



All about ADHD

Understand - Listen - Support - Celebrate

While a great deal of information on the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD is available, not all of it is accurate or based on scientific evidence. It is up to you to be a good consumer and learn to distinguish the accurate information from the inaccurate.

This short guide will help you navigate key concepts and current knowledge in the field of ADHD. Please, see further advice from your GP and be mindful of the publication date as things in science can change quickly.

■ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

"Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition that affects an individual's behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse. Most cases are diagnosed when children are 3 to 7 years old, but sometimes it's diagnosed later in childhood or adulthood. People with ADHD may also have additional problems, such as sleep and anxiety disorders." - NHS

ADHD is an inaccurate and potentially corrosive name. The term "deficit disorder" places ADHD in the realm of pathology, or disease. Individuals with ADHD do not have a disease, nor do they have a deficit of attention; in fact, what they have is an abundance of attention. The challenge is controlling it.

Don't mistake your child's ADHD strengths for symptoms! They are unique traits and abilities that make them more creative, spontaneous, caring, and energetic than anyone else.

■ ADHD through a different lens

When people with ADHD harness their inherent hyperfocus, they can accomplish much more, much faster than many without this superpower. *"Many scientists, writers, and artists with ADHD have had very successful careers, in large part because of their ability to focus on what they're doing for hours on end"* says Kathleen Nadeau, Ph.D.

Individuals with ADHD are bright, creative, and funny — often using self-deprecating humor to remind the world that perfection is wholly uninteresting. They have faced challenges, learned novel ways to manage their focus, and developed a sense of humility and self-respect along the way. All these traits add up to a person who is a pleasure to be around.

People with ADHD are known for their compassion toward others and willingness to lend a hand. As proud ADHD mother Dee Boling said after her son was awarded Student of the Month, *"I'd rather have a kind, cooperative kid than a smart aleck who gets straight As without trying."*

ADHD isn't always a walk in the park. We've all faced our share of disappointments and embarrassments over the years. But people with ADHD can push past setbacks, adapt to new strategies, and troubleshoot solutions to complex problems. *"We see the light at the end of the darkest tunnel. We pick ourselves up off the sidewalk when we fall. We smile through our tears"* - adult with ADHD

After living with accommodations — or perhaps struggling without them — people with ADHD know that "fair" doesn't always mean "equal." They understand that neurodivergent people need different things to succeed, and they're committed to helping whomever they can.

Most children and adults with ADHD work twice as hard as their neurotypical peers to achieve their goals. That struggle isn't always bad. It builds a deep determination to try again until we succeed. Those with ADHD experience the world in a unique way, which can make them more accepting of differences, in themselves and in others.

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■ Your own oxygen mask first

Don't waste your limited emotional energy on self-blame.

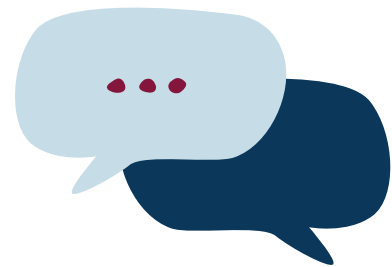
ADHD is a difference in ways that a person processes information, which can be beneficial if understood and supported. It is not caused by poor parenting or a chaotic home environment. Nothing you did as a parent caused it, and there is nothing in your child that needs fixing.

Communicate regularly, work together and be honest

Adopt a collaborative attitude when working with your child's team—after all, everyone has the same goal, to see your child succeed! Let your child's teachers know if there are some major changes going on in your family since your child's behavior can be affected. Invite the teachers to contact you with any issues or concerns before they become a problem. Having open lines of communication between you and the school will help your child



Identify your child's strengths.
Build upon these strengths, so that your child will have a sense of pride and accomplishment.



■ Build a good relationship with your child, work on trust and confidence

Balance of praising and correctional messages

Frequent correction or negative feedback can impact your child's self-esteem. In order to balance the messages we give, there need to be many opportunities for praise and positive emotions, whether it's an outing, playing games or just time spent with your child in positive interaction. This can help your child develop resilience and build their self-worth around positive characteristics.

Notice your child's successes, no matter how small

Make an effort to notice when your child is paying attention or doing well. Tell your child exactly what was successful or better than before. This can improve your child's self-esteem and teach them to notice gradual improvements, rather than being too hard on themselves.

Identify your child's strengths

Many children with ADHD have strengths in certain areas such as art, athletics, computers or mechanical ability. Build upon these strengths, so that your child will have a sense of pride and accomplishment. However, avoid targeting these activities as contingencies for good behaviour or withholding them, as a form of punishment, when your child makes a mistake.