocks of uninterrupted time during the day where the phone is set on do not disturb and e-mail notifications are blocked
- k) Manager/co-workers to provide a 5 to 10 minute warning when switching of focus required.
- l) When possible, plan ahead the time and resources for work to be reviewed for details with managers or co-worker.
- m) Intrusive thoughts or ideas written down so they do not intrude on attention to task.

### **Distractibility**

- a) Flex-time to facilitate some less-distracting time at work – for example, beginning work an hour early.
- b) Working at home part-time – reports and detail work may be easier to complete while uninterrupted at home.



- c) Noise cancelling headsets or white noise machines.
- d) Use of private offices or conference rooms for highly focused work.
- e) Closing office doors.
- f) Use of sound absorption panels.
- g) Moving office or cubicle to lower-traffic areas.
- h) Moving inboxes outside of desk space.
- i) Asking employees to wear headsets when on the phone to minimize noise.
- j) Use of space enclosures (cubicle walls) or face desk away from the line of traffic.
- k) Make your offices available for employees who want to bring in their own professional organizer for de-cluttering or reconfiguring their work environment to minimize visual distractions and development organizational systems.

### **Impulsivity**

- a) Development of standard statements to fall back on when asked to commit to projects – “That sounds very interesting, but I need to check my schedule”: meaning: I need to discuss it with my supervisor and review what I am already committed to.
- b) Note taking of thoughts and potential points to avoid interrupting or off-topic comments during meetings: this will delay the thought process and allow for reflection.
- c) Partnership with a co-worker or supervisor to plan and organize larger projects: creation of a time line and list of duties allows for continued reference.
- d) Implement accommodations and strategies to increase job performance and satisfaction and allow time for constructive discussion of dissatisfaction – this will increase job satisfaction and discourage impulsive quitting of jobs.

### **Hyperactivity**

- a) Tasks that encourage movement breaks – walking to meetings, picking up mail, getting coffee, walking to a co-workers desk rather than picking up the phone, using the stairs rather than the elevator.
- b) Built in structured breaks that allow for movement.
- c) Exercise during lunch.
- d) Taking notes during meetings.

- e) Use of fidget toys or stress balls for intentional fidgeting.
- f) Private workspace where employee will not disturb others by tapping, humming, or fidgeting.
- g) Working from home.

### **Time Management Impairments**

- a) Alerts (not easy to ignore or switch off when hyper focusing) prompting disengagement of focus to leave for appointments and meetings.
- b) Divide larger assignments into more manageable tasks with staggered deadlines.
- c) Use of electronic organizers.
- d) Timelines and schedules developed and reviewed with team, co-worker or supervisor.
- e) Use of large wall calendar with due dates and time lines.
- f) Under rather than over scheduling.
- g) Temptation to cram in one more activity discouraged.
- h) Provide flexibility in hours and breaks, for example early arrival could mean additional time for breaks throughout the day, etc.

### **Organization difficulties**

- a) Colour-coded systems for files and projects.
- b) List of daily, weekly and monthly routine tasks.
- c) Use of “to do” lists that can be checked off.
- d) Promote teamwork amongst co-workers, including planning meetings for projects.
- e) Supervision with prioritization of tasks – scheduled bi-weekly meetings.
- f) Assign new project only when previous project is complete, when possible.
- g) Limited number of projects worked on at one time.
- h) Gantt or flow-charts on times lines for larger projects – especially useful for team projects.
- i) Additional orientation or training may be helpful for employees juggling multiple or repetitive tasks.
- j) Paperwork is often impairing – minimize, streamline, automate, colour code, dictate or delegate paperwork whenever possible.

- k) Remove the stigma and shame associated with accommodation requests by promoting a collaborative and supportive workplace and management style.
- l) Working from home.

### **Forgetfulness**

- a) Take immediate action on tasks or immediately log tasks on calendar or note pad.
- b) Check agenda at routine times a day.
- c) All messages written in a binder and checked at scheduled times of the day.
- d) Use or timers, alerts or beepers.
- e) Follow-up of meetings or verbal instructions with an e-mail or hard copy.
- f) Allow employees to use charts or cheat sheets for tasks and instructions.
- g) Suggest the use of an agenda or phone calendar rather than the use of scrap or post-its.
- h) Promote an environment of teamwork where employees feel that they can ask one another questions when unsure of something.

### **Procrastination**

- a) Assign tasks suited to immediate response.
- b) Closer supervision – biweekly scheduled meeting with supervisor to check on progress.
- c) Balance workload and type of work – for example, set up a schedule where you take a break after 30 minutes of menial work to get up and stretch for 5 minutes, or balance a menial task with creative work throughout the day.

### **Emotional Dysregulation and difficult relationships with co-workers**

- a) Feedback from a trusted supervisor, co-worker, or friend to build awareness of interrupting, bluntness and other issues with social skills – VET trainees with AD/HD may be unaware of how they are perceived by co-workers.
- b) Provide awareness and education to all employees regarding effective communication strategies among colleagues.
- c) Assist employee to understand situations as other than black and white.
- d) Breaks to cool down from anger or feeling overwhelmed – removal from the situation by going for a walk, coffee or lunch break, or working from home for a day or two.

- e) Preparation for formal meeting with a review of performance or criticism.
- f) Optional attendance at social activities.
- g) Encourage all employees to model appropriate social skills.
- h) Supervisory method to better fit the employee's needs.

**Potential supports for people with AD/HD to seek independently**

- a) Use a professional organizer to assist with desk and workplace environment.
- b) AD/HD Coach to assist with organizational strategies.
- c) AD/HD Coach to teach social skills and how to pick up social cues.

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## Internet Resources

[http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/10347/2004-110-7\\_20041107.pdf](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/10347/2004-110-7_20041107.pdf)  
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ADHD-center, pojkar och flickor

[http://www.habilitering.nu/gn/opencms/web/HAB/\\_Subwebbar/adhd\\_center/Om\\_adhd/pojkar\\_och\\_flickor.html](http://www.habilitering.nu/gn/opencms/web/HAB/_Subwebbar/adhd_center/Om_adhd/pojkar_och_flickor.html) (Hämtat 2012-07-12)

ADHD-center, behandling

[http://www.habilitering.nu/gn/opencms/web/HAB/\\_Subwebbar/adhd\\_center/Om\\_adhd/stod\\_och\\_behandling.html](http://www.habilitering.nu/gn/opencms/web/HAB/_Subwebbar/adhd_center/Om_adhd/stod_och_behandling.html) (Hämtat 2012-07-12)

Skolförordningen SFS 2011:185

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Skollagen 2010:800

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## **GUIDELINES: ASSISTING VET SCHOOL BOARDS IN DELIVERING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH AD/HD**

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In the context of:

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