



What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?

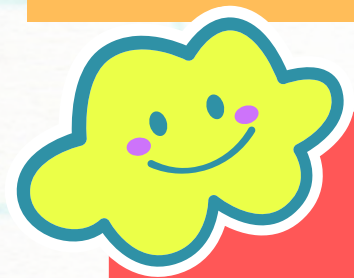
ADHD is a common condition that impacts the way a person's brain works. People with ADHD may struggle with skills relating to EXECUTIVE FUNCTION like paying attention, managing emotions, staying organized, starting tasks and keeping track of what they are doing.

Lots of people think ADHD is about a LACK of focus, but people with ADHD can be REALLY good at focusing on things they like. For many, It's more about REGULATING attention, emotions and behaviors. Having ADHD can make school, work or things at home really challenging.



Facts about ADHD

- 11% of school aged children have been diagnosed with ADHD.
- Many people with ADHD also have another diagnosis like dyslexia, anxiety, tic disorders, autism or obsessive compulsive disorder.
- People once used the term ADD to describe those who struggled with attention and not hyperactivity. We now say a person has one of three types of ADHD: Hyperactive/ Impulsive, Inattentive or Combined.
- ADHD impacts girls and boys equally, but because it can look very different for girls, they may not be diagnosed until much later (or at all!). Girls with ADHD may have less symptoms of hyperactivity, but might struggle with "daydreaming," lots of big feelings, shyness, perfectionism, forgetfulness or being very talkative in class.



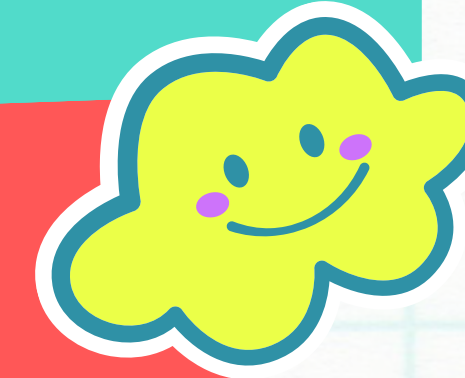
ADHD is NOT:

- **Just for kids.** Adults have ADHD too!
- **Something you can catch or cause.**
- **The same in everyone.** Everyone's brain experiences ADHD in a different way.
- **Something bad.** ADHD is a neurotype (type of brain).. It is another thing that makes you who you are!
- **A learning disability.** ADHD impacts more overall skills like paying attention, memory and impulses. ADHD can certainly make it hard to learn though!
- **About being "lazy" or "not being smart enough!"** ADHD is a medical diagnosis that has nothing to do with attitude or intelligence. It's really just about the way our brains work!



October is

ADHD Awareness Month



I have ADHD and school feels hard.

Think of it like this- a brain is like a highway and you and your classmates all have to get to the same place. But, your path has traffic cones and puddles and potholes! These obstacles mean it might take longer to get to your destination (or finish that assignment!). If you, your caregivers and your teachers work together to change your path so you can go a different route or remove the obstacles, you should be able to reach your final destination too.

Having ADHD does not make you a "bad student" or a "troublemaker." Your brain just needs a different route and there's nothing wrong with that!

Famous people with ADHD

Ryan Gosling: Actor (It's Ken!)
Simone Biles: Gymnast
Will Smith: Actor
Jim Carrey: Actor
Michael Jordan: Basketball Player
Emma Watson: Actor (Hermione!)
Justin Timberlake: Actor & Musician
Michael Phelps: Swimmer
Will.i.am: Musician
Dav Pilkey: Author of Captain Underpants & Dog Man
Steve Jobs: Founder of Apple



How do we help people with ADHD?

If our brains are like race cars, a person with ADHD's brain has a turbo engine. It can go really, really fast, but it might overheat and stop working. If we use special motor oil and make sure you have the right brakes, you can win lots of races.

- Ways to **MOVE** our bodies during the day can help: lots of exercise, special chairs, fidget tools, or lots of brain and walking breaks.
- **SCHEDULES & CHECKLISTS** to help with memory and completing tasks.
- **EXTRA TIME** to finish assignments or breaking down tasks into smaller pieces
- **THERAPY** can help us learn to work through hard emotions or figure out the organization strategies
- Special **SOFTWARE** helps students collect their thoughts for stories or come up with words when they are writing.
- **TECHNOLOGY** in phones and smartwatches allow us to set reminders, create calendars or make lists.
- Doctors can give people with ADHD **MEDICINE** that may help with focus, memory and feeling more comfortable in school or work.

ADHD looks different to everyone, but some kids might feel like:

- It is hard not to interrupt because they want to share their cool ideas right away.
- Getting started with a new task like writing a story or doing chores feels overwhelming.
- It is a struggle to stay focused on or remember things they aren't interested in.
- Keeping track of their belongings, organizing their desk or finding things in their backpack is super tricky.
- Their bodies need to move in places where they might need to stay still and quiet (like class!). It may feel like they should fidget, wiggle or be on their feet to learn.
- They want to just get tasks and schoolwork over with, so they speed through work without checking for mistakes.
- Feelings and emotions can get really big really fast and it's hard to use strategies to work through tough situations.

People with ADHD can also have some really awesome strengths!

- Creativity
- Remembering stories and experiences
- Perserverance when things get hard
- Making other people laugh
- Courage to jump into new experiences
- Ability to focus intensely and remember lots about the things or topics you enjoy