



UNDERSTANDING AND ADJUSTING TO ADHD BEHAVIOURS IN YOUR CHILD



CAMHS HSE Mid-West



Parenting your child with ADHD



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Scan the QR code above to gain access
to a 1 hour parenting workshop for
understanding ADHD and supporting
your child.

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CAMHS TEAM

CAMHS MID-WEST

The CAMHS Mid-West team consists of 7 teams:

- 3 Limerick (East, West, Central)
- 2 North Tipperary (Nenagh, Thurles)
- 2 Clare (East, West)

The team your child is assigned to is based on your home address.

We are the East Limerick team. We are a multidisciplinary team mostly based out of the Mid-West Regional Office, Rosbrien Road, Limerick.

Our team includes doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists.

Services include:

- ADHD clinics, mental health clinics/ assessments
- ADHD Parenting Groups
- Groups for children and groups for Adolescents



CAMHS TEAM



CAMHS MID-WEST



Multidisciplinary Team Members:

Psychiatrist & Medical Doctor

- Medical doctors assess, manage and treat mental health difficulties. They may also prescribe medication and provide advice.

Nurse

- Nurses provide advice and intervention. They may also monitor medication and carry out physical and mental health checks.

Social Worker

- Social workers provide support and intervention to parents/guardians and young people.

Speech and Language Therapist

- Speech and Language therapists (SLTs) assess and provide intervention to support communication and social skills.

Occupational Therapist

- Occupational Therapists (OTs) work with children and young people to promote independence and engagement in everyday activities.

Psychologist

- Psychologists use talking therapy to explore thoughts, feelings and behaviours.



MODEL OF CARE

Keyworkers :

- *A Vision for Change- Report for the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy, 2006* recommends the allocation of a key worker to each child or adolescent and their parent(s) so that they have direct and easy access to a known team member.
- Each child or adolescent and their parent(s) should be informed of who their key worker is.
- The role of the keyworker is to establish a relationship with the child or adolescent, and to take responsibility for actively remaining in contact with them and their parent(s).
- The role of the keyworker can be assigned to any clinical CAMHS team member.
- The keyworker coordinates the care provided by all other team members and provides feedback to the team on progress.
- The role of the keyworker may not involve delivering all of the treatment for the child or adolescent, however they are responsible for making sure that clinicians are following the Individual Care Plan.

Individual Care Plan:

- An ICP is a clear plan, in plain English, that describes the levels of care and treatment needed to meet the assessed needs of the child or adolescent while they are attending CAMHS.



WELCOME

Welcome to CAMHS. You are receiving this booklet as your child has received a diagnosis of ADHD. The aim is to provide you with a better understanding of ADHD and to help you support your child.

You are a key person to help your child manage ADHD, no one is to blame for ADHD, especially not the child. Your child has underlying difficulties which impact on their behaviour. Some of the difficulties that a child with ADHD might experience can be changed with your help.

Consistency is the key to ensure all adults looking after your child have a good understanding of ADHD and can respond in the same way.

Acknowledgement

This booklet was your idea/suggestion.

To the many parents who have contributed ideas of how to support their child with ADHD and gave us insight into how to help, we thank you.

This booklet is a collaboration of information provided by parents, families, siblings, service users and your CAMHS team.



WHAT IS ADHD?

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a medical/neurobiological condition in which the brain's neurotransmitter chemicals, noradrenalin and dopamine do not work properly.

It is a long term condition which affects learning and behaviour right throughout school years and in some cases into adulthood.

It is characterised by symptoms of:

- Hyperactivity
- Impulsivity
- Inattention

Some people are primarily hyperactive and impulsive and some are primarily inattentive.

Only those with significant impairment in multiple settings e.g. school, home and social settings meet the diagnostic criteria.

Children with ADHD can have difficulty with school work, homework, dealing with physical risks and forming positive relationships with family and peers.

ADHD is a disorder that can coexist with other disorders such as dyslexia, learning disorders, dyspraxia, autism, conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder, mood and anxiety disorders.



SCHOOL





SCHOOL

Helping Children with ADHD Succeed at School

The classroom environment can be a challenging place for a child with ADHD. The very tasks these students find the most difficult – sitting still, listening quietly, and concentrating – are the ones they are required to do all day long. Perhaps most frustrating of all is that most of these children want to be able to learn and behave like their unaffected peers. Neurological differences, not unwillingness, makes it difficult for children with ADHD to learn in traditional ways.

