

Learning Links Fact Sheet

ADHD in Children



What is ADHD?

ADHD, or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, is a prevalent neurodevelopmental condition, affecting around five per cent of children. It impacts a child's ability to regulate their attention, energy levels, impulses and emotions. These difficulties do not reflect a child's overall intelligence or learning potential but may affect their ability to self-regulate, focus, remember information and plan – a group of cognitive skills known as executive functions.

Types of ADHD

ADHD is a complex condition that presents differently in all children. While each child experiences their own unique set of challenges, there are three main subtypes of ADHD.

- **ADHD inattentive type:** challenges predominantly with concentration, memory, organisation and task initiation /completion.
- **ADHD hyperactive/impulsive type:** challenges predominantly in self-control, restlessness, waiting and sitting still.
- **ADHD combined type:** challenges across several areas of attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.

Signs of ADHD

The signs of ADHD are often recognised in children before the age of 12 years. Signs of ADHD are usually noticed across multiple settings such as at home, school and extra-curricular activities and impact various aspects of a child's functioning.

There are several signs and symptoms of ADHD to look out for:

- Difficulty concentrating for extended periods
- Appears distracted or 'daydreaming'
- Constantly seeking movement such as fidgeting, walking around or 'squirming'.
- Forgetfulness and trouble with memory
- Difficulty initiating and completing tasks
- Difficulty following multi-step instructions
- Talks a lot and at high volume, particular if discussing own interests
- May interrupt or find it hard to wait
- Avoidance of task that require sustained attention and effort

What Causes ADHD?

The exact cause of ADHD is still unknown. However, studies have shown that a range of genetic, biological and environmental factors may contribute to the development of ADHD. ADHD is present at birth and cannot be cured so symptoms can persist into adulthood.

How is ADHD Diagnosed?

There is currently no single definitive medical or psychological test to diagnose ADHD. Diagnosing ADHD requires a detailed assessment conducted by a paediatrician, psychiatrist or child psychologist.

A comprehensive ADHD assessment may include:

- Family questionnaires to understand your child's background and medical history
- Interviews with the child, family and teacher
- Cognitive and academic testing to understand your child's abilities and rule out other causes for your child's symptoms
- Other standardised tests to evaluate specific symptoms associated with ADHD
- Observations in the home, school and clinic environment to understand symptoms across different settings

Support for Children with ADHD

There is no cure for ADHD but education and treatment can help children cope and succeed at home and school. Most experts believe that ADHD is best treated through a multi-modal approach that involves parents, teachers, and medical and mental health professionals.

Recommended support options include:

- **Medication:** Helps to normalise the imbalance of neurotransmitter chemicals to manage impact of symptoms.
- **Lifestyle changes:** changes to diet, exercise and sleep patterns do not directly treat ADHD but can help to improve overall daily functioning, quality of life and the child's ability to manage symptoms.
- **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy:** challenges negative or unhelpful thought patterns and teaches practical self-help and problem-solving strategies to manage feelings of anxiety, low self-esteem and emotional dysregulation that may occur with ADHD.



- **Classroom Adjustments:** Some common adjustments for a child with ADHD include:
 - Providing instructions in multiple formats
 - Wearing noise-reducing headphones
 - Modifying tasks to align with interests
 - Extra time to complete homework
 - Extra time and breaks during exams
 - Opportunity to ask questions before an exam starts

How Learning Links Can Help

Learning Links has more than 50 years of experience supporting children with learning difficulties like ADHD. We offer a range of services and resources to support children.

- **ADHD Assessments:** get a comprehensive evaluation with a psychologist to understand the cause of a child's difficulty with attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.
- **ADHD Counselling:** get support with emotional regulation, behaviour, self-esteem and anxiety associated with ADHD.
- **Specialist ADHD Tutoring:** get weekly support with executive functioning skills for academic tasks from a teacher experienced in learning difficulties.

Enquire about our services

Call our friendly Intake team on **1300 003 900** or submit an online enquiry.

[www.learninglinks.org.au/
service-enquiry](http://www.learninglinks.org.au/service-enquiry)