

ADHD Recommendations



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ADHD is the current term for a specific developmental disorder diagnosed in both children and adults that is comprised of deficits in behavioral inhibition, sustained attention, resistance to distraction, and the regulation of one's activity level to the demands of the situation. There are three subtypes of ADHD: ADHD predominately hyperactive-impulsive, ADHD predominately inattentive and ADHD combined type.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder is often associated mainly with poor attention and hyperactivity but can have effects on all areas of executive functioning and self-regulation. Executive functioning and self-regulation. Executive functioning is responsible for planning and organizing ideas and tasks, the persistence in following through with these tasks, making behavior consequence connections, managing time, avoiding saying or doing impulsive things, filtering distractions and multi-tasking. Individuals with ADHD can also demonstrate behavior problems related to difficulties with impulse control and can develop negative patterns of behavior as a result of years of frequent conflict with adults due to this.

The following resources may be useful:

A) Websites:

- a. <http://www.chadd.org> CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder)
- b. <https://www.caddra.ca/> (Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance)
- c. <https://www.triplep-parenting.ca/alb-en/triple-p/> (Triple P is a parenting program, but it doesn't tell you how to be a parent. It's more like a toolbox of ideas.)

B) Books:

- a. Smart but Scattered: The Revolutionary "Executive Skills" Approach to Helping Kids Reach Their Potential by Peg Dawson may be a good resource to help with executive functioning.
- b. My Brain Needs Glasses: ADHD explained to kids
- c. My Brain Still Needs Glasses: ADHD in adolescents and adults

- C) A Guide to Executive Function – Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/guide/a-guide-to-executive-function/>

Community Resources

- 1) "To The Stars" offers a variety of groups or summer camps (dates and availability vary). Information can be found at www.tothestars.ca

2) **Camp Amicus** in Calgary offers a variety of day camps and summer camps for children with ADHD and learning difficulties. More information can be found at:
<https://www.foothillsacademy.org/community/amicus/camps>

3) **Jack Hirose** has a variety of webinars available for parents and professionals. This includes topics on executive functioning. More information can be found at: Quality Workshops for Mental Health & Education Professionals (jackhirose.com)

Free Virtual ADHD Parent Seminars (Canada-Wide)

These are online, free, and accessible from home.

1. CADDAC – National ADHD Parent Support Group (Virtual, Free Monthly)
<https://caddac.ca/programs-events/monday-parent-support-group/>
2. CADDAC – Free Webinar: Impact of ADHD on the Family (On-Demand)
<https://caddac.ca/programs-events/adhd-webinar-impact-of-adhd-on-the-child-parents-siblings-and-the-family-as-a-whole/>
3. Kelty Mental Health – ADHD Webinar Series for Parents & Caregivers (Free, Recorded)
<https://keltymentalhealth.ca/ADHDWebinarSeries>
4. BC Children’s Hospital – Rolling With ADHD (Free Online Parent Program)
<https://healthymindslearning.ca/rollingwith-adhd-for-parents/>

Medical

It is recommended that parents speak with a medical professional should they consider medical treatment. A child’s diagnosis should be monitored overtime.

Educational Programming

- 1) It will be important to keep in mind the child’s diagnosis of ADHD. They would benefit from support from an occupational therapist (regulation) as needed or psychologist/behavior specialist knowledgeable in ADHD. They would also benefit from classroom support. Access to these services will be determined by the school.
- 2) The child would benefit from having a relationship with a school counselor or a person they feel comfortable going to when they are struggling. They would also benefit from being involved in any social skills or emotional regulation programs the school may offer.

Psychology Recommendations

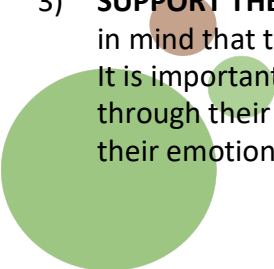
When having some difficulties with inattention and significant difficulties with hyperactivity/impulsivity. The following recommendations may be useful:

- a. Experiment with different seating options that allow movement such as a Move’N’Sit cushion, rocker chairs, doing a task while standing, sitting on an exercise ball, kicking TheraBand that has been wrapped around chair legs, etc.

- b. Allow for fidgeting or the use of a fidget toy (e.g., a pencil topper, a squishy ball, Fidget Digit) as long as these are used appropriately. These can be found at www.toolsforkids.ca
- c. Ensure that regular movement breaks are scheduled. Try to schedule movement or deep pressure activities before seated activities.
- d. Involve them in sports and activities that have a weighted component such as karate, yoga, swimming, gymnastics, rock climbing, etc.
- e. Provide the child with breaks throughout the day to move around. These can be built into the classroom activities such as handling out assignments, taking down attendance, etc.
- f. Teach them the “stop and think” strategy. You can even have a visual of a stop sign on their desk. The questions they can ask are “Is this harmful to me?”, “Is this harmful to someone else?” “Is this expected behavior?” “Can this wait?” etc. This will be a skill that needs ongoing support and practice.
- g. Keep thinking with them about the impact of their behavior on others and the consequence to themselves. Keep this light and friendly so that they feel positive about their social skills. Talk about boundaries such as keeping an arm’s length of distance, not taking things from others etc.
- h. Spend lots of time talking about the rules of friendship, boundaries, and self-advocacy. It is not uncommon for individuals with ADHD to engage in unwanted behaviors at requests of peers, or to engage in dangerous or unwanted behaviors impulsively (e.g., drug use, vaping, drinking, engaging in dares as teenagers).
- i. It is important to keep in mind that ADHD is a biological condition which impacts executive functioning. This means that they currently have little control. Children and individuals with ADHD often get negative feedback such as that their behavior is poor, they are too loud, too messy, too much! Be very mindful of this and try to give 3 positive comments to 1 correction.

Behavior

- 1) **SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS:** Be very clear with the child about what the expectations are. It is recommended that only 1-2 difficulties are targeted at a time. For example, if the child is being aggressive with peers, set up a plan. This will include talking with the child about not placing hands on anyone and giving them an alternative option, such as going to sit in a safe space, asking for help, etc. Expectations should be clear as the child will not likely not understand general requests such as “be good” or “follow the plan”. Reinforcement systems should be built in as this will increase the child’s motivation to follow through.
- 2) **HELP WITH TRANSITIONS:** If the child has an anxious temperament that can lead to some irritability, cautious behavior, and sensory concerns. It will be important to continue to give the child warnings and reminders for transitions, let them know what is coming next, use gradual exposure and gentle guidance for things that they are nervous about and give them a safe space to calm down if needed.

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- 3) **SUPPORT THEM ALWAYS:** Relationship should be the focus of managing behavior. Keep in mind that they will continue to have some struggles. It is the nature of their diagnosis. It is important for the child to know you support them and are going to help them through their challenges rather than consequences for them. Help the child regulate their emotions when upset or silly and be gentle in feedback.

