

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

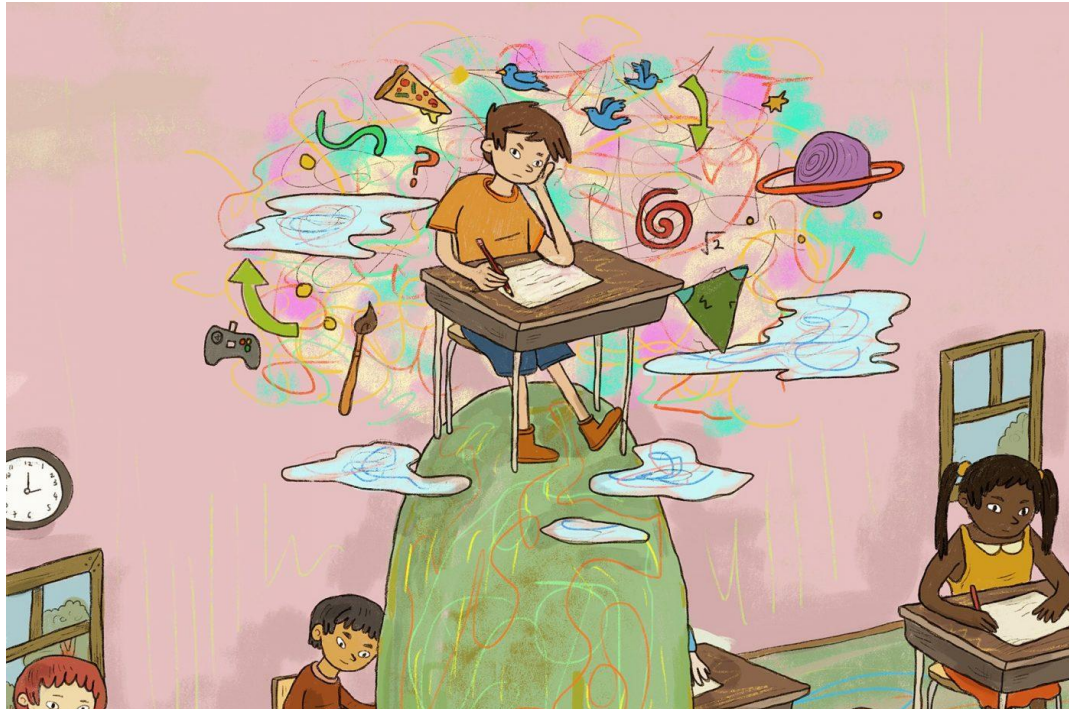
Information for parents and carers

Introduction

This booklet looks to help you as a parent or carer to build a better understanding of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and strategies that can help to manage the symptoms. It also gives you guidance on where to get more information on help available to you if you have a child with ADHD.

All children need guidance on how to behave sometimes. If your child has ADHD, there are lots of ways as a parent that you can support your child and find ways to manage their symptoms and improve behaviours. Gaining further understanding of ADHD is the first step by talking to people such as Doctors, Psychologists, Specialist Nurses or Teachers.

Seeking advice and trying to make the most of the experienced professionals, treatments and support available can be hugely important for your child's development. Building up a support network can hopefully help to make things a little easier in your home. Reading books and using the internet is a good place to start to read about ADHD; see book and website recommendations throughout this leaflet.



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What is ADHD?

ADD stands for Attention Deficit Disorder; this is when being inattentive is the biggest challenge.

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder, which means that there may be a slight difference in the way that the brain functions. Some research suggests there are certain areas of the brain that show differences in structure and in the way that they work. ADHD often runs in a family which suggests that there is a genetic link (**SIGN Guidelines, 2009**).

ADHD is not caused by parenting or diet, neither is it the child's fault. It has been suggested that 1 in 20 children may have ADHD (*Teenagers and ADHD, 2011*).

Money matters

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) - You may be able to get help with some costs of daily living. Even though ADHD is not classified as a disability, it can have an impact on daily functioning; which means that you could be assessed for government payments.

To find out more information, please contact:

Citizens Advice Bureau: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/sick-or-disabled-people-and-carers/pip/> (0131 550 1000)

Kindred Scotland- <http://www.kindred-scotland.org/> (0800 031 5793)

Personal Independent Payments - <https://www.gov.uk/pip> (0800 917 2222)

Edinburgh Council- offer information on local care and support services:
<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/children-families> (0131 200 2000)

Difference between boys and girls

More boys have a diagnosis of ADHD than girls. Some clinicians think that ADHD is under-recognised in girls and so they are less likely to be referred or assessed. Typically girls with ADHD display less 'disruptive' behaviours than boys, which means that their challenges can sometimes go unnoticed.

Positive traits

There are lots of good things about ADHD, but it can make some things more challenging. Trying some or lots of different strategies and adapted learning styles should hopefully make things less challenging. It is important to note that each individual is different, so ADHD affects people in completely different ways. Some of the more positive aspects of ADHD are:

Generous	Active
Humour	Eager
Sense of fairness	Good Problem Solvers
Willingness to take risks and keep trying	Dream Big
Persistence	Ambitious
Engaging conversational skills	Sensitive
Compassion towards others	Interested in learning
Willingness to lend a hand	Hyperfocus if highly interested
Entertaining	Outside of the box creativity
Adventurous	Heightened Energy
Enthusiastic	Bright personalities
Fun	Engaged in the moment
Inquisitive	Sees things that other people miss
Exciting	Spontaneous
Ingenuity	Show flashes of brilliance
Resilience- pushing past setbacks and adapting to new strategies	

Features and challenges

The three core symptoms of ADHD are: **Hyperactivity**, **Inattention** and **Impulsiveness**

Hyperactivity: Fidgety, restless, always fiddling and touching things, 'busy hands', always on the go.

