

Children and Young People

ADHD Support Recommendations

For Children and Young People aged 6-18 Years Old and
their Families

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We have included lots of information in this leaflet, covering many areas, so you can revisit as needed and your child's needs develop.

You don't need to read it all at once but can refer to this booklet or sections of it, now and in the future.



Talking to your child about **ADHD**

We would recommend that families have a discussion about ADHD with their child to improve their understanding of themselves, their strengths and the things they find more challenging. In addition to the knowledge your child already has about ADHD, it would be helpful for them to access neuropositive resources which aim to empower neurodiverse individuals. This will support them to construct a positive self-image and improve their self-esteem.

Helpful resources include books, online resources and videos to develop their understanding of ADHD. Accessing this information allows children and young people to reflect on their own experiences and think about how they may be understood in the context of ADHD. It is also important for children to develop a positive understanding of ADHD and be aware of the many associated strengths.

Books

- The ADHD Workbook for Kids: Help for Kids to Gain Self-confidence, Social Skills, and Self-control; Lawrence E. Shapiro (2010)
- 'Attention, Girls!: A Guide to Learn All about Your AD/HD' written by Patricia O Quinn MD and illustrated by Carl Pearce.
- 'ADHD is our superpower: the amazing talents and skills of children with ADHD' by Soli Lazarus
- 'The ADHD Advantage' by Dr Dale Archer
- 'Thriving with ADHD Workbook for Teens: Improve Focus, Get Organized, and Succeed' by Alison Tyler

Your child may also find it beneficial to research celebrities or famous individuals who may have ADHD as their diagnosis story could be positive and relatable.

Videos and self-help resources

Videos / Youtube

- ADHD Ted Talk: Failing at normal – an ADHD success story (Jessica McCabe): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiwZQNYIGQI&t=86s>
- Let's talk about ADHD (co-produced by children) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeamHE6Kank>
- Shine a Light <https://mind-the-gap.live/2018/10/31/shine-a-light-adhd>
- ADHD and Me with Saeedeh Hashemi, BBC <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct0hz0>
- ADHD and Me with Rory Bremner, BBC: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p050mmyt>
- The Joy of Having ADHD, BBC Ideas <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJu-hydR0FE>
- Failing at Normal: An ADHD Success Story, TedTalks <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiwZQNYIGQI>

Self-help Resources

- Smartphone Apps: e.g. Headspace, Moodjuice or Calm, to help with relaxation, anxiety management, insomnia etc.
- Websites: e.g. RCPsych Mental Health + Growing Up series <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people>
- Young Minds <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
- Music/audiobooks: To use for distraction from worrying thoughts or when you notice anxious/depressive feelings emerging.
- A balanced diet and regular exercise have also been shown to positively impact some ADHD symptoms.
- Safety (online, at home and at school): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqH2QYt6oOc>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtJNRxMRuPE>
- Goblin tools is an app and website aimed at young people with a range of different tools to support executive functioning, for example breaking down tasks to the desired level of detail, generating recipes, and analysing the tone of written communication, among others. <https://goblin.tools/>

Mindfulness and helpful websites

Mindfulness

Your child may benefit from trying various mindfulness activities to help support them to increase focus, help calm their body and brain, and reduce symptoms of impulsivity and hyperactivity.

A useful video to watch is from Cosmic Kids Yoga which is about supporting young people to make choices, and to practise building in pauses before behavioural responses/choices are made:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cxt_Ki4GSo

Websites

- Understood website has a lot of helpful resources and lots of information for parents and young people; <https://www.understood.org>
- ADHD UK is a charity dedicated to providing information, support, and advocacy for individuals with ADHD and their families in the United Kingdom. <https://www.adhduk.co.uk>
- The Neurodiversity Information Hub has many resources and links to further recommendations for supporting neurodivergent children and young people that you may find helpful: <https://mindmate.org.uk/neurodiversity-information-hub/>
- ADDitude mag has a website with a range of resources in relation to ADHD; <https://www.additudemag.com/>
- ADHD Girls is a social impact company that aims to inspire women and girls to succeed within society and raise awareness of neurodiversity. Founded by Dr. Samantha Hiew, ADHD Girls provides support, training, and advocacy for girls, women, and parents; <https://adhdgirls.co.uk/>



SECTION 7

Sleep

The following websites and guides have very useful information about managing sleep difficulties for children with ADHD.

- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/adhd-child-sleep#adhd-and-sleep>
- <https://camhs.rdash.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DP8668-Sleep-information-for-parents-of-children-with-ADHD-leaflet-01.21.pdf>
- <https://www.additudemag.com/how-to-get-kids-to-sleep-adhd/>
- <https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/media/109514310/7-adhd-guide-sleep.pdf>

The West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership website has co-produced resources addressing (school) transitions, sleep, and eating, with top tips and suggestions to help neurodiverse children and young people find what's best for them. They emphasise reducing pressure and encourage young people to take their own path, with accessible videos, booklets and audio recordings:

<https://www.wypartnership.co.uk/our-priorities/mental-health-learning-disability-and-autism/neurodiversity/routes-and-routines>



Medication

For children and young people who are suitable for medication, there is evidence that it can help with: **difficulties concentrating, hyperactivity and impulsivity, restlessness and inattention.**

There are different types of medication available to support young people with ADHD. Usually, the first type that people try would be a stimulant medication (e.g. methylphenidate and dexamphetamine). There are also non-stimulant medications available (e.g. atomoxetine). A qualified prescriber would assess and find the most suitable type of medication.

Medication is not suitable for everyone

ADHD medication is not suitable for everyone and there can be many reasons for this, some of the main ones are covered below.

- As ADHD medications can have an effect on pulse and blood pressure, for children / young people with a history of heart problems or high blood pressure, further tests are usually required to confirm it is safe to prescribe these medications. Please discuss this with your Cardiologist or GP when referring.
- ADHD medications are unlikely to be suitable for children / young people who use illicit substances.

Young people taking ADHD medication must have their health regularly and carefully monitored. This includes monitoring side-effects. All medication can have side effects. The most common side effects with ADHD medication are: **difficulties sleeping, difficulties eating, headaches and increased anxiety.** Some children and young people have regular breaks from their medication (e.g. at weekends, or school holidays) to try and reduce any side effects.

If you are considering ADHD medication for your child, you should discuss this further with your child's GP, or your chosen ADHD medication prescribing service. There are currently differences in local funded NHS pathways for medication and wait times across the country. Your child's GP or chosen ADHD medication prescribing service will be able to provide more information regarding your local area.

You can also get reliable information from:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/treatment/>
- <https://www.choiceandmedication.org/swyp/condition/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/>
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87/chapter/Recommendations#medication>

Find more information about Oakdale's ADHD Medication Service on [our website](#).

Recommendations for Family/Parents

- It would be helpful to continue to develop your understanding of ADHD and reflect upon how your child's behaviours may relate to their experiences in the context of ADHD. Dr Susan Young has a YouTube channel which offers expert advice on helping your child to manage a variety of difficulties in relation to Autism and ADHD. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_4Y8vebbp_7jOxxH6PGd-g?app=desktop
- Should parents want to seek local parent support groups, the 'Contact' website could be a good place to find these. 'Contact' also have a range of resources and information for parents of children with neurodiversity; <https://contact.org.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/>
- The AccessAble website identifies local amenities e.g. restaurants, cinemas that are accessible to children with additional needs; <https://www.accessable.co.uk/>
- For parents of girls, the Child Mind Institute helps children and parents who are battling mental health conditions and various learning difficulties. Its website provides a comprehensive list of useful information on identifying and managing mental health conditions and ongoing initiatives on improving mental healthcare.

Books

- Understanding ADHD: A Parent's Guide to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Children; Dr Christopher Green (1995)
- Step by Step Help for Children with ADHD: A Self-Help Manual for Parents; David Daley and Edmund J. S (2010)
- Smart Foods for ADHD and Brain Health: How Nutrition Influences Cognitive Function, Behaviour and Mood; Rachel Gow (2021)
- What Your ADHD Child Wishes You Knew: Working Together to Empower Kids for Success in School and Life; Sharon Saline (2018)
- Attention Deficit Disorder: The Unfocused Mind in Children and Adults, Dr Thomas Brown (2005)
- Scattered Minds: The Origins and Healing of Attention Deficit Disorder, Dr Gabor Maté (2019)
- Understanding Girls with ADHD: How They Feel and Why They Do What They Do; Kathleen Nadeau (2015)
- Understanding ADHD in Girls and Women; Joanne Steer (2021)
- Women with Attention Deficit Disorder: Embrace Your Differences and Transform Your Life; Sari Solden (1995)

Sensory Differences

It is important for your family to have an understanding of your child's sensory processing differences so that adaptations can be made to suit their strengths and needs. The BBC have created a short video, 'Sensory Chaos' which outlines what it might be like to experience sensory overload;

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0b5xjt4>

Sensory preferences should be monitored closely in different environments. Building a sensory profile can be a good way of understanding an individual's preferences. Drawing, writing and recording can be helpful ways of establishing a sensory profile. Ultimately, the goal of creating a sensory profile is to enable an individual to have 'sensory autonomy' and be able to manage their experiences independently.

Your child's sensory environment can be tailored to their needs, for example non-fluorescent lighting, dimmer switches and ensuring that there is minimal ambient noise. It could be helpful to consider a sensory routine; your child may have different routines for different settings (e.g. home and school).

