

Helping Your Child with ADHD

A Guide for Parents and Caregivers



ADHD stands for attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. It is a brain condition that can make it hard for a child to pay attention, sit still, or think before acting. ADHD usually starts in childhood and may continue into adulthood.

All children can be busy or unfocused at times. With ADHD, these problems happen more often and make daily life harder. ADHD can impact school, home, friends, and family life. With the right help, children can do well at home and at school.

Many children with ADHD get care from their primary care team, with help from family and school staff. Some children may need care from specialists.

What Parents May Notice

ADHD signs often fit into three groups. Children may show any of the following:

Trouble Planning & Paying Attention	Too Much Activity	Acting Fast (Impulsive)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty focusing• Gets distracted easily• Does not seem to listen• Forgets simple instructions• Has trouble finishing work• Manages time poorly• Often loses track of schoolwork and other things	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fidgets or squirms• Has trouble staying seated• Talks a lot• Always seems “on the go”• Difficulty calming their body• Unable to play quietly• Struggles with personal space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blurts out answers• Interrupts others• Has trouble waiting• Acts without thinking• Unaware of how behaviors may put them at risk• Physical, emotional, or behavioral outbursts or meltdowns

All children show these behaviors sometimes. ADHD is when these behaviors happen often or make it difficult for a child to learn, make friends, or behave in a way typical for their age.

Seeking Help

When to Seek Help

Talk with your child’s doctor if problems:

- Happen in more than one place (home, school, activities)
- Impact schoolwork, behavior, or friendships

What Help Can Look Like

ADHD care works best when families, doctors, and schools work together.

Help may include:

- Behavior therapy and parent training
- School supports (like extra help or a 504 Plan)
- Medication treatment with follow-up care

Don’t Forget Yourself

Your well-being matters. Kids feel adults’ stress.

Ask for help when needed. Taking care of yourself is important—not selfish.



Ohio Minds Matter

Ohio Youth Behavioral Health Resource

How Schools Can Help

Schools are an important part of ADHD care. All public school districts must provide services that meet the educational needs of every student. You can ask for support if ADHD affects learning. Common school supports include:

Section 504 Plan

A 504 Plan helps a child with ADHD get equal access to learning through changes at school.

Examples may include:

- A quiet place to work
- Extra time for tests
- Help with notes or writing
- Support from an Intervention Specialist

These are special teachers or staff members who support students with their learning, behavior, or developmental needs

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An IEP is for children who need special education help at school. Some children need more support than what is provided by a 504 Plan for their learning and behavior may qualify for an IEP.

Other possible school supports

- Behavior plans or daily report cards
- Help with organization and planning
- Check-ins with a trusted adult
- Planned breaks
- Sensory supports (such as, flexible seating options or fidget tools)

For additional information: [Families of Students with Disabilities | Ohio Department of Education and Workforce](#)

Strategies to Support Your Child at Home

Caregivers play a major role in helping children manage ADHD. Small habits at home can make a big difference:

Keep a Regular Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same wake up, meal, and bedtime each day.• Use a simple schedule or picture chart.
Give Clear Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say one step at a time.• Ask your child to repeat instructions.
Praise Good Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notice effort right away.• Use small rewards for achieving goals.
Set Clear Limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep rules short.• Be consistent with limits when rules are broken.
Help with Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assign one place for backpack and shoes.• Pack bags the night before.
Connect and Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spend 10–15 minutes each day with your child doing something fun.• Ask open ended questions, “What was the best part of your day?”

For more information and resources, visit:
[Ohio Minds Matter ADHD Webpage](#)



References

1. American Academy of Pediatrics. ADHD toolkit: caring for children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. American Academy of Pediatrics. <https://publications.aap.org/toolkits/pages/ADHD-Toolkit>. Accessed March 5, 2026.
2. National Institute of Mental Health. Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder: what you need to know. National Institutes of Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-what-you-need-to-know>. Accessed March 5, 2026.
3. Ohio Minds Matter. Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Ohio Minds Matter. Last reviewed August 2024. <https://www.ohiomindsmatter.org/youth-families/adhd>. Accessed March 5, 2026.