



Hindlip First School
Tibberton First School



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

This guidance has been written by our partners at
Perryfields Primary PRU.



Perryfields Primary PRU

Challenges That ADHD Children May Face

There are two types of ADHD –

“Inattentive” and “hyperactive – impulsive”

It is common for children who have a diagnosis of ADHD to present with both of these and this can result in the following challenges:

Inattentive

- A lack of attention and easily distracted – they struggle to filter out distractions and therefore find it difficult to focus on the task at hand.
- They may not seem to be listening and often don't pay close attention.
- Frequently they will make careless mistakes.
- Organisational difficulties can also occur - this may include poor organisation, unable to focus on or completing a task, being forgetful, absentminded or easily losing things.

Hyperactive-impulsive

- Being fidgety or talking excessively.
- They often run, climb, be continually “on the go” and are frequently out of their seat.
- Struggle to play quietly.
- Blurt out answers
- Have difficulty waiting for their turn.
- Intrude or interrupt.

Children with ADHD can maintain their concentration as long as they are allowed to stay on the most interesting activity. The problem occurs when they are asked to give their attention to something which is less captivating.

For example – they could play on their Xbox for long periods of time without being distracted as this would be of particular interest to them, however if asked to stop their game and complete maths homework, a task which they have no interest in, this is when their concentration stops and distractions occur.

Problems with their executive function

Executive functions are the skills we require to plan and deliver. For children with ADHD they at times are unable to use their executive functions effectively. This therefore often results in difficulties with the following:

- Foresight – predicting future needs
- Hindsight – reviewing previous actions
- Self - talk – ability to work through our choices
- Working memory – manage what is happening now
- Prospective memory - what to remember
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Sense of time
- Persistence
- Managing change
- Separating emotion from fact
- Adding emotion to fact

Recognising ADHD Children

The following behaviours could indicate that a child may have ADHD, however once these have been identified further medical opinion should be sort.

Inattentiveness -

- ✓ Easily distracted
- ✓ Flits from task to task
- ✓ Benefits from 1:1 support
- ✓ Is slow to complete work
- ✓ Forgets instructions

Impulsiveness -

- ✓ Lack of filters
- ✓ Talks over others
- ✓ Butts in or tries to answer questions before the question has been completed
- ✓ Are accident prone
- ✓ Have very short fuses
- ✓ Act without thinking

- ✓ Don't learn from their mistakes - so continue to make the same mistakes repeatedly
- ✓ If their behaviour is treated insensitively can be very volatile and escalate quickly
- ✓ Often very intelligent but act very inappropriately

Over-activity –

- ✓ Restless and fidgety
- ✓ Difficulties in remaining seated
- ✓ Find it hard to stop talking
- ✓ Fiddle with anything close to hand
- ✓ Continually tapping fingers and feet
- ✓ Often looking around at everyone
- ✓ On the playground – manic play, charge around with little regard for others
- ✓ When return to class after playtime struggle to settle

Persistence –

- ✓ Frequent interrogation
- ✓ Inflammation of situations

Lack of social skills/relationship problems-

- ✓ Misread facial expressions and social cues
- ✓ Misinterpret the right behaviour required for a given situation
- ✓ Will be “silly” in a group
- ✓ Often come on too strong, over-demanding and bossy behaviour
- ✓ Can make friends but have difficulty in maintaining friendships

Emotional over-arousal –

- ✓ Experience extremities of the emotion spectrum – they don't tend to get a bit cross or like something – they love intensely and experience great anger and frustration

Hypersensitivity –

- ✓ Can be very sensitive to certain stimuli - fabrics, tastes, smells and textures
- ✓ React with discomfort to levels of sound and light that others would find tolerable

Variability –

- ✓ Dramatic mood swings – which vary from day to day with no obvious cause
- ✓ Changes in performance
- ✓ Lack of consistency in completing tasks

Poor Co-ordination –

- ✓ Clumsiness
- ✓ Difficulty in performing two or more actions at a time such as handwriting
- ✓ Untidy handwriting

Disorganisation –

- ✓ Unaware of the mess they create
- ✓ Fiddly fingers – compelled to touch everything
- ✓ No structure to their work
- ✓ Difficulty starting a task
- ✓ Confused about what is required of them
- ✓ Leave objects at school/home
- ✓ Lose objects

