

Is your child disorganized, always losing their belongings, having to be reminded to do things repeatedly, can't sit still, or always "in trouble"? These could be signs of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. This is a behavior disorder that causes children to lose focus, have difficulty concentrating, and sometimes act in a hyper and impulsive manner. It is often difficult to determine if kids are just being kids or if there is a bigger problem. If a child has ADHD the symptoms will be present both at home and school. Children are often diagnosed by 2nd or 3rd grade if they are hyper or impulsive but the diagnosis may be missed if they are just inattentive. Oftentimes, girls who are not as active by nature, may not be diagnosed until later years when academics become increasingly more challenging. There are 3 types of ADHD- inattentive type, hyperactive/impulsive type, and a combination of inattentive and hyperactive/impulsive type.

Children with ADHD will often have a hard time completing tasks unless it is something they are truly passionate about. For instance, many parents have a hard time believing the diagnosis when they see their child sitting and playing video games for hours. Not only are video games very stimulating they are usually very popular and therefore something kids become passionate about. If your child is diagnosed with ADHD it will be very important to work with his teacher to find creative ways to keep his or her interest in challenging subjects that he or she may not particularly like.

Additionally, children with ADHD can be overly emotional, and moody, invade personal space, ask intrusive questions, and thus cause others to not want to be around them. Children with the hyperactive/impulsive type of the disorder have a difficult time sitting still and may still fidget, tap their feet, or play with things around them.

Although ADHD can be challenging it can also have positive qualities. Children with ADHD can be energetic, able to transition more easily, imaginative, and readily accepting of others. No child wants to be in trouble, off task, or chronically disappointing adults. This disorder prevents their brains from performing in the way we require. The best way to determine if your child has ADHD is to seek guidance from a professional. You can get a preliminary screening by your pediatrician, or mental health counselor, or testing from a psychologist.

Signs to look for:

- A very messy book bag
- A notebook or desk that is crammed with papers
- Multiple prompts to complete simple tasks
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Frequent problems with peers resulting in few friends
- excessively energetic and/or impulsive

Tips for parents:

- Organizational systems and strategies to teach children how to keep track of their things
- quiet, non-stimulating environment to complete homework
- written lists of daily tasks to complete
- rewards for appropriate behaviors

- consequences for inappropriate behavior
- structured, high-energy activities such as sports to channel energy appropriately
- meetings with school officials and teachers to see what supports are available and necessary
- patience-they are not trying to be difficult
- support from friends, family, or support groups

Call for a consultation:

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