



MERRILL PALMER SKILLMAN INSTITUTE
for Child & Family Development

ADHD and Your Family



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What is Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder?

- One of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood
- Results in differences in brain development and brain activity
- It is chronic
- It is typically diagnosed between the ages of 3 –7 years old
- It impacts child's family, academic and social functioning
- It is treatable



ADHD Is Not Caused By

Eating too much sugar

Watching too much television

Vaccinations

Parenting styles



ADHD Diagnosis is Based on a Child Consistently Displaying

- **Hyperactivity**
 - Examples: consistently appears more physically active than peers, struggles with engaging in quiet activities
 - **Inattention**
 - Examples: routinely not completing tasks, listening, or following directions
 - **Impulsivity**
 - Examples: consistently struggles with waiting turn, seems to talk all of the time
- CDC- Symptoms and Diagnosis of ADHD



Possible Risk Factors for ADHD

Genetics

Low birth weight

Brain injury

Exposure to
environmental
toxins like lead

Alcohol and
tobacco use
during pregnancy

In many cases
cause is
unknown



Myth: ADHD is a Learning Disability

- ADHD is NOT a learning disability
- Symptoms can make it more difficult to learn due to challenges
 - Concentrating
 - Staying focused
 - Completing tasks
 - Engaging in disruptive behaviors



MYTH – Only Boys have ADHD

- ADHD affects both boys and girls
 - Boys are more likely to be diagnosed
 - Boys are more likely to be diagnosed due to acting out behaviors
 - Girls are more likely to be diagnosed due to inattentive behaviors

- add.org



Myth: ADHD Medications Should be Avoided

- Make an informed decision
 - Talk to child's doctor
 - Ask questions about risks and benefits
 - Inquire about all options
 - Keep doctor informed



How You Think About ADHD Does Matter

- Recognize that ADHD is common, you are not alone
- View ADHD as a challenge rather than a descriptor of your child
- Avoid comparing your child to sibs and other children
- Realize that many of the behaviors are not purposeful
- Understand that your child may at times feel frustrated, sad and angry because of challenges caused by ADHD



Managing Your Expectations

- Keep expectations in line with your child's abilities
- Be concise when making requests
- Be prepared to repeat and offer reminders
- Be sure to let your child know what they are doing right
- Allow for guided second chances and do-overs
- If discipline is needed, help your child understand why
- Avoid discipline that results in shame and embarrassment



Added Support

01

Consider joining
a support group

02

Attend trainings
and conferences

03

Collaborate with
child's teacher,
physician,
counselor

04

Engage in self
care





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