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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

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## **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

**ADHD**, or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, is a condition that interferes with a child's development or functioning, and is marked by a consistent or recurring pattern of inattention, impulsivity and/or hyperactivity. This may lead to challenges at school and at home, and may appear in the form of struggling to focus on schoolwork or other tasks, difficulty paying attention or sitting still, and trouble controlling impulses.

### **Statistics**

- According to the CDC, “An estimated 7 million (11.4%) U.S. children aged 3–17 years have been diagnosed with ADHD.”
- Although ADHD is often identified in a child during their early school years, more than 60% of children continue to present symptoms as an adult.
- ADHD is diagnosed more in boys than in girls.

### **Symptoms**

- Easily becomes distracted
- Consistent fidgeting or squirming
- Being very energetic and having a hard time sitting still
- Lack of patience
- Constantly talking and interrupting adults or peers
- Difficulty with organization

- Makes careless mistakes and misses details in schoolwork or other activities
- Frequently forgets or loses things
- Appears like they are not listening when spoken to
- Finds it challenging to follow through with instructions they have been given
- Starts a task, but often loses focus and gets sidetracked
- Inability to play or engage in activities quietly

## Diagnosis:

There is no single test to diagnose someone with ADHD, however with a detailed assessment by a mental health professional, an accurate diagnosis can be made. This assessment is composed of an observation of the child, which oftentimes includes testing, as well as a consultation with parents, teachers, or other adults and caregivers in the child’s life to acquire more information about the child. All of these components will help the professional decide if the child has ADHD, or potentially a different disorder.

## Risk Factors for Children

- There is a link to genetics, such as if a parent or sibling has ADHD, or another mental health disorder.
- Environmental factors may include exposure to environmental toxins, such as lead, typically found in paint.
- Problems with the central nervous system during crucial moments in development.
- A child who was born prematurely.

## Treatment

<p><b>Therapy:</b></p> <p>Many different types of therapy are often beneficial to the child, as well as the parent. Some common types are</p>	<p><b>Medication:</b></p> <p>Oftentimes prescribing a medication that is a stimulant is extremely effective. This helps the child be calm, leading to</p>	<p><b>Accommodations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extra time on tests</li> <li>● Option to take tests in a different room</li> <li>● Allowed breaks to get up and move while testing</li> </ul>
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<p>parent-child interaction therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and social skills training. Also, parent training is typically very effective.</p>	<p>better focus and control over their impulses. However if serious side effects are experienced, there is an option for non-stimulant medication instead.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preferential seating to eliminate distractions</li> <li>● Breaking up large assignments into smaller sections</li> <li>● Using a timer or alarm when switching tasks</li> </ul>
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## How Can I Help My Child?

- When rules are followed, give the child praise and rewards
- Give commands or directions that are clear, effective, brief, and get to the point
- Make eye contact or gentle touch to get the child's attention
- Implement healthy habits such as adequate sleep, a well-balanced diet, and some type of exercise each day
- Create routines around chores and homework, such as making a checklist for bedtime or daily tasks
- Encourage your child to use a calendar and/or daily planner to assure they are completing their homework each day
- Allow your child to set timers and take breaks if needed, giving them the opportunity to move around
- Assist your child with establishing and maintaining friendships and relationships– for younger children this may look like arranging a playdate or signing them up for activities
- Promote the development of strong social skills
- Set aside times each week, without screens, to spend with your child to develop a secure parent-child relationship
- Attend parent training to learn more about how you can best support your child

## Resources:

<https://childmind.org/guide/quick-guide-to-attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/adhd/symptoms-causes/syc-20350889>

<https://www.cdc.gov/adhd/data/index.html>

<https://chadd.org/for-educators/classroom-accommodations/>

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/5-tips-to-manage-adhd-in-children>