

# Understanding Attention Deficit Disorder

“I think my child may have ADD/ADHD...”

Your child **may** have ADD/ADHD if s/he exhibits the following symptoms:

\*Only a medical professional can diagnose ADD/ADHD

## Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

- Difficulty following directions and completing assignments
- Difficulty organizing tasks, activities, and time
- Misses details or makes careless mistakes
- Avoids/dislikes tasks requiring sustained mental effort (prefers uncomplicated tasks)
- Often loses things or is forgetful
- Does not seem to listen
- Is easily distracted
- Can be impulsive

## Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- Has trouble remaining seated
- Fidgets, squirms, and moves constantly
- May talk excessively
- May have trouble playing alone or quietly
- May seem to always be “on the go”
- Interrupts adults, teachers, or other children
- Blurts out answers
- Has trouble waiting his/her turn

“My child has been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD...”

## Strategies to use if your child has ADD/ADHD:

- Be Positive:** Focus on successes, not failures. Look at what your child is doing well and celebrate it.
- Don't Use ADD/ADHD as a Crutch:** “I can do it!” should always be the standard. Get rid of expectations that your child will screw up or have trouble.
- Play the Attention Game:** Teach & remind your child to be mindful/self-aware.
- Cue:** Say child's name first to get his/her attention before giving directions.
- Be Flexible:** Be careful not to structure situations where control could be an issue. Offer choices between good, better, and best options, not good/bad.
- Distinguish Behaviour from the Child:** Remember to say you dislike a certain behaviour, not the child. For example, say “I love you, but it upsets me when you leave your toys all over the living room.”
- Expect Responsibility:** Do not excuse a child with ADD/ADHD from responsibilities. Have clear expectations and ensure your child understands the expectations.

## School Action Plan

- Establish Routines:** Schedule consistent homework/study times and spaces.
- Provide Personal Space:** Within dedicated workspace, clear the clutter and get rid of distractions (TVs, phones, radios, etc.)
- Demonstrate:** When teaching new tasks, demonstrate them. Repeat as necessary. Be patient.
- Get Started:** Teach and re-teach organization skills. Before starting, break tasks into smaller, more manageable parts and go over all instructions clearly.
- Build Confidence:** Celebrate every success, no matter how minor!