

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

A resource for children & teens

What does having ADHD mean?

ADHD is short for Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. ADHD affects the way your brain works, having it is like having a “racing car brain”. It means your brain can go really, really fast, the problem is that it sometimes can go too fast and the brakes don’t work so well.



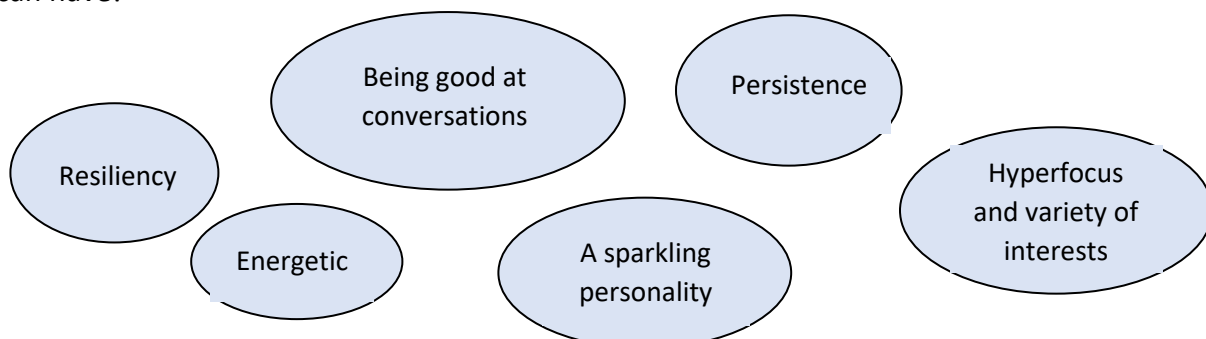
With ADHD, you may find it hard to pay attention in school because your mind is zipping around all over the place and always bursting with new ideas, which is great! But sometimes, children may need help to slow down so they can take care of their race-car brain!

Symptoms of ADHD

Inattention	Hyperactivity/Impulsivity
Poor attention to detail/carelessness	Fidgetiness/squirminess
Difficulty staying focused	Difficulty remaining in seat
Difficulties listening	Trouble with quiet calm activities
Trouble completing tasks	Often “on the go”
Difficulty with organization	Lots of talking
Loses things easily	Interrupting others
Forgetfulness	Blurts out answers or opinions

* It is important to note how **common** and **normal** these symptoms are in children!

There is a great side to these symptoms as well and sometimes we just need a little help using our powerful brain in a healthy/positive way! Below is a list of all the great qualities ADHD/ADD can have!



Coping and managing ADHD

Fidgeting/Trouble keeping body calm	Strategy
When you are fidgety and cant stay seated in your chair or have difficulties keeping your body calm.	Find a way to get your energy out ahead of time by exercising at recess or doing some kids yoga in the morning before school! Some teachers allow fidgets in the classroom, ask your teacher what they have for ways of helping you calm your body down, this could be a calming corner or a fidget box! Work with your teacher on this!
Having lots of energy!!!	Strategy
It is great to have lots of energy when we are channeling it for the right things! Sometimes it feels like we are running on a motor and we cant control our bodies.	Practice relaxation, for times like this. One example is to squeeze different muscles in your body for 10 seconds each and release them! Deep breathing can also help you calm your body down, breathe in like you're smelling a flower and breathe out like your blowing candles out on a birthday cake!
Trouble focusing & Getting Distracted!	Strategy
Sometimes we can get easily distracted by different things happening in the classroom or at home. We can also have a difficult time staying focused for long periods of time.	Have reminders on your desk that allow you to remember to "check-in" with yourself...simply write the words "check-in" on a note on your desk. Set timers at home to remind you to check-in with yourself while doing homework or completing a task. Set the timer for every 10 minutes to help you refocus if you get distracted during that time! Create a distraction-free workspace.
Disorganization	Strategy
Clutter is the enemy of ADHD, as you move from task to tasks, partly finished projects will start to take over your physical and mental state.	Create to-do lists: start with the fastest and easiest items so you can see progress! Keep your desk/workspace clean! Leave an extra 5 minutes at the end of each day to tidy up. De-clutter your backpack and desk frequently!
Feeling overwhelmed	Strategy
The obligations of a single day can become jumbled and overwhelming, or simply forgotten.	Create structure and routine: a "routine is doing the same things every day"... set a schedule/time for everything. Try to eat, sleep, relax, work, study at roughly the same time every day.

