

ADHD Education for Caregivers

Everybody has difficulty sitting still, paying attention, or controlling impulsive behavior once in a while. It is typical for children to occasionally forget their homework, daydream, act without thinking, or get fidgety. However, for some youth, these issues cause difficulties that impact their life: home, academic, social, and work. *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder in which *inattention, overactivity, impulsivity, or a combination* are common. Youth will typically exhibit some of these signs before they are 7-years old. ADHD can look like the hyperactive youth who talks non-stop and can't sit still. It also can look like the quiet dreamer who sits at their desk and stares off into space. It does not look the same in every student. Other neurodevelopmental disorders, like Autism, speech problems, and Bipolar disorder occur in two-thirds of youth with ADHD. Symptoms of ADHD and Trauma can look the same. It is important to seek additional support if you are concerned. ADHD presents differently across ages, cultures, and genders.



EVERYONE EXPERIENCES DIFFICULTY IN FOCUSING SOMETIMES. ADHD IS DETERMINED BY:

1. **SEVERITY** – youth display six or more symptoms on a regular basis
2. **DURATION** – symptoms have been occurring for more than six months in multiple environments (home, school, etc.)
3. **INTERFERING WITH THE PERSON'S STUDIES, ACTIVITIES, AND FAMILY/SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS.**

Inattentive Symptoms

- Has trouble staying focused or get bored with a task before it's completed
- Does not appear to listen
- Struggles to follow through on instructions
- Has difficulty with organization
- Seems to not pay attention to details or makes careless mistakes
- Loses things
- Is easily distracted
- Is forgetful in daily activities

Hyperactive Symptoms

- Fidgets with hands, feet, or squirms in chair
- Has difficulty remaining seated
- Runs about or climbs excessively during inappropriate times
- Difficulty engaging in activities quietly
- Struggles with relaxing/playing quietly
- Talks excessively

Impulsive Symptoms

- Acts without thinking
- Guesses rather than takes the time to solve a problem
- Blurts out answers in class without waiting to be called on or hear the whole question
- Intrudes on other people's conversations or games
- Often interrupts others; says the wrong things at the wrong time
- Unable to keep emotions in check; often resulting in angry outbursts or temper tantrums

11%

of Youth have an ADHD diagnosis

How we can support youth:

1. Give reassurance and listen nonjudgmentally

- Some youth with ADHD struggle with listening or following directions. Often, this causes them to be labeled with the 'bad reputation' in the family. Make sure all family members understand what is going on, normalize it, and try to keep a balance of attention in the family.

2. Help kids access healthy lifestyle habits and movement activities

- Physical activity improves concentration and promotes brain growth.

Importantly for children with ADHD, it also leads to better sleep. Scheduling regular healthy meals and snacks, accessing physical activity and more sleep has shown to reduce and help manage symptoms of ADHD.

3. Set clear expectations and stick to it

- Help youth stay focused and organized by following daily routines, simplifying rules and schedules. Give expectations that are clear and easy to understand. Creating routines and schedules can help youth know what to expect and steps they need to follow. Support them in giving praise or rewards when expectations are followed.

4. Promote support networks and positive relationships

- Help youth connect with positive peer and adult relationships. Some youth with ADHD struggle with making friends. Friendship skill groups or structured activities can support students who have difficulties in gaining positive peer relationships. Model listening and taking turns with them to promote smoother interactions with others.

Additional supports shown to be effective: [Therapy, Behavior Support, Medication](#)

[Resources for additional education, support, and toolkits on ADHD: https://chadd.org/nrc-toolkit/](https://chadd.org/nrc-toolkit/)