Communicate with school and teachers

As a parent, you are a child's advocate. For your child to succeed in the classroom, it is vital that you communicate his or her needs, strengths and talents to the adults at school. It is equally important for you to listen to what the teachers have to say. You can make communication with your child's school

CAMHS contact with the School

1. Contact with parental consent
2. School report forms
3. Conners Scales & questionnaires
4. Five day report forms before each appointment (important for assessing, monitoring symptoms and determining how effective medication or interventions are)



Organisation

- Seat child away from distractions.
- Clear the desk of all items not needed for the task at hand.
- Help to teach organisation and planning skills.

Good Communication

- Teacher should frequently call on the child, especially when he/she appears to daydream.
- Always talk to the child making eye contact.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Routine

- Keep a routine in the classroom.
- Allow for physical movement e.g. go to get books from the shelf.
- High structure

Positive Encouragement

- Praise the child.
- Keep a visual record of good behaviour and good work.
- Catch the child being good and reward on a chart.
- Teachers should provide frequent, unambiguous feedback.

Giving Instruction

- Break tasks down into steps from start to finish and reward after each stage.
- Make sure you have the child's attention before giving instruction, get the child to repeat the instruction back to you.
- Set limits clearly. Children with ADHD find it hard to quantify time – use a stopwatch or egg timer.
- Insist on completion of a task.
- Use of computer programmes - children with ADHD respond well to them and it encourages them to monitor themselves.
- Multisensory learning
- Help with the development of self monitoring skills.



Organisation

- Keep a diary or to do list.
- Encourage colour coding e.g. in homework journal.
- Give advance notice of upcoming tasks.

Good Communication

- Say what you expect and how you expect it to be completed.
- Change your tone of voice and pace to keep them interested.
- Establish a private signal so that they know their behaviour is inappropriate e.g. tapping the desk.

EXTRA TIPS FOR TEACHERS OF OLDER CHILDREN

Giving Instruction

- Encourage the child to write it down & break it down.
- Say it, write it and repeat it when giving instruction.
- Encourage them to give feedback to reinforce the given instruction.
- Coach the student until task completion.

Positive Encouragement

- Use positive language – “you’re doing great”, “you’re nearly there”
- Reassure

Routine

- Time out breaks.
- Seat breaks allow movement within the room.

HOMEWORK





HOMework

Helping Children with ADHD Succeed with Homework

- Reduce clutter and have a specific area cleared where homework can be done without distractions.
- Get books and copies organised, focusing on one subject at a time.
- Go through child's homework diary in advance. Use diary as a means for communication with teachers regarding homework and suggested length of time for homework.
- Label and colour code books.
- Try to stay nearby as this alone can assist the child in maintaining their focus.
- Reduce visual stress. Provide a space free from clutter, pets, television.
- Pick a specific time for homework each day.
- Use a timer for homework.
- Allow the child breaks as often as every ten to twenty minutes.
- Child might need to take a break after school and/or have a snack and free time (e.g. kick ball, cycle) prior to starting homework.
- Positively reinforce your child for their attempts/completion of homework.
- Set deadlines on completing homework and communicate these with teachers. It will give your child a better sense of structure especially if both the school and parents are aware of set goals.



Use past exam papers.

Discover which memory retrieval strategy works best for you – mnemonics, drills with flash cards, explaining, demonstrating, writing, outlining, verbalising.

Use flashcards to help you memorise information.

TIPS FOR EXAM PREPARATION

Take good notes throughout the term and study from the notes.

Goals should be set for study periods

Plan your answers on exam day. Be sure to leave enough time for every question.

Break homework/study tasks into smaller, more manageable units.

Approach your teacher for advice.

Try to start studying right at the beginning of the school term

LIFE OUTSIDE SCHOOL





LIFE OUTSIDE SCHOOL

It is important when supporting your child with ADHD that routines and structure continue to be consistent when your child is at home, not just in school. Having regular routines during the evenings and at weekends that stay very consistent will provide your child with a sense of stability.

