



***You may have heard the term “ADHD” and wondered what it means. Right?***

Parenting a ADHD child can be both challenging and rewarding. The home can often become a combat zone with confrontation over every little thing. Mom and Dad are left harassed and fed up, and the children upset and angry. There are ways to break out of this cycle and here we'll discuss those things.

Many people think that **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** signs include children or adults that are disruptive and totally out of control. While this can occur in some cases of this disorder, this isn't the only potential picture. Some kids that deal with ADHD can show signs of hyperactivity, but not all of them. Others may simply sit quietly while their attention is miles and miles away. Yet other children may focus too hard on one task, which can make it difficult for them to go on to something else. In some cases, children may be overly impulsive, but only mildly inattentive.



It's important to realize that there are three different primary characteristics of ADHD. They include **impulsivity, hyperactivity, and inattention**. The symptoms and signs can vary from child to child, depending on the predominant characteristics that they may have. Some children are inattentive, but they are not impulsive or hyperactive at all. Other children may be able to pay attention but they are impulsive and hyperactive. Lastly, kids can have the combination of being hyperactive, impulsive, and inattentive. When children only have the inattentive symptom of this disorder, sometimes they are overlooked, since they don't cause disruptions. Of course, even children who only suffer from inattention can have problems, such as under-performing in school, not correctly following directions, and not playing by the rules, which causes clashes with other people.

To help parents of children with ADHD, here is a look at all three of the characteristics of ADHD and the ADHD signs that go along with those characteristics.

## **INATTENTIVE TYPE**

Kids who have ADHD can pay attention. They do so when they are doing things that they like to do or when hearing things about topics they are interested in. They usually don't have trouble staying on task or staying focused, but they can tune out quickly when tasks are boring or repetitive. Staying on track can be a problem as well, since they often bounce from one task to another while never completing a task. It is difficult for children to keep schoolwork organized. Some even have a tough time concentrating when other things are occurring around them. Here are some of the symptoms of inattention:

- They appear not to listen when someone speaks to them
- They make careless mistakes
- Get bored before completing a task
- Fail to pay close attention to details
- Get easily distracted and have problems staying focused
- Frequently loses things like toys, homework, books, and more
- Has a difficult time following instructions or remembering things
- Has a hard time finishing projects and keeping things organized



## **HYPERACTIVE TYPE**

Children are often very active naturally. However, children that have the hyperactive characteristic of this disorder are moving all the time. They bounce from activity to activity and try to do many things at one time. They are usually always moving and when forced to sit, they may be drumming their fingers, tapping a foot, or shaking their leg. Some of the symptoms of hyperactivity in kids include the following:

- Constantly move around and often climb or run when it is inappropriate
- Squirming and fidgeting occurs constantly
- Has a tough time relaxing or playing quietly
- Often have a short fuse or a very quick temper
- Often talks excessively
- Leaves the seated position when sitting is something that is expected
- Seems to always be on the go, as if something is driving them



## **IMPULSIVE TYPE**

The third and last main characteristic of ADHD happens to be impulsiveness. Kids that are impulsive have problems controlling themselves. They don't sensor themselves the way other children do, so they end up asking questions that are irrelevant in class, interrupt conversations, ask personal questions, make observations that are tactless, or invade the space of other people. For kids dealing

with this characteristic, it is difficult to wait or be patient. Often children that show signs of being impulsive overreact emotionally or are moody. ADHD signs of children that are impulsive include the following:

- Saying the wrong thing at a time that is inappropriate
- Guessing on problems instead of taking time to solve problems
  - Interrupt others on a regular basis
  - Acts before thinking
  - Isn't able to wait for their turn in games or while in line
  - Blurts out answers when in class without hearing the entire question or being called upon
  - Has a hard time keeping powerful emotions in check, which causes temper tantrums and angry outbursts
- Intrudes on games or conversations of other people.



Understanding these characteristics is important and the signs that go along with each characteristic. Take a good look at these symptoms. If you notice them in your child, you may need to have your child further tested for ADHD.

You need to understand that an ADHD child needs special attention. But it does not follow that your lives should be turned upside down and you should cater to their every whim.

Clear boundaries and expectations over behavior should be set and met. You as parents must provide the essential guidance, behavior management, patience, and discipline.

***Here are some suggestions for making your home life calmer and your family happier:***

- ❖ Start by truly understanding the condition. ADHD can be made up of **many different characteristics**. Ensure you understand why your child is acting the way they do.
- ❖ A lot of the time children with ADHD **won't be acting in wilfully disobedient manner**. When you ask them to do something and they don't it's likely they either haven't understood or were distracted rather than consciously deciding to defy you. That's not saying they won't do that sometimes so you need to learn to distinguish between the two.
- ❖ It helps to realize that people respond better to **positive direction** rather than negative and this applies to kids with ADHD too. This means rather than always telling them what not to do, start telling them what they should be doing. That way they'll understand better what it is that you expect of them.
- ❖ Although you may not feel like it, always take the time to praise your child when they do something right. It is very easy to spot when things are going wrong and highlight those moments, however all this does is reiterate to your child that they are 'bad' or 'naughty' and that as everything they do is 'wrong' what's the point in changing their behaviour? **Take the time to notice good behaviour and actively give praise, i.e. 'You hung your clothes up, thank you - that's great'**. All children require positive feedback, but **ADHD kids more so**. They need both verbal (praise) and physical rewards (toys, treats etc) to a greater extent than non-ADHD kids do.



- ❖ Think about timing too for punishments and rewards. These should follow the action that leads to them as quickly as possible. **Children will associate the behaviour with the consequence more easily if the reward or punishment for those behaviours immediately follows.** Waiting for your spouse to come home from work to punish a child that misbehaved hours earlier is not as effective as instant feedback.
- ❖ Be accommodating of the ADHD behaviours and try to avoid placing your child in a position where these behaviours are likely to cause difficulties and so lead to punishment. **Be realistic about expectations.**
- ❖ Don't forget that your child will have **qualities and abilities that can be nurtured.** Try to find an outlet that meets their interest i.e. a sport or hobby. This is also a good time to spend some quality time together if it's something that you can get involved with too.
- ❖ Be consistent and fair. **You are a role model for your child** so if it is all getting too much, leave the room and calm down. Children learn by watching others so lead by example.
- ❖ If you really aren't coping then don't be afraid to **ask for help from professionals.** Among the people you could turn to are your physician, counsellors, psychiatrists, psychologists, teachers, and therapists.
- ❖ Finally **don't forget to tell your child that you love them** and remember that a good sense of humour will carry you far.

**Parenting ADHD child can be quite a challenging experience, but conversely seeing your child make progress is very rewarding.**



***Thank you for taking the time to read about my reflections. I hope you have found something useful here.***

***Next month's topic: "Safe touch- a key to GOOD mental health and relationships"***

***Happy parenting & best of luck for us!***

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**Parents who are willing to contribute are encouraged to email their thoughts to [tigpsar.counselor@gmail.com](mailto:tigpsar.counselor@gmail.com).**