

TIPS FOR PARENTS:

CHILDREN'S DIFFICULTY WITH *ATTENTION & HYPERACTIVITY*

Look for Warning Signs

Symptoms: Attention (Concentration)

- Makes careless mistakes in schoolwork
- Has difficulty staying focused during conversations; mind seems to be elsewhere
- Starts tasks but quickly loses focus and is easily sidetracked; fails to meet deadlines
- Poor time management; disorganized; messy
- Loses things such as homework, keys, books, lunch money

Symptoms: Hyperactivity (Impulsivity)

- Fidgets; taps hands or feet; squirms in seat; restless
- Has difficulty remaining in places where he is supposed to be (e.g., lunch line)
- Runs around or climbs in situations where it is inappropriate or unsafe (e.g., crossing a street)
- Talks excessively; blurts out answers in class; butts into conversations
- Unable to play quietly--either by himself or with others

Discuss with Your Child

Facts about Attention and Hyperactivity

- Symptoms of inattention and hyperactivity often—but not necessarily--go hand in hand. ADHD is the term used for both sets of symptoms.
- Unfortunately, children with ADHD often are misperceived as oppositional, defiant, lazy, rude, irresponsible, or not understanding how to do a task.
- Symptoms occur in multiple settings, such as school AND home, with friends AND alone.
- Even though symptoms may be absent under certain conditions (e.g., with close supervision, in a novel and interesting situation, when there are rewards for appropriate behavior), the symptoms are present elsewhere. This makes diagnosis difficult.
- With age, overt signs of hyperactivity tend to become less prominent whereas inattention becomes more prominent. With age, signs of hyperactivity tend to become more restricted to inner feelings of jitteriness, restless, and impatience.

Treatment Strategies

- ADHD is treated, first, with proper diagnosis and the ruling out of other possible explanations of the symptoms.
- Help should address (a) poor peer relationships, (b) poor academic achievement, and (c) injury proneness—all of which can be consequences of ADHD.
- Help at school typically involves modifications of the academic program and environment (e.g., support from teachers, reduction of classroom distractions, increase in one-to-one instruction).
- Treatment by a psychologist often includes cognitive behavioral therapy and sometimes a referral for a medication evaluation by a pediatrician or child psychiatrist.
- Stress with your child that ADHD is treatable; relief is in sight!

When Necessary, Get Professional Help

- From your child's pediatrician
- From your child's teacher
- From a psychologist