- Try to prioritise 1:1 time/family time with your child. By allocating a set time to participate in enjoyable activities, you will strengthen your relationship with your child and allow for more opportunities for them to open up to you about what is on their mind.
- After-school activities that are supervised in a well-structured environment are also a great way of keeping your child entertained after school. For instance, team sports, martial arts, scouts (e.g. Ladybirds, Scouts etc.), art or music classes.
- Have a conversation with your child about what types of activities they enjoy and are interested in, this will improve their engagement and help them to stay focused for longer.
- Spending time outside in green environments, such as parks or gardens, has been shown to improve ADHD symptoms. More specifically, research has shown that children with ADHD who play regularly in green play settings have milder symptoms than children who play indoors or in built-up outside settings.
- Remember, a child with hyperactive/ impulsive type ADHD might benefit from a highly active physical sport (such as swimming), whereas a child with inattentive ADHD might do better with more short-term, focused goals (such as athletics).



LIFE OUTSIDE SCHOOL

See below for a list of free/low-cost activities that you can do with your child outside and from your home.

- Going for walks
- Gardening or other yard work
- Playing outdoor sports
- Hiking or backpacking
- Fishing
- Dance party/ movement breaks (freely available on YouTube if you search 'movement breaks for kids').
- Arts and crafts
- There are plenty of colouring pages freely available online. Activities like slime/ making stress balls are easily doable and require few resources. Activities like this will also help improve your child's fine motor skills.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION





EMOTIONAL REGULATOR

Strategies to help Your child manage their emotions

Some children with ADHD may have difficulty regulating their emotions, for instance they may act without thinking or they may also become extremely excited, angry or upset. As a parent/guardian you can help to support your young person in the following ways:

1. Try to become aware of the Build Up

- Look for patterns (i.e. same time each day or day of week, with certain people or place) and try and make notes or keep records of when this build up happens
- Identify your child's triggers (e.g. after school, med's wearing off, car journey with sister/brothers) using the information you have collected from keeping records.
- Take note of what you can see when looking at your child when they are getting angry (e.g. fast/high pitched talking/shouting, eye's widening, shortness of breath, clenching fists, red/pale face).
- Stay calm & in control. Take time to plan your response & Don't Just React.

2. Help your child become more aware:

A) About themselves

- Make them aware of their triggers, before they have lost control.
- Teach them to label their feelings (e.g. isolation, frustration, confusion rejection, anger, sadness, etc . . . "I noticed that you became very frustrated while trying to solve that puzzle". The Feelings Wheel (p.g. 33) is a useful tool that helps to prompt people when describing feelings, and could be used with your child to help them identify their emotions
- Help them to accurately identify how they are feeling and be aware of any confusion (e.g. mistaking sadness for anger).



EMOTIONAL REGULATION

- Help them consider why they feel a particular way, does it make sense? How might they want to feel? – how would others feel?
- After an Incident when everyone is calm, try and help your child consider their response to their emotions. Your child's feelings are valid, but it might be that their response or behaviour was inappropriate.

B) About their Environment

- Help your child understand how their behaviour affects others in their environment.
- Remind your child that everyone is responsible for their own behaviour.

3. Talking to your child

- Be understanding & sympathetic, stay calm and try not get angry.
- Be positive & encouraging by praising their achievements and personal characteristics.
- Notice when they manage their emotions and ask them how they did it.
- Set realistic goals and praise/reward them when these goals are achieved.
- Actively listen and mirror back what they say, e.g. “so it sounds like you feel upset that your brother took your toy”.
- Use open and curious questions to understand their opinion and tell them that their opinion is valued
- Give them one or two options (lack of options/ too many options might be confusing or overwhelming)
- Show your child respect by remaining calm and supportive, they will be more likely to reciprocate if you model the behaviour.