Some challenges of ADHD come from children feeling very active; it can be really challenging to sit still in class and play quietly. There is a need to be constantly moving and this can result in a child climbing over furniture or running around excitedly and inappropriately, or a young person wandering round the classroom. This is often described as being "driven by a motor."

Moving around and speaking lots can often be distracting for classmates that are trying to focus in a different way. Being very active can mean that the child may find gym class or

'doing' activities and classes (such as technologies) a little bit easier. There is a feeling of restlessness, meaning it is difficult to sit still without fidgeting. Children with ADHD often can't play quietly and can make lots of noise or talk while they play (even when they are in situations where being quiet is expected).

Inattention: Concentration can be challenging, instructions can be difficult to follow, prone to skipping from task to task, disorganised, can appear forgetful.

It can be challenging to focus on one thing for a period of time as they may be busy thinking about lots of other things. This does mean that they can come up with lots of fantastic ideas but they will need to work a little bit harder to complete a piece of work. Ignoring distractions is difficult for them and this can mean that even though they fully understand the school work, they can make mistakes or don't get it finished. This can result in a very short attention span, being easily distracted and finding it difficult to organise their approach to tasks. Sometimes this disorganisation can lead to losing or misplacing things more often.

Impulsive behaviour: Find it challenging to wait for their turn, sometimes speak and act without thinking through consequences, interrupting others, outbursts, poor road safety, difficulty regulating emotion.

It can be difficult for people with ADHD to stop and think before doing something. Friendships can be challenging without strategies in place to get better at turn-taking and interrupting games or conversations. In class, when they know the answer to a question, they don't put their hand up but will shout it out. Taking turns and waiting in queues are not easy for them- this can even affect things like conversations when they interrupt or intrude into other people's conversations. Poor consequential thinking can result in risk-taking behaviour or rule breaking.

Additional criteria

- These symptoms must have been present before the age of 7
- Have been present for more than 6 months
- Occur in more than one setting / environment (e.g. home and school)
- Symptoms are inconsistent with the child's age or developmental level
- Symptoms are causing significant difficulties and affecting daily functioning
- For some young people it can be important to explore and rule out any other conditions (such as other neuro developmental disorders, anxiety, depression or learning difficulties and learning disability).

Of course, everyone can be inattentive, impulsive and full of energy sometimes but people with ADHD have more extreme **variations of these behaviours**. The behaviours can cause significant difficulties in lots of areas in life (such as the classroom and at home).

Each individual can experience these symptoms in different ways. For some, hyperactivity and impulsiveness may be the most challenging features. For other people, being inattentive is perhaps the biggest challenge; this is sometimes referred to as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

Or for others, it may be all three features that are very challenging for them.

Descriptions of some people living with ADHD

“It is like trying to watch the TV while somebody is constantly changing the channel. A bewildering stream of changing images, sounds and thoughts. You can’t focus on one thing, because something new is always distracting you.”

“Sometimes you’re so wrapped up in this whirl of thoughts and images that you don’t even notice when somebody speaks to you. Parents and Teachers keep telling you off because you forget things. Or do things that irritate them. Or don’t do the things you’re supposed to do. Even friends can be irritating sometimes and it’s not fun.”

Features of ADHD may change over time

All young children are excitable and haven’t fine-tuned their ability to think before they act as their brains are still developing. In a child with ADHD, these behaviours can be even more of a challenge.

In adolescence, the excessive activity may be replaced by inner feelings of restlessness. In the classroom, instead of constantly getting out of their seat, they may display low level fidgeting and have overly busy minds.

Adulthood:

Some people with ADHD have fewer symptoms as they age, but some adults continue to have major symptoms that interfere with daily functioning. Adults with ADHD may find it difficult to focus and prioritise, leading to missed deadlines and forgotten meetings or social plans. The inability to control impulses can range from impatience while waiting in line or driving in traffic, to mood swings and outbursts of anger.

Treatment

Treatment is usually a combination of three approaches: Education, Behaviour Management, and Medication.

Education

It is a great first step that you are reading this booklet. Please also refer to websites and books that are recommended throughout this booklet.

Useful Websites

For teenagers, parents and teachers:

www.livingwithADHD.co.uk

Information for adults, children and families:

www.adders.org

Information and resources for anyone who needs assistance:

www.addiss.co.uk

Useful books about ADHD:

- ***I Would If I Could: A Teenagers Guide to ADHD*** by Michael Gordon

Explains what ADHD is and how to cope with the disorder.

- ***All Dogs Have ADHD*** by Kathy Hoopman

All Dogs Have ADHD takes an inspiring and affectionate look at Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), using images and ideas from the canine world to explore a variety of traits that will be instantly recognisable to those who are familiar with ADHD

- ***Late, Lost and Unprepared ADHD Book*** by Joyce Cooper-Kahn

Suitable for parents of children from primary school through to High School who struggle with: impulse control, cognitive flexibility, initiation, working memory, planning, organising; and self-monitoring

- ***ADHD Workbook for Teens*** by Lara Honos-Webb

A workbook for teens to learn simple skills they can use to confidently handle school, make and keep friends, and organise and finish every project they start

- ***Understanding ADHD*** by Green & Chee

This guide for parents provides a clear overview of ADHD (causes, behaviours and treatments) and practical, proven strategies to help with common associated problems such as inattention, impulsiveness and underachievement.

- ***Putting on the Brakes: Understanding and Taking Control of Your ADD or ADHD*** by Patricia Quinn and Judith Stern

This resource for young people, their parents, and professionals includes updated information about medication; organisation and time management strategies.

