



ADHD AT A GLANCE

Presented by

NCO Youth & Family Services

1305 Oswego Road

Naperville, IL 60540

(630) 961-2992

www.ncoyouth.org

1601 N. Bond Street, Suite 309

Naperville, IL 60563

ADHD at a Glance

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder is a **neurobiological** condition that affects the brain's ability to sustain age-appropriate attention and to self-regulate behavior.

There are three types of ADHD: Inattentive Type; Hyperactive/Impulsive Type; and, Combined Type (all three).

ADHD is often, but not always, associated with hyperactivity. The distinguishing features of ADHD are:

Inattention (Key word Distractibility): The ADHD person is not inattentive because he/she can't pay attention to anything. The problem for the ADHD person is paying attention to any-one-thing while being distracted by everything else.

Impulsiveness: Parents, teachers, and friends are apt to ask, "What were you thinking?" or "Didn't you consider the consequences?" The ADHD person has difficulty pausing between "the thought" and "the deed." Often regrets things said and done, but doesn't learn from experience. May be considered rude, immature, inept or aggressive.

Hyperactivity: In children, hyperactivity varies in severity from fidgeting or nervousness to being "driven" or "possessed." Generally moderate to non-existent in adults.

ADHD affects 3-5% of school-age children (American Psychiatric Association). ADHD affects boys and girls equally, but boys are 3 – 4 times more likely to be diagnosed during childhood. Girls are less often affected by hyperactivity and they are less likely to engage in aggressive or disruptive behaviors that lead to assessment and diagnosis.

The persistence of ADHD symptoms into adulthood is now widely accepted. ADHD is thought to be 70 – 80% genetic. ADHD is NOT caused by a lack of intelligence or education, too much TV, poor parenting, family problems, or diet. ADHD is not a character flaw or just "immaturity."

What Causes ADHD?

One of the first questions a parent will have is "Why? What went wrong?" "Did I do something to cause this?" There is little compelling evidence at this time that ADHD can arise purely from social factors or child-rearing methods. Most

substantiated causes appear to fall in the realm of neurobiology and genetics. This is not to say that environmental factors may not influence the severity of the disorder, and especially the degree of impairment and suffering the child may experience, but that such factors do not seem to give rise to the condition by themselves.

The parents' focus should be on looking forward and finding the best possible way to help their child.

Environmental agents

Studies have shown a possible correlation between the use of cigarettes and alcohol during pregnancy and risk for ADHD in the offspring of that pregnancy. As a precaution, it is best during pregnancy to refrain from both cigarette and alcohol use.

Another environmental agent that may be associated with a higher risk of ADHD is high levels of lead in the bodies of young preschool children

Brain injury

One early theory was that attention disorders were caused by brain injury. Some children who have suffered accidents leading to brain injury may show some signs of behavior similar to that of ADHD, but only a small percentage of children with ADHD have been found to have suffered a traumatic brain injury.

Genetics

Attention disorders often run in families, so there are likely to be genetic influences. Studies indicate that 25 percent of the close relatives in the families of ADHD children also have ADHD, whereas the rate is about 5 percent in the general population. Many studies of twins now show that a strong genetic influence exists in the disorder.

The Family and the ADHD Child

Medication can help the ADHD child in everyday life. He or she may be better able to control some of the behavior problems that have led to trouble with parents and siblings. But it takes time to undo the frustration, blame, and anger that may have gone on for so long. Both parents and children may need special help to develop techniques for managing the patterns of behavior.

Sometimes only the child with ADHD needs counseling support. But in many cases, because the problem affects the family as a whole, the entire family may need help. The therapist assists the family in finding better ways to handle the disruptive behaviors and promote change. If the child is young, most of the

therapist's work is with the parents, teaching them techniques for coping with and improving their child's behavior.

Several intervention approaches are available. Knowing something about the various types of interventions makes it easier for families to choose the intervention that is right for their needs.

Psychotherapy, works to help people with ADHD to like and accept themselves despite their disorder. It does not address the symptoms or underlying causes of the disorder.

Behavioral therapy (BT), helps people develop more effective ways to work on immediate issues. Rather than helping the child understand his or her feelings and actions, it helps directly in changing their thinking and coping and thus may lead to changes in behavior. The support might be practical assistance, like help in organizing tasks or schoolwork or dealing with emotionally charged events. Or the support might be in self-monitoring one's own behavior and giving self-praise or rewards for acting in a desired way such as controlling anger or thinking before acting.

Social skills training, can also help children learn new behaviors. In social skills training, the therapist discusses and models appropriate behaviors important in developing and maintaining social relationships, like waiting for a turn, sharing toys, asking for help, or responding to teasing, then gives children a chance to practice. For example, a child might learn to "read" other people's facial expression and tone of voice in order to respond appropriately. Social skills training helps the child to develop better ways to play and work with other children.

Support groups, help parents connect with other people who have similar problems and concerns with their ADHD children.

Parenting skills training, offered by therapists or in special classes, gives parents tools and techniques for managing their child's behavior.

In addition, parents may learn to structure situations in ways that will allow their child to succeed. This may include allowing only one or two playmates at a time, so that their child doesn't get overstimulated. Or if their child has trouble completing tasks, they may learn to help the child divide a large task into small steps, then praise the child as each step is completed.

