



AD/HD

What is Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder?



Every child, at some time or another, has trouble sitting still, paying attention, and behaving well. But when the problem is constant and affects a child's daily life at home and school, it could be a sign of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or AD/HD.

Signs of AD/HD can include: inability to pay attention, careless mistakes, trouble staying focused and organized, not appearing to listen, unable to follow directions, disliking

activities that require concentration, and being easily distracted and forgetful.

AD/HD is most often diagnosed during childhood, and can stay with a person as they become an adult.

Signs of AD/HD usually start before age seven. An exact cause is not known, but it is believed that AD/HD can be passed through a family, or may be the result of a difficult pregnancy, prenatal exposure to alcohol and

smoking, premature delivery, or very low birth weight.

There is no single test for AD/HD. It can take a lot of time and many steps to diagnose, including looking at the child's developmental level, problems they have at home and school, and social and emotional abilities. A team is involved in diagnosis, including the child's doctor, parents, teachers, and the child.

Treating AD/HD involves parent training, positive reinforcement of good behavior, and needed support at school. A child's doctor may also prescribe medicine to help the child with attention span and impulse control.

AD/HD can be managed when the family and school work together.

Ways to help your child:

ONE

Create predictable daily routines for your child, including bedtime, mealtime, and playtime. Routines will help your child know what to expect, and will help decrease your family's stress while teaching your child to be more independent.

TWO

Praise your child for good behavior! Find ways to motivate your child to do what is expected, by using a chart, small rewards, or whatever works. Sometimes it might just be a hug or a high five.

Resources:

Call [Early Access](tel:1-888-IAKIDS1) at 1-888-IAKIDS1 if you have child development questions or concerns.

Link to an [Area Education Agency](#) in your region for more child and family information:

www.iowaaea.org. Find a contact for your area under the [AEA Directory](#) tab.

The [CHADD](#) website is a great resource where families can find local support, blogs, conferences and parent-to-parent training.

[The ADD/AD/HD Checklist: An Easy Reference for Parents and Teachers](#) is a book full of facts, techniques, and strategies for helping your child behave better and be more successful.

[AdditudeMag.com](#) has blogs written by real parents of children with AD/HD.

This factsheet is part of an informational series for parents of children ages 0-5, developed by the Iowa Department of Education Early Childhood Services Bureau. (Updated April 2010)

Three important facts about AD/HD:

1. Your child may just be very active. This does not mean AD/HD is present. Also, children under five are very active learners that stay busy most of the time. Consider whether there is a pattern to your child's struggles or behavior concerns.

2. There are three main types of AD/HD. Inattentive: the child has trouble paying attention, doesn't listen well, is forgetful, and has trouble

following directions. Hyperactive/Impulsive: the child fidgets, can't sit still, talks a lot, and has trouble taking turns. Combined: the child has trouble paying attention and can't control impulses.

3. Medication may not be necessary. Discuss treatment with your doctor. You may be able to manage your child's AD/HD with behavior therapy alone.

THREE

Work closely with your child's teachers and healthcare team to stay on top of your child's behavior and progress. Use the ideas these experts give you at home, and share your ideas with them.

FOUR

Remember that your child has AD/HD, and is not trying to behave badly or make you angry. Your child may need to be taught everyday skills like listening, following directions, and staying on task. And you may repeat yourself a lot!