Behaviour management

Behavioural treatments vary between child to child based on their needs and the resources available. Treatments can be elaborate and intensive or simple and low-key. The main approach includes training programmes developed by specialists to help parents manage symptoms and help the child to self-monitor and self-regulate their symptoms, which can improve their functioning and the social aspects of school. Parents can self-refer to:

Behaviour Management Training

Incredible Years for 3-6 years

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/support-families/parenting-courses-help-3-6-years-form?documentId=12851&categoryId=20100>

Social Skills Training

Please check with your child's school for any groups that may be running in schools

Parent ADHD Programmes / Workshops

Barnardos ADHD education session for parents. Please speak to your specialist ADHD nurse for more details.

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/services/adhd-support-service>

*Please speak to your case holder for up to date information. CAMHS occasionally run ADHD workshops too.

City of Edinburgh Council

Edinburgh Council have the below courses available for parents. Full details can be found on their website at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/support-families>

- 'Raising Children with Confidence' 0-11 years
- 'Raising Teens with Confidence' 11-16 years
- Triple P Positive Parenting Program 11-16 years

Availability of some courses may be limited due to COVID-19. You can email growingconfidence@edinburgh.gov.uk for more information.

Scottish ADHD Coalition- Local Support Groups

<https://www.scottishadhdcoalition.org/local-groups-in-scotland/>

Parentline Scotland

<https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/>

0800 028 2233

Emotional Regulation Support

Emotions Talks

[http://www.clermiston.edin.sch.uk/documents/%5B166897%5DEmotion Talks Leaflet.pdf](http://www.clermiston.edin.sch.uk/documents/%5B166897%5DEmotion%20Talks%20Leaflet.pdf)

School-based programmes to improve performance in school: Please discuss anything on offer through school meetings, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) planning meetings and/or the school's Educational Psychologist.

Questions for Professionals (write these down before or after sessions to help remember at the next appointment)

Medication

Medication is not a cure for ADHD, but can often help improve symptoms. There are two types of medication which can be prescribed by your doctor: a stimulant or a non-stimulant medication.

Stimulant medication is typically prescribed first because it works for 70 - 80% of young people with ADHD. The medication increases chemical (dopamine and norepinephrine) levels between the brain's synapses. This happens as soon as the medication crosses the blood-brain barrier, which takes approximately 45 - 60 minutes. The result of taking stimulant medication is often seen through a reduction in hyperactivity, distractibility and/or impulsivity. All stimulant medications incorporate one of two molecules (either methylphenidate or amphetamine) and the choice between which medication is used depends on each individual's biochemistry. It is important to note that this is why family members can experience different results on the same medication.

Non-stimulant medication is usually considered for the 20 - 30% of young people who have tried stimulant medication and not seen results. It takes approximately 5 – 7 days to assess the full benefits of this medication. Sustained focus, improved mood, greater attention to detail, improved sleep and reduced impulsivity are all signs that the medication is working.

Independent Medical authorities, including the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2018), and the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN, 2009) give pharmacological treatment recommendations.

Methylphenidate, the most commonly prescribed medication for ADHD, has been in use for many years. Dexamfetamine and Atomoxetine are also prescribed. The medicine is usually a small tablet or capsule (SIGN, 2009).

This table shows the current medications licensed for ADHD (*SIGN Guidelines, 2009; Teenagers and ADHD, 2011*).

Medication	Type
Short-acting Methylphenidate	Stimulant
Long-lasting Methylphenidate (6-12 hours)	Stimulant
Dexamfetamine	Stimulant
Atomoxetine	Non-Stimulant
Guanfacine	Non-Stimulant

How does medicine help?

The overall aim of medicine is to improve your child's concentration and focus. If your child has better focus and concentration, it can help with their school work. This can make it easier for them to have fun with friends and hopefully improves their experience in the classroom.

Sometimes children don't feel hungry when they take specific medicines and they may eat more when the medication wears off. It can also sometimes affect how tired a child feels at night time. Some people have reported feeling nauseous as a short-term side effect. This usually goes away within a week. If the nausea doesn't go away or you would like further information on side-effects, please discuss this and any other concerns further with your child's doctor.

ADHD Nurse Specialists will speak to you and your family initially about the medicine and you can decide together if it would be helpful. There will then be medication and regular check-ups with a doctor to see if the medication is just right for your child. At these check-ups the doctor will take your child's height, weight and blood pressure. Once your child is stable on the medication, routine check-ups should take place every 6 months.

However, some children don't take any medication and use behavioural strategies for extra support instead. **Some of these strategies will be covered in this booklet (page 11).**

Are diet and nutrition important?

The current scientific evidence suggests that ADHD is not caused by diet although for some individuals certain foods may worsen ADHD symptoms. Some parents/carers do see an improvement when these foods are removed or restricted. It can be helpful to keep a food diary for a few weeks to enable you to highlight any foods which seem to have an impact on your child's symptoms.

Examples of these foods include:

- Caffeine – found in chocolate and some hot chocolates, coffee/tea and some fizzy drinks
- Some Diluting Juice/ Squash/Cordial
- Artificial food colouring, for example: sunset yellow, tartrazine, carmoisine and ponceau 4R, or the preservative sodium benzoate, have been found to worsen hyperactive behaviours (*SIGN Guidelines*, 2009).

Talking to your child about ADHD medication

The **additional medication leaflet** covers the most up-to date information about ADHD medications. Remember, medication is not a cure and the staff at the clinic will be happy to support you with ways of talking to your child. It is also important that you tell your child that the medication may help them manage some of their symptoms and behaviours. **But they still need to learn ways that work for them.**

Routines

It is really important for children with ADHD to have routines for lots of situations (for example: getting things ready for school/work, homework, mealtimes, getting ready for bed, etc.) Routines allow everyone to know what is expected and what is going to happen next. While it can take time and a lot of effort from parents/carers to establish and keep to routines, once established they make life a lot easier for everyone. It is a good idea to check that any routine you put in place suits everyone in your family.