Regardless of the specific technique parents may use to modify their child's behavior, some general principles appear to be useful for most children with ADHD. These include:

- Providing more frequent and immediate feedback (including rewards and punishment),
- Setting up more structure in advance of potential problem situations,
- Providing greater supervision and encouragement to children with ADHD in relatively unrewarding or tedious situations.
- Parents may also learn to use stress management methods, such as meditation, relaxation techniques, and exercise, to increase their own tolerance for frustration so that they can respond more calmly to their child's behavior.

Some simple behavioral interventions

Children with ADHD may need help in organizing. Therefore:

- **Schedule.** Have the same routine every day, from wake-up time to bedtime. The schedule should include homework time and playtime (including outdoor recreation and indoor activities such as computer games). Have the schedule on the refrigerator or a bulletin board in the kitchen. If a schedule change must be made, make it as far in advance as possible.
- **Organize needed everyday items.** Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place. This includes clothing, backpacks, and school supplies.
- **Use homework and notebook organizers.** Stress the importance of writing down assignments and bringing home needed books.

Children with ADHD need consistent rules that they can understand and follow. If rules are followed, give small rewards. Children with ADHD often receive, and expect, criticism. Look for good behavior and praise it.

The Gift of ADHD

Everyone who struggles with ADHD or a learning disability also has a gift. It may be one thing in particular or many things. Some examples include:

- Resiliency
- Determination
- Creativity
- Imagination
- Courage
- Intuition
- Artistic Expression
- Other Highly Developed Capabilities
- Imaginative Problem Solving

- Work Ethic
- Intelligence
- Compassion
- Sense of Humor

There are many more. Help someone you love or care about find their gift!

ADHD and Learning Disabilities Information Resources

ADDA provides information, resources and networking opportunities to help adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD).

<http://www.add.org>

ADD Warehouse a large collection of ADHD-related books, videos, training programs, games, professional texts and assessment products. The catalog is a recommended source of help in practically every book written on ADHD... and is provided to patients by hundreds of health professionals across the country.

www.ADDWarehouse.com

ADDitude Magazine is a magazine devoted to children and adults with AD/HD. Their website is very complete and informative and they have links to PODCASTS that are both user friendly and have great information (see below).

www.additudemag.com

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) provides education, advocacy and support for individuals with AD/HD.

<http://www.chadd.org/>

International Dyslexia Association (IDA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals with dyslexia, their families and the communities that support them.

<http://www.interdys.org>

Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) is a national organization of parents, professionals and individuals with learning disabilities. LDA has state and local chapters in your area.

<http://www.ldaamerica.org>

LD OnLine offers information for parents, teachers, and other interested professionals in the areas of learning disabilities, legal issues, current research, instructional strategies, and personal stories.

<http://www.LDOnline.org>

National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities

The NAEAACLD Web site includes information and resources provided by an established network of individuals and organizations experienced in minority research and special education. It also provides a parent resource network and publications for teachers, parents, and others.

<http://www.charityadvantage.com/aaclD/HomePage.asp>

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) seeks to raise public awareness and understanding, furnish national information and referrals, and arrange educational programs and legislative advocacy.

<http://www.ld.org>

National Coalition for Auditory Processing Disorders, Inc (NCAPD)

includes a state-by-state referral network

<http://www.ncapd.org>

ReadingRockets.org provides detailed information about learning to read and strategies for supporting struggling readers at home, at school, and in the community. It offers news, practical information, expert advice, and resources for parents, teachers, tutors, child care providers, and policy makers.

<http://www.readingrockets.org>

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic - provides information on over 80,000 recorded textbooks and other classroom materials, from 4th grade through postgraduate levels, available for loan. Individuals with learning disabilities are eligible to participate but must complete the certification requirements.

<http://www.rfbd.org>

Schwab Learning is a program of the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, dedicated to helping kids with learning differences to be successful in learning and life.

<http://www.schwablearning.org>

SmartKidswithLD.org is the website of Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to providing support to parents of children with learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders.

<http://www.smartkidswithld.org>

PODCASTS for Parents and Teens

Podcasts by Dr. Ned Hallowell on ADDitude magazine

<http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/2711.html>

--plays on windows media player or can be saved as mp3 to be transferred to iPod or other device.

- ADD is a gift (positive, strength based perspective on the disorder)*
- Why girls go undiagnosed (how symptoms differ by gender)*
- What's it like to have ADD? (descriptions to gain a better understanding of what it's like)
- Why it's called ADHD (historical perspective on the label)
- A plan for living with ADHD (managing ADHD in yourself and/or in your child)
- The truth about ADHD medications*

Podcasts on HealthTalk

<http://www2.healthtalk.com/go/adhd>

--Click Podcast on right side of screen, can be played through media player or iTunes

- ADHD: Is it a symptom of ADHD or a personality trait?
- A Mid-year Progress Report: ADHD in the classroom (tips on how to work well with your child's school)
- Parenting a child with ADHD (tips on rules and boundaries)
- Insurance Coverage and ADHD (advice on getting ADHD treatment covered)
- Behind Bars: ADHD and Criminal Behavior
- ADHD: Top Ten Myths*
- ADHD: Involve your school
- Coping with ADHD in an Adult World (help friends, family and co-workers understand ADHD)
- Treating ADHD Part 2: The Therapy Guide*
- Adult ADHD Part 1: Diagnosis
- Treating ADHD Part 1: The Drug Guide*
- The Challenges of Diagnosing ADHD (FAQs answered by author Dr. Russell Barkley)*
- Your Guide to ADHD from Diagnosis to Treatment*
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Podcasts on PodCast.net

www.podcast.net (search ADHD)

*best for teens to check out!

References: Some of the above material was obtained from:
LD OnLine
Learning Disabilities Association of America