



# BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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## ADHD in Children

ADHD has been called attention-deficit disorder (ADD) and hyperactivity. But ADHD is the preferred term because it describes both primary aspects of the condition: inattention and hyperactive-impulsive behavior.

### Symptoms

#### Signs and symptoms of inattention may include:

- Often fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or other activities
- Often has trouble sustaining attention during tasks or play
- Seems not to listen even when spoken to directly
- Has difficulty following through on instructions and often fails to finish schoolwork, chores or other tasks
- Often has problems organizing tasks or activities
- Avoids or dislikes tasks that require sustained mental effort, such as schoolwork or homework
- Frequently loses needed items, such as books, pencils, toys or tools
- Can be easily distracted
- Often forgetful

#### Signs and symptoms of hyperactive and impulsive behavior may include:

- Fidgets or squirms frequently
- Often leaves his or her seat in the classroom or in other situations when remaining seated is expected
- Constantly feel restless
- Always seems on the go
- Talks excessively
- Blurts out the answers before questions have been completely asked
- Frequently has difficulty waiting for his or her turn
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others' conversations or games

#### Normal behavior vs. ADHD

Most healthy children are inattentive, hyperactive or impulsive at one time or another. Young children are naturally energetic and some children just have a higher activity level than do others. For many, attention span often depends on their level of interest. Children should never be classified as having ADHD just because they're different from their friends or siblings. Children who have problems in school but get along well at home or with



For more information or support about ADHD in Children, contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

**1.800.327.2255**

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friends are not considered to have ADHD. The same is true of children who are hyper-active or inattentive only at home but whose schoolwork and friendships aren't affected by their behavior.

## Lifestyle Changes

### Children at home

- Show your child lots of affection. Children need to hear that they're loved and appreciated.
- Be patient. Try to remain patient and calm when dealing with your child, even when your child is out of control. If you're calm, your child is more likely to calm down too.
- Keep things in perspective. Be realistic in your expectations for improvement — both your own and your child's.
- Take time to enjoy your child and simply spend time together. This should be a private time when no other children or adults interfere.
- Make sure your child is rested. Try to keep your child from becoming overtired, because fatigue often makes symptoms of ADHD worse.
- Identify difficult situations. Try to avoid situations that are difficult for your child, such as sitting through long presentations or shopping for extended periods of time.
- Use timeouts or the loss of a privilege to discipline your child. For children with ADHD, a timeout from social stimulation can be very effective. Timeouts should be relatively brief, but long enough for your child to regain control.
- Work on organization. Help your child organize and maintain a daily assignment notebook and be sure your child has a quiet place to study.
- Find ways to improve your child's self-esteem and sense of discipline. Children with ADHD often do very well with art projects, music or dance lessons, or martial arts classes, especially karate or tae kwon do.

- Be very specific and concrete when giving directions. Stop and make eye contact with the child if needed to.
- Take a break yourself. If you're exhausted and stressed, you're a much less effective parent.

### Children in school

- Ask about school programs. As with other disabilities, schools are required by law to have a program in place to make sure children who have a disability that interferes with learning are getting the support they need. Your child may be eligible for additional services offered under the federal laws Section 504 or the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These can include curriculum adjustments, changes in classroom setup, modified teaching techniques, study skills instruction, and increased collaboration between parents and teachers.
- Talk to your child's teachers. Stay in close communication with your child's teachers, and support their efforts to help your child in the classroom. Be sure teachers closely monitor your child's work, provide positive feedback, and are flexible and patient. Ask that they be very clear about their instructions and expectations.
- Ask about having your child use a computer in the classroom. Children with ADHD often have trouble with handwriting and can greatly benefit from using a computer or a typewriter.

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