Rules for ensuring routines are effective:

- Keep them simple
- Make sure everyone understands them
- Give children time to learn and adapt to the routine
- If you make any changes let everyone know in advance
- Remember to use praise when a child keeps to the routine
- Have a back-up plan for unforeseen circumstances
- When first getting into a routine, it can be helpful to set it up every day of the week, including the weekend.

Strategies

Encourage your child to ask their teacher to **repeat instructions** if needed, or get them to write them down.

Reserve a space to put everything that you need. Encourage your child to **put everything back in its 'place'** to help keep their space organised. Perhaps create a **'take-off' and a 'landing zone'** to help them organise their belongings and required equipment for school. When they arrive home, they put their things in the landing zone and when they are preparing to leave, they put things in the take-off zone. Ideally the take-off zone is prepared the day/evening before.

Break down large tasks into smaller sizes, using simple language and set an order and deadlines for completing each step. Give small rewards for completing each step. Rewards can be verbal praise, a fresh air break or dancing to their favourite song before starting the next task.

Help your child make a **'To Do List' for each day** and plan the best order to do things in. Then make a schedule showing when you plan to do each thing. An example could be using the note section or calendar in their mobile phone or a diary/notebook that can be decorated and used for appointments, homework, lists and phone numbers, etc.

Colour codes, post it notes or files to help organise and remember important tasks. (e.g. red = important; green = not urgent; blue = tasks to do; yellow = school work to be done).

Encourage your child to **work in a quiet area**, away from possible distractions and ensure that they take regular short 'brain breaks' (e.g. position their desk to reduce exposure to unnecessary visual stimulation; reduce sound levels with ear plugs or headsets).

If your child is trying to focus or concentrate, **try to keep temptations away** (such as phone-texts, computer-emails, tablet-social media). **Have breaks organised in advance** so that there are limited distractions during time to focus. As the parent, stick to the time frames/limits you set for this.

Channel their need to move by **playing sports or being outdoors**.

Encourage your child to **identify waves of emotions quickly and take a step back** from the situation. Take a time out if necessary.

Help to keep to the time limits by using a **watch or using an alarm**.

Apply the OHIO principle (Only Handle it Once) to avoid getting bogged down in paperwork.

Work your way through your “to do list” or “to file” piles. Try to do everything in one step. For example, open your mail when you are ready to deal with it, follow things up at once, then immediately file whatever needs to be kept.

Solving problems:

1. Identify the problem
2. Make a list of possible options
3. List the pros and cons of each possible option
4. Select a solution
5. Apply the chosen solution to test its effectiveness.
6. Was it successful? If unsuccessful, chose another solution and try again.

Surround your child with **positive people** that are happy to adapt styles to take your child’s individual learning style into consideration.

Strategies for calming bedtime routine:

Parents sometimes report that their children with ADHD often have problems getting to sleep, which is both a cause of concern and a source of conflict. Here are a few tips and tricks to perhaps make bedtime easier:

- Ensure that the room is at a **comfortable temperature**
- The child should have a **comfortable pillow**
- It is always a good idea to avoid caffeine drinks and heavy meals around bedtime. You should also try to avoid raising difficult issues or starting arguments at this time. Examples of drinks with caffeine are some hot chocolates and Diet Coke. **Warm milk** is a better drink before bedtime
- Limit access to video games in the hours before bed
- **Dim light sources**, including all screens (Computers, TV, Tablets), in the evening, especially one hour before bedtime
- Include **personal hygiene** as part of the night routine (teeth, shower, bath, hair, nails, etc)
- Set time aside for **reading or storytelling**, ideally alone with the child. This quality time should not be dependent on the child’s behaviour
- **Speak** with the child about their day at school and their friends. Put any worries in a box or notepad for discussion the next day at an agreed time

- Think of asking your child to remember **something positive** that happened that day; something that made them feel proud or happy
- Finish by **highlighting quality or specific good behaviours** from that day.

Tips and tricks for bedtime

An example of a helpful bedtime routine is:

1. Agree in advance what the bedtime will be (e.g. place, time, what steps there will be and in what order)
2. Light snack for supper
3. Bath or shower
4. Put on pyjamas
5. Brush teeth
6. Make sure the bedroom is quiet, lights darkened, at a comfortable temperature and your child has their familiar bedtime teddy/blanket etc.
7. Child gets in to their bed
8. Bedtime story
9. Parent says goodnight / gives kiss and leaves bedroom

If the routine is disrupted for special occasions or holidays, it is important to re-establish it as soon as practical although this may take some time. This helps your child's brain to get their sleep routine back in place.

Please check Sleep Scotland <http://www.sleepscotland.org/> for further information.

Strategy for Activities

The below table can be completed by the child so that they can see their strengths.

What am I good at.....	
Make a list of things that you are good at in the first left box. In the other boxes, ask other people (Your teacher, your parents, and friends) to put down what you are good at...	
What I am good at	Whatthinks I'm good at
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
What.....thinks I am good at	Whatthinks I'm good at
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Break it up

Sometimes it helps to break up big tasks into lots of little tasks.

In the grid, we've broken down "Do my homework" into smaller easier steps. You could use the grid to do the same thing for other tasks like "Getting ready for school" or "Getting ready for bed".

Big Task	Smaller Tasks
Do my homework	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. At school, note down what the homework is or take a photo2. Pack the right books into your school bag and ask yourself: Have I got all the right books and equipment that I will need?3. Take your school bag home4. Plan how long the homework will take5. Decide when to do your homework6. Do the homework7. Put the books back into your school bag8. Place your bag in your 'take off station' so that you know where it is in the morning9. Take your school bag to school in the morning.
Big Task	Smaller Tasks

If and Then Strategy

Think up manageable challenges for your child to earn rewards and privileges.

