

# **Setting your child with ADHD up for success**

Quick reference guide for parents and caregivers



**Corium**

Actor portrayal.

ADHD, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

# Many resources are available for children with ADHD

## What does an ADHD diagnosis mean for my child?

Children with ADHD frequently show ongoing patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and/or impulsivity throughout the day; however, symptoms may vary.

These children often struggle with problems at home and in school, including

- ✗ Disruptive behavior
- ✗ Decreased accuracy on assignments
- ✗ Poor study skills
- ✗ Difficulty in social interactions
- ✗ Inability to follow directions

These problems can affect a child's relationship with their parents, teachers, and friends.

**Many kinds of providers and specialists who can help support your child throughout adolescence are listed below, such as**



Pediatricians • Neurologists • Psychiatrists • Psychologists • Social workers

**Although it's never too late to start your child on a treatment plan, beginning before school is back in session is a good idea. Work with your doctor to develop a plan that addresses the specific needs of your child.**

# There are several ways you can help support your child at home

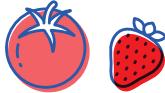
## Choose healthy and nutritious foods for your child

Children taking medicine for ADHD often grow slower and weigh less than their classmates. A healthy diet can help your child stay well nourished and focused at school.

Examples of ADHD-friendly foods include



**Proteins**, such as eggs, cheese, nuts, beans, and meat



**Complex carbohydrates** that digest slowly, such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains



**Omega-3 fatty acids**, including salmon, tuna, nuts, and olive oil

Certain foods might make ADHD symptoms worse and affect a child's performance in school. Focusing on foods that are low in sugar and use only natural ingredients (minimizing sweets and artificial additives, colors, and preservatives) may help reduce ADHD symptoms. Always ask a doctor before limiting any foods.

## Establishing a bedtime routine can help children get a good night's sleep

Create a structured bedtime schedule for your child to follow. The goal is to provide a calm environment where they feel relaxed.



- ✓ Ask your child to bathe, brush their teeth, and go to bed at the same time every night
- ✓ Remove common distractions from your child's bedroom, such as TVs, cell phones, and computers
- ✓ Avoid screen time 30 to 60 minutes before bed
- ✓ Encourage your child to use relaxation skills
  - Read a book
  - Practice slow, deep breathing exercises
  - Take a warm bath

# Working with the school can help ensure your child's needs are met

Learn about advocating for your child and what to expect

## Talk with your child's teacher early and often



Your child's teacher is your primary contact for information about your child's academic and social performance. Before your child starts school, introduce yourself to their teacher. Let them know what behaviors to expect, and ask about your child's progress throughout the year.

### Your child's teacher is their ally—and yours, too

Before the school year begins, ask

- What methods have worked for you in the past when teaching children with ADHD?
- How often should we check in with each other to monitor my child's progress?

During the school year, ask

- How would you describe my child's social interactions?
- Do you see behavior changes during the day?
- Does my child participate in class?
- Have you noticed any specific triggers that affect classroom behavior?

## Do you know who to contact?

Ask the school to help you identify the correct contacts for your child, so you can reach out as needed.

# School programs designed for children with ADHD

There are 2 programs that provide free public special education services: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act. Your child's school can help you request either service.

With either service, you'll meet with the school to develop and review your child's plan. Be prepared to check in with your child and their teacher throughout the year to see how the plan is working.

## IDEA individualized education programs (IEPs)

IEPs are for children with specific conditions, such as intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, and speech and language difficulties.

At the meeting, ensure that goals set for your child

- Are "SMART": Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound
- Align with your child's current level of performance
- Address academic and social areas your child struggles with

## Section 504 plans

Section 504 plans are for children who do not qualify for an IEP but still need extra help in the classroom.

At the meeting,

- Ensure the plan is customized for your child
- Address all school scenarios where your child needs extra help
- Be specific about each accommodation and/or service being offered

# Take your understanding of ADHD to the next level

Connecting with others and learning more about ADHD can help you on your journey. These websites have useful information about ADHD, and many can lead you to support groups that can connect you with other families.

For more information about ADHD in children, visit



[www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/  
Hyperactivity Disorder

**ADDITUDE**

[www.additudemag.com](http://www.additudemag.com)

ADDitude Magazine



[www.apsard.org](http://www.apsard.org)

The American Professional Society of ADHD  
and Related Disorders



[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

American Academy of Pediatrics



[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

National Institute of Mental Health

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