Poor Time Management –

- ✓ Poor sense of time
- ✓ Need support to achieve targets
- ✓ Regularly procrastinate
- ✓ Difficulty in completing task in allocated time

Specific Learning Difficulties –

- ✓ Significant weaknesses in academic areas

Motivation Difficulties –

- ✓ Find it hard to focus on tasks which don't grab their attention
- ✓ Unable to apply themselves to tedious tasks

Low Self-esteem –

- ✓ On surface appears to have high self-esteem
- ✓ Exceptionally sensitive
- ✓ Unable to cope with failure
- ✓ Want to be popular

Stubbornness –

- ✓ Will not negotiate
- ✓ Unable to change their opinion
- ✓ Providing concrete evidence won't sway their convictions
- ✓ Won't be consistent with their viewpoint

SUPPORT

My Learning disorders

Struggles with my social skills

The effects of my medication

My poor organisation



My challenging behaviour

My executive function

The anxiety and depression I might have

Any sensory issues that I could have present

Supporting Strategies

Communication

- **Recognise when the child is actually hearing you and paying attention. An ADHD child has a brain that is operating at a fast pace which may not allow them to give you eye contact or their full concentration. This doesn't mean they are not listening. In actual fact many children with ADHD will fiddle with objects while they are listening.**
- **Give them short and simple directions. ADHD children are easily overwhelmed. When issuing instructions break this down and don't lay out all the steps at once. Give them one or two simple steps then when these are complete go onto the next.**
- **Write down instructions and encourage them to tick these off once they are completed**
- **Think of creative communication strategies. For example maybe introduce a "listening ball" Instruct the child to hold the ball or toss it from hand to hand while they listen. This gives them a visual prompt that it is time to listen but also satisfies their need to fidget.**
- **Use visual cues – for example when it is snack time show them a piece of fruit.**
- **Use visual aids – "now and then" boards work well or a series of pictures which demonstrates steps**

- Give them choices – ADHD children will quickly learn to tune you out especially when they perceive you are talking at them rather than to them. When you give them a choice it is easier for them to listen and they often allow themselves to slow down and weigh up the choices to see which is the most appealing to them. For example “It’s time for a brain break now would you like to do your jigsaw or finish your colouring?”
- Talk softly and remain calm. If you become agitated or raise your voice this can stimulate an ADHD child and this is the opposite of what you are trying to achieve especially if they are already agitated or upset. Step away from them and engage in a quiet activity which they may find interesting.

Supporting Strategies

Classroom

- Clear their area of distraction – in particular stationery – give them what is required at the start of the task.
- Present work tasks in a vibrant, animated and attention grabbing way – remember they will focus on the thing they find most interesting. Frame it for them – differentiate the work.
- Consider where they sit – most ADHD children manage more effectively if they have an adult close by.
- Adapt expectations for the times they are seated, they may find sitting on the carpet close to others too distracting and would be better on a chair by an adult.
- Establish good eye contact – but be aware that some children feels this interferes with their concentration so check.

- Tap on the desk or think of another way to gain attention when they lose focus.
- Alert the child's attention with directives such as "This is important!"
- Start your sentence with their name. "Sam we are going to start maths now".
- Break down larger directions into smaller chunks.
- Write down instructions for them and highlight the key words to give them a focus on what is important.
- Check their understanding.
- Allow physically hyperactive children out of their seats – maybe sit in their chair whilst helping them and let them stand. Give them jobs to do around the class and school so they can have some exercise.
- Build physical activity into their brain breaks – OT exercises are great for this and research has shown that vigorous exercise helps children have better attention.
- Recognise children with ADHD will struggle with their organisation. Give them prompts, visual reminders and suitable stationery to assist with this. A pad of post-its works well for reminders to be written on.
- Name their stationery and keep everything to hand in their own pot. This will then discourage them from wandering around the class looking for a pencil/ pen /rubber etc.
- Create worksheets and tests with fewer items, give frequent short quizzes rather than long tests and reduce the number of timed tests.
- Test your ADHD student in the way they do best such as verbally or filling in blanks.