If we give young people the opportunity to negotiate, we can create a situation where both parent and the young person benefit. Try to be specific about time and duration, such as:

- Keep your room tidy for a week
- Getting dressed in 10 minutes for 5 days in a row
- Not interrupting people when they are on the phone.

Then in return you can agree that they get a specific reward or privilege, such as:

- 15 minutes extra on the internet
- Downloading a new app
- 30 minutes extra playing outside.

Use the 'If and Then Cards' template below to make deals with your children. You could even stick the card on the fridge or kitchen cupboard so that both of you can remember it.

If and Then Card	
If I.....	
(Write here what you are going to do)	
For.....days	
(Fill in the number)	
Then I can (Write the reward)	
.....	
Signed	Signed
Date:	(Parent)

Praise and rewards

Children with ADHD respond well to praise and rewards and it is important to show them you are pleased with something they have done (or not done). Rewards don't need to be material goods like a toy. Indeed, it is often best to have rewards that involve things like spending time with you doing something enjoyable, getting to make a decision (e.g. what film for family movie night, what to have for dinner one night that week, or picking their bedtime story), stickers, or verbal praise.

Tips and tricks about praise and rewards

- When you give praise, make sure you are clear and **specific** about what you are praising (e.g. 'I really liked the way you let your younger brother join your game'). If appropriate, you can also use signs of affection (e.g. a cuddle along with praise) to reinforce the positive message. If you say "well done on being good today" your child may not know what you actually mean or know what to do next time to get this praise or reward again as it is not specific
- Remember for some children with ADHD, a reward that they can see or feel is the best option (e.g. a cuddle, stickers or spending some time playing a game with you)
- Don't delay it - rewards need to be given immediately so that your child can relate it to the positive behaviour
- Be consistent - changes lead to confusion
- Make sure the rewards are relevant to your child to keep them motivated to earn them
- Once a reward is earned it should not be taken away– if rewards can be removed this may discourage children demonstrating good behaviours if they think that they will later lose the reward
- Children with ADHD can get easily bored with reward schemes, so have a few options at the ready and swap them from time to time
- Make a list with your child of rewards which have a combination of activities and small treats and, when it is appropriate, let them choose their reward from the list.

Siblings

As a parent, although it will be lively and exciting, you will be greatly aware of how challenging it can be to share a home with a child with ADHD. This can result in feeling exhausted, frustrated and sometimes emotionally drained. If you recognise these feelings, other children living in your household will perhaps recognise these feelings too. This means that it is important to give them extra care and attention to help them cope with their sibling's ADHD diagnosis.

They may have feelings of sadness or loss, due to missing out on the extra attention that your child with ADHD requires. Examples are: treasured toys being broken, family outings being cut short and being amongst lots of emotional moments.

Children thrive in a safe and predictable environment. Putting ADHD into the mix can make this tricky. Siblings can often be an easy target of strong emotions, which may result in them feeling victimised by their siblings with ADHD.

Being bossed around or feeling worried about impulsive behaviour can leave children feeling powerless.

Siblings can sometimes feel the burden to be responsible for their sibling with ADHD. Some children may feel a sense of pride to take on this role, but it is important to get the balance right to enable them to have their own care-free childhood.

There is a risk that children without ADHD will try to make themselves invisible so as not to burden their already stressed parents. They may view themselves as less significant. They may even feel a little bit ignored or unloved. If this happens, they might start to spend more time on their own or become very quiet. This makes it difficult for them to express their own needs and have these met.

Alternatively, siblings without ADHD may mimic their brother's or sister's behaviour, or intentionally misbehave to get your attention. Set clear rules and boundaries; help them understand their sibling's ADHD.

When ADHD is carefully managed, family relationships will be very much improved. Luckily there are lots of things that you can do to minimise disruption to other siblings.

Tips for supporting siblings

1. Educate the whole family about ADHD. If your children understand the reason behind hyperactive and impulsive behaviour, they will be more accepting and tolerant of it
2. Hold family meetings to ensure that everyone has a say in how the family operates. Take turns to be the speaker
3. Agree on one or two non-negotiable rules (such as: 'sibling's bedrooms are out of bounds'; 'we use indoor voices inside the house' and 'no hitting or kicking'). These rules apply to everyone
4. Try to spend 10 minutes every day with each of your children alone, just to talk about their day
5. Once a month, plan a special activity for you and each child alone. You could go on a day out or just to the park
6. Allow your children some quiet, uninterrupted time. You could arrange for your child with ADHD to go to a club or relative's home
7. Allow older children to have a lock on their bedroom door if that feels comfortable to you
8. If your children are getting on well together, acknowledge and praise it
9. Beware of mimicking. Try to only give your attention to good behaviours. If your child misbehaves, they should be ignored rather than rewarded with your attention, even if this is negative attention (shouting, being told off)

