

# ATTENTION-DEFICIT/ HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)



## About ADHD

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (commonly known as ADHD) is a disorder in which an individual demonstrates difficulty with inattention, hyperactivity, or a combination of both. While frequently diagnosed in childhood, the disorder can occur in individuals at all ages.

Students with ADHD may exhibit a variety of symptoms, including struggles with maintaining attention, absent-mindedness, inappropriate restless movement, and difficulties with waiting their turn. A number of interventions, including medication and therapy, have been shown to aid students, their families, and schools in developing positive supports for students to become successful.

It is important to note that all children may experience occasional struggles with attention and hyperactivity throughout periods of their development. In contrast, those diagnosed with ADHD exhibit a pattern of difficulties that impact their ability to learn and function.

## What Does It Look Like?

As mentioned, individuals with ADHD can struggle with inattention, hyperactivity, or a combination of both. Once behaviors are identified, a diagnosis can further specify whether the individual is predominantly inattentive, predominantly hyperactive/impulsive, or a combined type. This is an important distinction, as all diagnoses of ADHD do not appear similar. Predominantly inattentive types are often particularly difficult to identify, as exhibited behaviors are more subdued.

## Symptoms and Interventions

	Symptoms	Interventions
<b>Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences difficulties maintaining attention during periods of instruction, play, or listening</li> <li>Interrupts during conversations or lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signal class first (flashing lights, clapping hands) to gain or redirect attention</li> <li>Develop a signal with the student to redirect behavior</li> <li>Consider student's learning style when teaching lessons (visual, auditory, etc.)</li> <li>Use a social skills group to model appropriate classroom behavior, such as raising one's hand</li> </ul>
<b>School Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences difficulties with attention to detail</li> <li>Does not complete or loses assignments</li> <li>Struggles with time management</li> <li>Avoids tasks requiring sustained attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use checklists</li> <li>Outline daily details such as class times and subjects to serve as helpful reminders</li> </ul>
<b>Desk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages in frequent, restless movement such as fidgeting</li> <li>Interrupts during conversations or lessons</li> <li>Has trouble keeping school materials, including papers, books, and supplies, organized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider items at desk to use for movement (collaborate with school staff such as occupational therapists)</li> <li>Provide student(s) with opportunities to move throughout the day – assisting with distribution of supplies or papers; helping a staff member with an activity</li> <li>Provide student with time to organize items (consider making it a classroom activity) or work with student to develop organizational system based on their learning style</li> </ul>
<b>Outside the Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Struggles with waiting for turn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use social skills group to model appropriate behavior</li> <li>Work with other staff members to develop uniform interventions, language, and rules to use with student (e.g., using same code word, gesture, or phrase to direct student)</li> </ul>
<b>Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finds it difficult to stay in line or remain quiet</li> <li>Struggles with transitioning between periods of activity and those of less movement or stimulus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use social skills group to model appropriate transition behavior</li> <li>Provide written or verbal reminders before transitioning</li> <li>Develop gesture or phrase to redirect student</li> <li>If possible, allow for time to wind down between high-energy activities, such as recess or gym, and more structured or quiet activities (independent drawing, writing, walking, mindfulness activities, etc.)</li> </ul>

## Student Strengths

- Creativity
- Energy
- Passion
- Engagement and excitement around topics the student finds interesting

## Resources

- **National Institute of Mental Health**  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/index.shtml>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/>
- **National Resource Center of ADHD**  
<http://www.help4adhd.org>
- **Children and Adults With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**  
<http://www.chadd.org>
- **Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support (PBIS)**  
<http://www.pbis.org>
- **SAMSHA**  
<http://www.samhsa.gov>
- **Anxiety and Depression Association of America**  
<http://www.adaa.org/>