Books on sensory processing differences are available, along with online content, for example:

- Sheffield Children's Hospital website <https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/child-development-and-neurodisability/sensory-processing-difficulties/>
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde website <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/joining-in-with-sensory-differences/>
- 'Answers to questions teachers ask about sensory integration' by Carol Kranovitz, this has lots of checklists and profiling type tools for sensory processing disorder.
- Kent Community Health Trust provide a free 3 part workshop about sensory processing for parents: <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/occupational-therapy/sensory-processing/>
- 'Sensory Trauma: Autism, Sensory Difference and the Daily Experience of Fear' by Dr Rorie Fulton, Emma Reardon and Kate Richardson.

It is also extremely important to acknowledge the strengths that come with sensory differences. Your child's preferences should be built upon and incorporated where possible. This could also support their confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to have a positive self-identity.

Recommendations for **School/Education** Setting

We would recommend that your child's teachers are made aware of their assessment outcome and a meeting is held to discuss plans for additional support. In addition to the strategies which school may already be implementing, it is important that new strategies and adaptations are considered in light of this diagnosis. These adaptations should be agreed with your child and reviewed on a regular basis, with the opportunity for your child to give feedback.

Executive function is a term used to describe complex thinking skills such as planning, organising, problem solving and monitoring our behaviour. Due to their diagnosis of ADHD, your child may have difficulty in these areas. It will be useful for them to receive direct support with planning and organisation. Visual strategies for planning/organising written work (e.g. mind maps, generating essay plans and learning to regularly refer to the plan), exam skills (time management), and organisation of materials (e.g. flash cards, working on one task at a time), would all be useful for your child to develop with their parents and teachers to support them in home and school settings.

We would recommend the school obtain a copy of **'ADHD The Facts'**. This book supports teaching staff to understand the impact that ADHD could have on your child's ability to follow instructions, focus on a task and engage in their overall learning curriculum. Particular reference should be made to chapter 13 "school management".

Teaching staff should work with your child to implement strategies to support with their attention. Some things which young people with ADHD have found to be helpful are:

- Repetition of key material
- Being assigned simple, highly structured tasks
- Having adult support nearby
- Having verbal instructions broken down and simplified to promote memory retention
- Tasks should be given in 'bite-size' sections
- Asking the young person to repeat back instructions to ensure that they have understood them
- Having memory aids, a structured diary or phone, where information can be recorded
- Using technology to assist with tasks
- Regular positive reinforcement and feedback
- For the young person to sit near the front of the class or away from any distractions or distractable peers
- Allowing breaks or time to move around
- For information to be broken down into smaller chunks which are frequently presented before moving on
- Additional time in exams and tests, or for the young person to be able to take a test in a separate, quiet, room

If your child is required to sit an exam/test it may be that additional time or movement breaks may need to be allocated to support them. Other options could include taking exams in a separate room to reduce noise/distractions. Your child may require at least 25% extra time in exams. The SENCO at school should apply for this extra time in advance of your child sitting formal examinations.

It should always be remembered that children diagnosed with ADHD may struggle to manage transitions and some allowance should be made for this.

A behavioural classroom management approach which encourages positive behaviours in the classroom through a rewards system or daily report card.

School/Education Setting — continued

To support a child diagnosed with ADHD effectively, a teacher must have an understanding of what it is like to be a child with ADHD and some insight into their own make-up and response to your child. Some teachers have a natural ability to empathise with children who have ADHD, and find it easy to get the best out of such children. Other **teachers may** find that their natural teaching style, which may be successful with children who do not have these differences, is not as suitable for your child. Unfortunately many children with ADHD do not ask for help and as such, teachers should try to create an environment where your child will feel comfortable seeking assistance.

In all situations, teaching staff should aim to support your child's self esteem and avoid criticism and ridicule. Rewards should be used liberally to maximise motivation and, in your child's case, be provided as soon as possible following a desired behaviour due to differences associated with delayed gratification. Teachers should ensure that your child is evaluated on their knowledge and not unfairly penalised for their difficulties with concentration.

A useful resource for your child's school to access would be a blog post by QbTech. This post discusses why ADHD is hard to identify in the classroom, and why girls with ADHD are often overlooked.

<https://adhdnews.qbtech.com/adhd-in-children-what-adults-should-look-out-for-at-school>

In addition to your family gaining an understanding of your child's sensory processing differences, it would be helpful for school to have an understanding of their specific strengths and differences too. This understanding could then inform the adaptations needed in the school environment, for example, a tailored low sensory environment could be helpful and an awareness of the impact of the environment on your child's emotional regulation. Sensory diaries and sensory profiles can be helpful in understanding your child's sensory needs, with the possible implementation of a 'sensory routine', according to the sensory needs identified within this diary/profile.

Some useful books for teachers include:

- Successfully Teaching and Managing Children with ADHD: A Resource for SENCOs and Teachers; Finton O'Regan (2019)
- Managing ADHD in School: The Best Evidence-Based Methods for Teachers; Russell Barkley (2016)
- Thriving with ADHD Workbook for Kids: 60 Fun Activities to Help Children Self-Regulate, Focus, Success; Kelli Miller (2018)