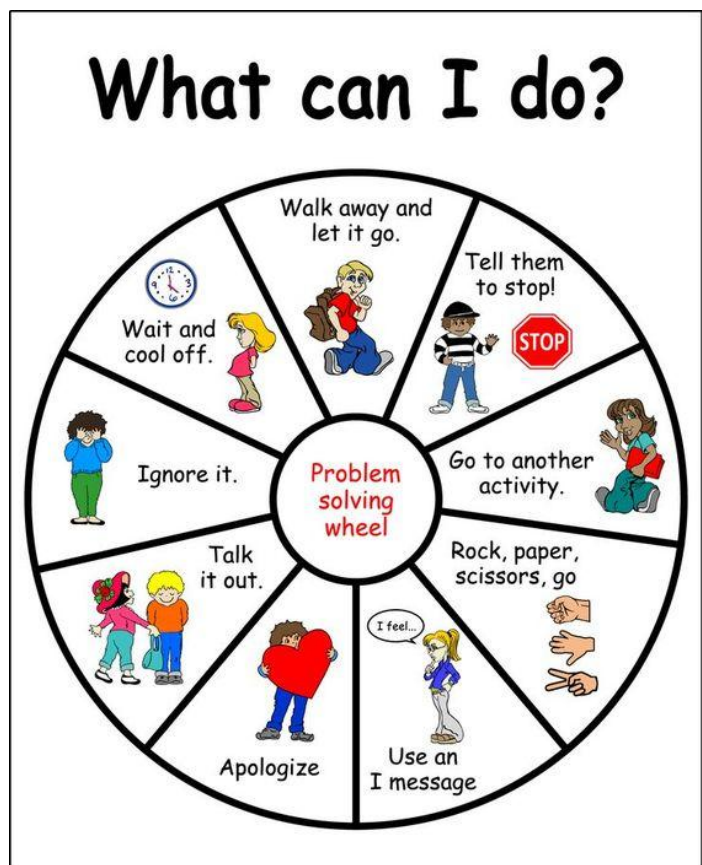
10. Bring as much routine into your home as possible. This way, everybody knows what to expect
11. Sibling rivalry is normal, but bullying is never acceptable. Hitting and aggression is always a red light behaviour (page 20). A good way to recognise bullying is when one child feels powerless to stop it
12. Make sure your children know that a brother or sister with ADHD is not their responsibility. If the siblings do have an active role in caring for their brother or sister with ADHD, then they may be eligible for Young Carers (<https://www.youngcarers.org.uk/>)
13. Children can feel a sense of belonging by being part of group activities outside the home. You could enrol them in cubs, brownies, sports teams or music clubs
14. Don't set yourself up for failure. If you know that one child won't be able to cope with a whole day out, arrange for a family member to collect them after an hour to do a separate fun activity.

Strategies for managing ADHD behaviour

Before starting to try to change your child's behaviour: Try to understand how your child may be feeling when getting a row all the time and being left feeling like they cannot do anything right. This can have a negative effect on their self-esteem. Parenting is a tough job and it is important to look after your own emotional needs too. Remember that your behaviour has an impact on the child, so try to set a good example and think about modelling the way that you would like them to behave.

If you think about it, what you would like more of is the good/acceptable behaviour, so the most important thing that you can do is to notice and encourage the behaviour that you would like more of. When your child is behaving well, go out of your way to tell them that you like it and be specific about it (e.g. sitting watching TV quietly together or playing peacefully with a sibling can be good to comment on). Your child will then start to feel better from the praise and their good behaviour should increase, as they will want to please you and behave well for you.

It is therefore extremely important to take a positive approach to managing any difficulties they experience, using praise for any achievements (no matter how small).



Whatever you are doing, remembering a few key rules will improve the chances of success for you and your child:

- Make sure that you have their full attention
- Stay calm and don't shout
- Have clear rules and structure
- Avoid escalating arguments
- Use immediate rewards and privileges
- Always have a backup plan.

As you respond more to your child's good behaviour in a calm manner, you will start to feel more in control. This is the start of building a positive relationship. It is also helpful to start spending a short amount of time regularly playing and interacting with your child, which can also build on positive relationships.

Ensuring that you are cutting down the attention to small undesirable behaviours can also help. Use the 'Planned Ignoring Technique' and look away for as long as you can, as long as the behaviour isn't dangerous. If the behaviour changes to more acceptable then you must be prepared to switch immediately to noticing and positively acknowledging these behaviours when they happen.

Stay calm and respond to your child's behaviour, not to how you are feeling. Set clear rules and boundaries for dangerous or damaging behaviour. Stay consistent and stick to your word. Take a short 'parental time out' if needed.

Traffic light analogy

You can use this Traffic Light analogy to identify a system to help identify the type of behaviour and how to respond to it.

Green = Appropriate Behaviour (Reward and Praise)

Amber = Low level inappropriate behaviour (Planned Ignoring Technique')

Red = Dangerous/ Inappropriate Behaviour (Act)

Family agreement and house rules

Family agreement/ house rules represent the values that are dear to us and that are to be respected by all members of the family. The purpose of these is to allow you to create and maintain harmony within your family. For example, keep hands to self and indoor voices.

As a parent, it is important to identify appropriate house rules because it is your responsibility to help make the family work in harmony. It is important that all involved in a child's care consistently follow the rules.

This agreement can be signed by everyone and then put somewhere visible (e.g. on the fridge, in the dining room). It is also important to put them at the child's eye level.

Tips for developing the rules:

- Target a small area first and then move on after success
- Consider which behaviours you would like to improve or focus on first
- Keep it simple (e.g. with a maximum of 3 rules to target at a time)
- Where appropriate rules should be for **everyone** at home including adults
- Agree and implement rules one at a time
- Make sure everyone understands and remembers the rules (e.g. get your children to make a list of the rules and put this somewhere obvious- like on the fridge door)
- Young children: Find a picture to represent the rule which can be placed just below the word
- Write down expected behaviours (and be specific) illustrated by each rule
- Try to keep the emphasis on positives (e.g. instead of saying 'don't be cheeky or abusive' say 'speak to one another in a respectful way' 'Don't shout, could be 'use indoor voices')
- Remember to praise your children each time they follow the agreed rules
- Make sure the consequences of not keeping to the rules are known in advance and are followed through (e.g. 'you earn this privilege, if you follow the rule for this time frame' rather than, 'you didn't do it, so I am taking away your xbox').