	Visual schedules can be especially helpful. For kids, a colorful written schedule and for teens there are a lot of great apps! Don't forget to work self-care and fun activities into your routine!
Problem Solving	Strategy
Some times we have problems we come across that need to be solved, like, forgetting to turn in our homework	Clearly explain the problem, sometimes it can be helpful to problem solve with an adult! Think of a few different ways to solve the problem. Then pick your favorite solutions and try it for a few days. Then review if the solution worked..if it didn't, you may need to pick another one!
Impulsivity/ Quick to react	Strategy
Sometimes we can react really quickly and do things without thinking them all the way through first.	It is best to take time to think about what you are going to say/do before you say it. Sometimes counting to 10 before acting on a thought/feeling can help you work out your impulse muscle. Another fun way to work on impulses is by playing "simon says" a few times a week with a family member, this is always great practice!

(adapted from TherapistAid.com, 2023)

Recommended Reading Materials & Websites

Children

- Kelli Miller LCSW MSW (2018). *Thriving with ADHD Workbook for Kids: 60 Fun Activities to Help Children Self-Regulate, Focus, and Succeed.*
- Dr. Sharon Grand PhD BCN (2021). *Executive Functioning Workbook for Kids: 40 Fun Activities to Build Memory, Flexible Thinking, and Self-Control Skills at Home, in School, and Beyond.*
- Barbara Esham (2018). *Mrs. Gorski I Think I Have the Wiggle Fidgets: An ADHD and ADD Book for Kids with Tips and Tricks to Help Them Stay Focused (The Adventures of Everyday Geniuses).*
- Quinn & Stern (2001). *Putting on the brakes: Young people's guide to understanding Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.*
- Raun Melmed and Annette Sexton (2016). *Marvin's Monster Diary: ADHD Attacks! (But I Rock It, Big Time).*

- Nadeau, Nixon, & Beyl (2004). *Learning to slow down & pay attention: A book for kids about ADHD.*
- John F. Taylor Ph.D (2013). *The Survival Guide for Kids with ADHD (Survival Guides for Kids).*
- Steve Herman (2021). *A Dragon With ADHD: A Children's Story About ADHD. A Cute Book to Help Kids Get Organized, Focus, and Succeed. (My Dragon Books)*

Parents

- Barkley (2020). *Taking Charge of ADHD, Fourth Edition: The Complete, Authoritative Guide for Parents*
- Barkley & Benton (2013). *Your Defiant Child, Second Edition: Eight Steps to Better Behavior.*
- Benjamin Cristopher Ross (2022). *Positive Parenting to Empower Kids with ADHD: Raising an Explosive Child: Learn the New Emotional Control Strategies to Help Your Children Self-Regulate and Thrive.*
- Russell, Olivia (2021). *ADHD: How to Raise an Explosive Child: The Definitive Guide on How to Deal With Hyperactive and Distracted Children With Tips and Strategies for a Positive Parenting Approach and Kids Self-Regulation.*
- Elaine Taylor-Klaus and Diane Dempster MHSA CPC PCC (2016). *Parenting ADHD Now!: Easy Intervention Strategies to Empower Kids with ADHD.*
- Dr. Sharon Saline (2018). *What Your ADHD Child Wishes You Knew: Working Together to Empower Kids for Success in School and Life.*

Websites

- Children and Adults with Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder : www.chadd.org
- Teens Health: www.kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/school/adhd.html
- Teens with ADHD by Chris Dendy: www.chrisdendy.com
- ADHD News: www.adhdnews.com