

What is ADHD?

Christine Hammond, LMHC

LifeWorks Group
1850 Lee Road, Suite 250
Winter Park, FL 32789
407-647-7005

CHRISTINEHAMMONDCOUNSELING.COM

ADHD Information Sheet

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is diagnosed in both girls and boys around by the age of 7. Although it is diagnosed early in life, it is a condition that will remain with the child throughout adulthood.

There are three major components to ADHD: distractibility, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. All three of these components must be present for at least six months and in multiple environments such as school, home and church.

Many have speculated that ADHD is caused by too much TV, poor diet or bad parenting. None of this is a cause for ADHD but all of these can have a negative impact on the child.

Rather, ADHD is a chemical issue with the brain in which the body does not produce the chemicals needed for rest or relaxation. The brain does not even get the message that it is time to rest until complete exhaustion has taken place.

Medication can be an effective tool in dealing with the ADHD child but over medicating the child can have consequences such as failure to gain weight and depression. A doctor is best able to decide what if any medication is needed.

There are many blessings with an ADHD child as there is never a dull moment with them around. They have an unusual ability to see the big picture

and juggle many things at once. Their minds take in so much information at one time because of how observant they are about nearly everything. If there is something they are interested in, the ability to hyper focus to the point of excluding things such as eating exists. Over all, they are exciting, enthusiastic, and entertaining.



Signs and Symptoms of ADHD

Here are the signs and symptoms of a ADHD child (Note—the child does not have to display all of the signs in order to be properly diagnosed):

- ◆ Does not pay close attention to detail
- ◆ Makes careless mistakes
- ◆ Difficulty remaining on task
- ◆ Losses focus easily
- ◆ Easily distracted
- ◆ Gives appearance of not listening
- ◆ Poor eye contact
- ◆ Fidgets non-stop
- ◆ Seems to have two speeds: fast (when awake) and stop (only when asleep)
- ◆ Loses favorite items frequently
- ◆ Fails to follow instructions completely
- ◆ Forgets homework repeatedly
- ◆ Is restless
- ◆ Bottom does not touch the seat of a chair
- ◆ Difficulty sitting still for long periods of time
- ◆ Climbs or runs when inappropriate
- ◆ Talks excessively
- ◆ Blurts out answers
- ◆ Difficulty waiting turn
- ◆ Trouble organizing bedroom or maintaining order once it has been established
- ◆ Disorganized backpack and desk at school
- ◆ Daydreaming at home and school
- ◆ Appears to be lazy
- ◆ Disruptive behavior at school
- ◆ Does not play by the rules with other kids
- ◆ Gets bored easily

Classroom Accommodations

Some of these accommodations are difficult but if you apply these strategies with empathy instead of anger, the ADHD child will respond better.

Strategies for you:

- Do not show intense emotions or overreact.
- This is not personal, so don't take it that way.
- Recognize that you have control in your classroom even when they are moving around; do not give control to the child.
- Focus first on the little problems rather than tackling the bigger problems to gain the child's trust.
- Use one sentence responses to avoid power struggles such as, "Too bad", "I'm sad for you", "I know you can handle it", "Thanks for sharing", "How are you going to handle this next time", "I listen to one person at a time", and "I know you hate to write".
- Do not argue with the child. "I respect you too much to argue."
- Stay calm and model desired behavior.
- If you want good eye contact, you must model it first with the child.
- Remember the child must choose to modify their behavior, you cannot force this issue.

Strategies for the classroom:

- Use reverse positives such as, "I see you did your homework, did you get aliens to help you?" Humor is very effective.
- Place child's seat away from windows, doors or high distraction areas.
- Allow child to keep an extra set of textbooks at home.
- Check organization of child on a regular basis to minimize lost papers.
- Establish a homework folder for all subjects. One side of folder is to be completed, opposite side is completed.
- Have the daily schedule written on

the board to help child feel calmer.

- Use "yes" statements instead of "no". "Yes you can go draw just as soon as your math is finished."
- Set reasonable expectations such as taking a break every 20 minutes to move. They must move to learn effectively so allow it.
- Do not give warnings, just state your expectations and expect they will be followed.
- Whenever possible, use actions such as removing dangerous things (running with scissors) instead of lectures (why this is bad).
- Do not address every single time child fidgets, interrupts, walks ahead, asks to leave classroom, lies, ignores, is distracted, asks for repeated instructions, or needs additional time to complete work. Too much attention can be as bad as too little.
- Give child freedom to move or take breaks within a boundary such as the back of the classroom or a corner.
- Allow child to doodle on paper to keep focus. Contrary to other children, ADHD children need to play with something in order to pay attention better. Forcing them to look at you is all they will think about and therefore won't learn what you are teaching.
- Overemphasize positive behaviors by exclaiming, "Oh no! Don't do this to me! Stop doing your homework! My heart can't take this!"
- Have regular parent-teacher meetings at least two times per year to maintain good contact and monthly emails.
- Help to set reasonable achievable goals for the child. Being still for an hour is not a reasonable goal.
- Do not send daily notes home to the parents. Behavior that needs correction at school should be handled at school. Parents should not be adding additional correction at home.

Strategies for discipline:

- Never give missing PE or outside activities as punishment. The child needs this time more than eating.
- Allow child to experience natural consequences such as being hungry because they forgot their lunch.
- Behavior modification such as prizes works; just make sure you set the bar within reach.
- Punishment produces resentment, retaliation, or retreat into sneakiness so use punishment as little as possible. Rather, state consequences in a positive way like, "How lucky you are that you get to spend extra time with me to finish your work today."
- When a good choice is made by the child, recognize it but do not reward it. Child should not be rewarded for doing what is expected; rather they should be rewarded for achieving above their expectations which is different from other children.
- Consequences for inappropriate behavior must be given without anger, lectures, or sarcastic statements.
- When the child steals, two times the value of the property stolen must be given back. A child can complete chores in the classroom to work the stolen property off.
- When the child lies, play along at first to see how far they take it then apply logic to dismantle the lies. Do not show anger and do not lecture.
- If the child harms themselves or another student, do not ask "Why did you do that?" rather recognized that they might have been harmed as well at some point. Instead state the obvious emotion, "I see that you are angry with ____, I do not harm you when I am angry."