Family agreement example

Family Agreement	
Rules	Expected Behaviours
Indoor Voice	I use my calm voice (you can use the Voice Levels chart to show what is acceptable)
Use Kind Words	Respect people's feelings. Consider the speaker and others listening
Listen to everyone and wait for my turn to speak.	Eyes = looking at speaker Ears = both ears ready to hear Mouth = quiet, waiting for your turn to speak Body = facing toward the speaker Brain = thinking about what is being said

Voice Levels

- 0** **Silence is Golden** – Absolute silence. No one is talking.
- 1** **Spy Talk** – Whispering, only 1 person can hear you.
- 2** **Low Flow** – Small group work, only the group can hear you.
- 3** **Formal Normal** – Normal conversation voice.
- 4** **Loud Crowd** – Presenting voice. Everyone can hear you.
- 5** **Out of Control** – Playground voice, never used inside.

Gaining understanding of ADHD in the classroom

Supporting children at school

ADHD children are able to have a successful learning journey in mainstream school. Putting in place the right strategies will enhance their learning experience and help your child to achieve their full potential.

Having an understanding of ADHD symptoms and the impact that it has in the classroom is the first step. Having a bank of creative ideas will benefit children and help to support teachers.

Working with your child and their teacher to implement practical strategies to optimise learning, both in and out of school, can be very effective. Ultimately **consistent** support and effective strategies can help your child to meet learning challenges and experience success in school.

Classroom environment

The expectations in a class environment can be challenging for a child with ADHD; listening quietly, sitting still, concentrating all day long. The symptoms of ADD/ADHD mean that traditional ways of learning can be a lot more challenging.

As a parent, if you help to put in place learning strategies, this will help your child to cope with their different learning style. Communicating with the teacher on ways that you have found work best with your child can help your child to flourish at school. You are an expert on your child, so work with the education experts for best results.

It is important to note that the school teacher has a full class of children, all with individual personalities and learning needs. Parents' influence and involvement to find effective learning strategies can dramatically optimise your child's education and chances for success. Working alongside the teacher can significantly enhance your child's experience in the classroom.

Overcoming challenges in school

1. Eye contact can be difficult for children with ADHD/ADD so it may look like they are not paying attention but this is not necessarily the case. Fidgeting and moving around while people are speaking can also be a common behaviour. It is always beneficial to ask the child to repeat back a summary of the information
2. Children wandering around and avoiding school work can also be a symptom of ADHD. They are perhaps not sure how to do the work or they could have found part of the instructions difficult to follow. It could sometimes feel that the easier

De-escalation Strategies

Act calm even if you're not.
Give a choice.
Use humor to lighten the mood.
Ask them to draw a picture.
Say, "I see where you are coming from."
Talk about something they like.
Try to understand their perspective.
Let the person talk without interrupting.
Avoid needing to get the last word.
Remind them they are not in trouble.
Say, "I'm here for you."
Ignore the behavior if you can.
Say, "What would help you right now?"
Offer to change something you are doing.
Let them take a walk or get a drink.
Walk away.
Give personal space.
Remind them of something amazing they did.
Show empathy.
Invite them to do a preferred activity.
Do what works in the moment.
Say, "You can do this."
Show that you are listening.
Call another adult to help.
Apologize if you've done something wrong.

option is to get into trouble for wandering rather than speaking about the difficulty that they have with the work

3. There may be difficulty in reading social cues which may result in inappropriate comments or behaviour (e.g. burping in class). Social stories and visual reminders of acceptable behaviours can help
4. It can be challenging to connect behaviour with consequences even when it is pointed out to a child. It takes time, repetition and consistency to develop the understanding. It does not come naturally for children with ADHD
5. Daydreaming, not paying attention and being easily distracted can be a characteristic of ADHD. However it is important to note that it is more likely that they are paying attention to everything and finding it challenging to focus on one thing
6. Children with ADHD are at high risk of having negative self-esteem as they are regularly being spoken to about bad behaviour. This can lead to a fear of 'getting it wrong' which may result in scribbling work out or scrunching the work up. The outcome of this behaviour can be confrontation with a parent, teacher or carers. Children with ADHD need reminded regularly of their strengths and praise whenever they do display acceptable/positive behaviours
7. Children with ADHD often want to make other children laugh and can become the 'Class Clown'; this can lead to class disruption. Help them feel they are great at something else and this can be 'their thing'
8. The impulsivity symptoms of ADHD can mean that waiting for turns or waiting in line can also be difficult. Children can act or speak without thinking along with potentially being clumsy or accident prone. Using 'hands up first' approach or only talking when you have the ball/spoon, etc. can help.

Communication with school

As a parent, you are your child's advocate. It is crucial that communication with school is effective (e.g. sharing your child's needs and listening to what the teachers and other school officials have to say). The mutual purpose and overall aim is to find out what is best for your child. The communication will always be more productive if you stay calm, be specific and try to have a positive attitude.

It can sometimes help to plan ahead with the school officials on what the next goal is. Try to write down specific and reachable goals and discuss how they could be achieved. Understanding your child's challenges in school is the key to finding solutions. It is beneficial to listen to the teacher and aim to work as a team to find the best success for your child.

You know your child's history and your child's class teacher sees them every day, so together you are very knowledgeable, which can lead to a better understanding of your child. Find out if your school can provide any extra support or special services to help with learning.

Behaviour strategies

With appropriate structure and boundaries, children with ADHD/ADD are capable of appropriate behaviour in school. Create positive behaviour plans that are also in line with the approach that the teacher is using/the school approve, to develop a consistency in both environments. Specific goals, daily positive reinforcement and small rewards can help to motivate your child to self-regulate their behaviour.

Tips and tricks to support learning in the classroom

- In the classroom, seat the child away from windows, doors and corridors
- If it's possible, put class pets or other noisy distractions away
- Use activities that allow the child to move around the classroom, change seats or move location to complete (e.g. when a child has completed a certain amount of minutes of work, they can place a star with a number on it in an area at the opposite side of the classroom. This gives the child a movement and brain break and allows you to monitor how much school work they managed to get through that day. These may be gradually lengthened over time, depending on what that particular child can manage
- Write instructions (in order) on the board where a child can refer back to it. Children should be aware of where the information can be found. Encourage them to copy the instructions and to tick them off as they go
- Build a vocabulary of discreet gestures with the child to help make them become aware when they are interrupting or behaving inappropriately. This helps to prevent the child being consistently embarrassed in front of their peers
- Praise should be specific and given immediately to allow the child to develop an understanding of good behaviour and encourages them to repeat the behaviour
- The day could start with a schedule for the day and when each task gets completed, it can get crossed off so that children can feel a sense of accomplishment.

