

Could it be more than *"just a very energetic, distracted kid"*?

A parent noticing tool for attention, focus, and self-regulation patterns. Not a diagnosis, but a starting point for a conversation with a professional.

This is not a diagnostic tool. ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) can only be diagnosed by a qualified professional, such as a paediatrician, psychiatrist, or psychologist, through a proper clinical assessment. This checklist simply helps you notice patterns worth discussing. Many of these behaviours are also completely typical at certain ages, especially in early childhood.

For each item, mark how often it applies to your child right now: Never · Rarely · Sometimes · Often · Very often.

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
ATTENTION & FOCUS					
Struggles to stay focused on tasks or play, even ones they chose themselves	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seems not to listen when spoken to directly, even with no obvious distraction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Loses or misplaces things needed for tasks: worksheets, pencils, water bottle, school notices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Easily distracted by things going on around them, even minor sounds or movement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
HYPERACTIVITY					
Fidgets, taps, or squirms even when expected to sit still	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Has trouble staying seated when it's expected: mealtimes, circle time, the car	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seems to be constantly "on the go," as if driven by a motor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IMPULSIVITY					
Blurts out answers before a question is finished, or interrupts conversations often	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Has real difficulty waiting their turn, in games, queues, or conversation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Acts before thinking through consequences: grabs, touches, or does something risky quickly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ORGANISATION & FOLLOW-THROUGH					
Avoids or resists tasks needing sustained mental effort, like homework or long instructions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Starts tasks but rarely finishes them, jumping to something else instead	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EMOTIONAL REGULATION					
Emotional reactions seem bigger or faster than the situation calls for, and hard to talk down from	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Frustration tolerance is noticeably lower than same-age peers. Small setbacks feel huge	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What to do with your answers

There's no score or cut-off here. This isn't that kind of tool. What matters more is the overall pattern: how many items you marked "Often" or "Very often", whether they show up across more than one setting (home and school), and whether they've been consistent for 6 months or more rather than a short phase. That's the kind of pattern worth bringing to a professional.

Important: This checklist is based on general developmental screening concepts and parent-reported patterns. It is **not a diagnosis or a substitute for a professional clinical assessment**. If you have concerns about your child's development, please speak to a qualified professional.

If this feels familiar: *what can help* at home

You don't need a diagnosis to start trying these. Pick one or two and give them a real two-week trial before judging whether they're working.

Work with their energy and attention

Build in movement, don't fight it

- Let them stand, fidget, or use a wobble cushion during seated work. It can actually improve focus, not just distract
- Break homework into short bursts with a movement break in between (5 min work, 2 min run around)
- Use "jobs" that involve moving: passing out things, running an errand across the room

Shrink instructions down

- Give one instruction at a time, not a chained list of three or four steps
- Get down to their eye level and make sure you have their attention before speaking
- Use visual checklists or picture schedules for multi-step routines like getting ready for school

Support self-control and routines

Support the "waiting" muscle

- Practise turn-taking in low-stakes games at home before expecting it in harder settings
- Use a visible timer so waiting has a clear, predictable end point
- Praise the moment they *do* wait or hold back, specifically and immediately

Set up the environment, not just the child

- Reduce visual and auditory clutter in the homework space: face a wall, not a window or doorway
- Keep frequently lost items (water bottle, pencil case) in one fixed spot, always
- Build in a consistent routine. Predictability reduces the load on a still-developing sense of time and sequence

A note on emotions: big reactions are often the impulsivity itself, showing up as feelings instead of actions. Naming the feeling calmly ("that felt really unfair") lands better than reasoning them out of it mid-meltdown.

Wondering about support at school and in exams? Strugglesmart helps parents check reports and plan exam Access Arrangements for PSLE and GCE, such as extra time or a separate room, in English or 华文.

Free first call: strugglesmart.sg/contact

Get the free **ADHD Homework Kit** (Homework Reset Sheet + assessment notes page): strugglesmart.sg/toolkits

Considering a formal assessment? In Singapore, a reasonable starting point is your child's paediatrician or polyclinic doctor, who can refer you to a developmental paediatrician, a Child Guidance Clinic, or a psychologist for a proper ADHD assessment. Schools can also loop in the school counsellor or SEN officer (SENO) to share what they're observing in the classroom.

A reminder: these are general suggestions, not a treatment plan. If you have concerns about your child's development, please speak to a qualified professional.