- **Divide longer term topics into segments.**
- **Accept that they may not always finish a piece of work so praise for partial completion.**
- **Try not to ask an ADHD pupil to perform a task or answer a question in front of their peers that might be too difficult.**
- **If possible work on their most difficult task early in the day.**
- **Use rewards and change these regularly to keep their interest.**
- **Catch them making good choices and give immediate praise – ignore low level negative behaviours.**
- **Do not use loss of playtime as a consequence for negative behaviour – ADHD children really benefit from physical exercise.**

Supporting Strategies

Playtime and Lunchtime

ADHD children tend to be extremely poor monitors of their own social behaviour – they often don't have an understanding or awareness of social situations and the reactions they provoke in others. As a result of this social time at school can be particularly challenging for a child with ADHD as they are unable to "read" a social situation. It is therefore crucial that support is given and strategies are implemented to ensure they can develop their social skills.

- **They struggle to learn from past experiences so will often react without thinking through the consequences. To help with this try to provide immediate and frequent feedback about inappropriate behaviours or social misunderstandings.
Ensure they are calm enough to consider this.**
- **Role – playing can be really beneficial to help model and practise social skills.**

- **Encourage them to have conversations and try to get them to recognise that for these to be successful they have to be done in a reciprocal manner. (Listening, asking about the other person's feelings, taking turns in conversations, and showing interest.)**
- **Encourage them to try and prevent conflict by sharing, maintaining personal space and considering the volume and tone of their voice.**
- **Give the child information about social rules and the types of behaviours you want to see.**
- **Highlight positive behaviour and offer rewards for this where appropriate.**
- **Try to engineer playmates who will allow the ADHD child to be successful.**
- **Encourage games which you know they are comfortable with and can excel in.**
- **Find them a Mentor to help them through these difficult social situations.**
- **Give them a job to do at playtimes to focus their attention on and give them a purpose – for example handing out the balls.**
- **If the lunch hall or playground are too overwhelming then look at alternatives. Could they eat lunch elsewhere and do some activities indoors? Ensure they have a companion of their choice in order that they don't feel excluded or that their removal from the playground is a punishment.**
- **Ensure all the staff who are supervising at these times are informed of the challenges this child is facing and are aware of the strategies which are in place.**

Supporting Strategies

Organisation

- **Label all their possessions, in particular their stationery. Children with ADHD will often become fixated on their property and will struggle when another child has it.**
- **Use lists to break down instructions / tasks.**
- **Utilise a white board – these are great for writing activities as they are easily amended.**
- **Try to protect book covers and pages where possible as children with ADHD often struggle with presentation and will fiddle with books resulting in covers being torn or page corners becoming dog – eared. Covering in plastic can help and putting corner tabs on pages. Keep all their resources in one place - for example their drawer. Waiting for their book to be given out from a large pile can often result in agitation.**
- **Consider what is allowed into class – fidget toys are really beneficial but limit personal possessions such as toys which cause distraction to themselves and others.**
- **Have their water bottle close by – lots of ADHD children find drinking a way of self – soothing so allow this when needed. Be mindful that as a result of this regular toilet breaks will also have to be allowed.**

Useful Resources

Some of the resources in this pack were taken from:

verywellmind

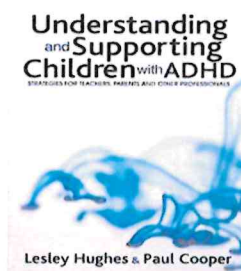
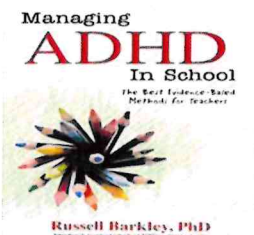
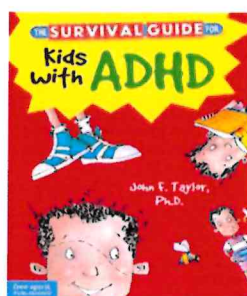
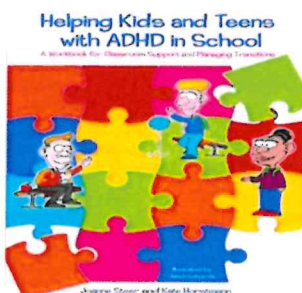
This is a really useful website with lots of information about ADHD.

Further information can be found at:



<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/>

Suggested Reading



Helping Kids and Teens with ADHD in School – Joanne Steer & Kate Horstmann

The Survival Guide for Kids with ADHD – John F Taylor

Managing ADHD in School – Russell Barkley

Understanding and Supporting Children with ADHD – Lesley Hughes & Paul Cooper