Adapting to fidgeting and hyperactivity in school

The constant movement in children with ADHD can make them more challenging to teach. A way to combat this can be to create lesson plans that allow the child to move in appropriate ways. This release of energy can make it easier for your child to keep their body calmer during work time.

Ask the child to run an errand, hand out books/equipment, do tasks such as putting things away or provide a stress ball for the child to fidget with. Try to give the child more movement activities rather than screen time. Encourage the child to engage in sports or outdoor activities (some schools also do the daily mile) and ensure the child never misses a break time or physical education (PE) as a consequence for their behaviour (as this will make it harder for them to follow the behaviour rules in the class later in the day). Make learning fun during homework time (for example: making silly songs, drawing pictures, using physical movement or fun acronyms to help them remember information).

Reading activities can be a time to get 1:1 quality time with a parent. Making predictions about the story line; engaging in conversations about what will happen next in the story and even acting out the characters together can help to engage your child in reading.

Tips and tricks for after school

Memory Aids with pictures can make the after school process easier. These can be placed at your child's eye level, inside a hall closet or somewhere easy to see when they come home.

Tips to get homework completed

Back from school routine

I hang up my coat

I put away my shoes in the 'spot'

I put my lunchbox in the kitchen

I have a snack

I relax for a while: 30 minutes (I watch TV or play outdoors, etc.)

I go to my quiet place and start my homework



- Pick a specific time and place for the child to complete their homework
- Establish a homework folder for finished homework. Allow the child to pick out school supplies that include folders and colour coded dividers to help organise their work
- Try to ensure that the area is organised, free from clutter and doesn't have distractions (e.g. pets, TV, etc.)
- Let the child take regular 'brain breaks', as often as every 10 to 20 minutes
- Use timers and clocks to monitor homework time and brain break times. Children often also respond well to games about racing themselves against the clock
- Encourage your child to start with the most difficult homework task first. Finish with homework that is the easiest and most fun to take into account end of the day tiredness
- Remember to praise the child throughout and encourage them to give themselves a pat on the back for completing their homework
- Consider different methods of taking down homework information, such as: taking photos on their phone of the assignment details; asking the school for support with a scribe or to have it emailed home to parents too

- The school could perhaps offer ideas of how much time should be spent on each homework task. This can help for you to set up a realistic and helpful routine
- Communicate with the school any tasks which your child has found particularly difficult or any tasks which have been time consuming or not completed. Some schools and parents have a communication book that goes back and forth about challenges and positives at school and at home
- Find out about homework support in schools. Your child may find it easier to focus in specific homework sessions. Research suggests that it takes a child with ADHD 3 times as long to complete a task at home compared to when they are in school (*ADHD Foundation, 2019*).

Moving up to Secondary School with ADHD

As children become teenagers, ADHD symptoms may change in subtle ways. They may be less restless and display reduced impulsivity. Challenges that may still remain are poor concentration, forgetfulness and emotional outbursts. There will also be more demands on self organisation, self learning and self management.

Secondary School preparations

- Practice the journey/bus to school before the term starts
- Contact the school to find out about what ADHD support they can put in place (e.g. a visit beforehand if your child would like to be shown around the school)
- Find out who the main contact would be for your child so that the process of passing on information can run smoother
- Ask for an example timetable for your child to be able to see what a normal day would look like
- Have a map of the school to help the child navigate
- Request a transition Child Planning Meeting (CPM) with the High School. Some schools offer enhanced transitions too so they may have extra days for your child to visit the high school and staff.

If you would like to find out further information about transitioning to High School, please visit www.livingwithADHD.co.uk

Useful sources of information

ADDers ADHD website- <http://www.adders.org/>

ADDISS ADHD website - <http://www.addiss.co.uk/>

ADHD Institute - <http://adhd-institute.com/burden-of-adhd/epidemiology/gender/>

Mental Health Foundation, All about ADHD booklet - https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/all_about_adhd.pdf

Developing Child (useful video) - <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-executive-function-skills-for-life-and-learning/>

Health Reading List – books recommended by the NHS on numerous mental health topics free to lend from Edinburgh council libraries- <https://talesofonecity.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/healthy-reading-for-children.pdf>

Living with ADHD- <http://livingwithadhd.co.uk>

MindEd is an online resource on children and young people’s mental health for adults. It has lots of information about various problems and how parents can help their children - <https://www.minded.org.uk/>

NHS choices is an online resource providing information about a range of common challenges for children - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/>

NICE 2018 ADHD Guidelines - <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87/resources/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-diagnosis-and-management-pdf-1837699732933>

Parent Line - <https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/>

Scottish ADHD Coalition - <https://www.scottishadhdcoalition.org/>

Young Carers Edinburgh - <https://www.youngcarers.org.uk/>

Young Carers Scotland Support - <https://www.mygov.scot/young-carer-support/>

Young Minds is the UK’s leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. Their website provides information for parents - www.youngminds.org.uk

Parent Club provides up-to-date guidance from the Scottish Government on children’s health and education. It is full of hints and tips from other parents and carers who have been in the same situation you’re in now - <https://www.parentclub.scot/>

The ADHD Foundation provides education, support and helpful resources to build a positive foundation for life. They also work really hard at raising awareness around what living with ADHD is like, and how we can reduce stigma - <https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/>