EMOTIONAL REGULATION

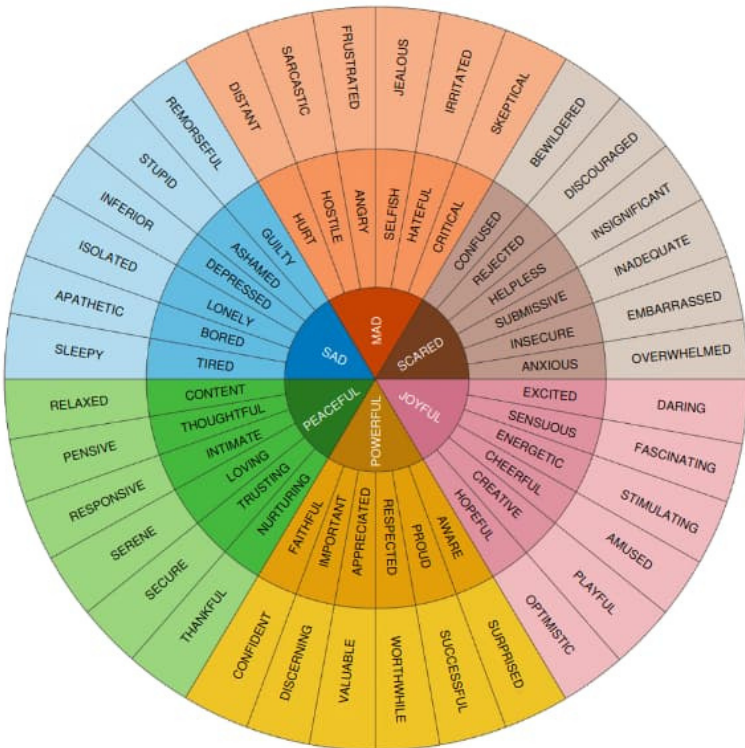
Strenghts/Positives for a child with ADHD



- Lots of energy
- Creative
- Quick reflexes/ sports
- Acts quickly
- When focused, can achieve a lot
- Practical people (entrepreneurs)
- Passionate & driven
- Good at multitasking



The Feeling Wheel developed by Dr. Gloria Wilcox



The aim of this tool is to prompt people to be more detailed when describing their feelings. It can help develop emotional awareness which can in turn improve emotional regulation

PARENTING TEENS





PARENTING TEENS

Limits

Teens want and need limits, even if they object to them. Boundaries permit them to explore and challenge the rules – a task of normal development – and learn that their parents care about them and their actions. Sometimes, parents may feel it is easier to give in however teenagers can feel unsafe with too much control.

Parenting Styles

It's worth repeating here that parents do not cause the primary symptoms of ADHD. However the way parents handle misbehaviour, disrespectful behaviour, rebellious acts, confrontations, deviance and normal day-to-day mistakes can have a big influence on the lives of children/ young people.

An effective parenting style can have a beneficial impact on behaviour as well as encouraging independence for teens.

- Use negotiations.
- Do not dictate the rules. Instead mutually establish rules and limits and consequences for inappropriate behaviour and rewards for compliance. Be sure your teenager knows ahead of time which issues are negotiable and which are not.
- Ask for their input- use open ended questions and be curious.
- Take some time to consider their request.
- Anticipate upcoming problems or difficulties
- Set reasonable expectations



PARENTING TEENS

General Tips:

- Plan scheduled time with them: organise some one on one time for you and your child. E.g. cooking, cinema. going for a walk together.
- Be patient
- Anticipate upcoming problems or difficulties.
- Set reasonable expectations
- Concentrate on their strengths and abilities and praise explicitly
- Believe in them
- Empathise with their feelings.
- Choose your battles carefully
- Talk to them about difficulties they may encounter
- Don't be afraid to let them fail
- Be sure they understand that your love is unconditional and remind them of the reasons why you love them.
- Avoid using labels
- Always present a united front
- Be a good role model for them
- Try to distinguish the difference between disobedience and inability to follow a rule/ complete a task.



PARENTING TEENS

General Tips:

- Work on developing effective problem solving and communication skills.
- Let them know how their behaviour affects you and other family members.
- Try not to embarrass or criticise them in front of others.
- Practice forgiveness.

Curfew: Negotiable or not?

Teens in early adolescence should have a curfew that you are comfortable with. This can be negotiated between parents and their teen. Encourage them to ring home if they expect to be late. Teens who break this rule should face pre-agreed consequences

“The rule was that you would call if you were going to be late. You didn’t. Therefore next weekend you will be expected to be home 30 minutes earlier than the agreed time. I hope you make that deadline next Friday night.”

Negotiating allows teens to express their feelings about all of your expectations. This, in return, promotes collaboration and willingness to comply with the guidelines. Sometimes a consensus can be reached and sometimes not. The important thing is that your teen knows that you are listening to what they have to say.

HOME ORGANISATION





HOME ORGANISATION

Follow a routine:

It is important to set a time and a place for all daily activities to help your child with ADD/ADHD understand and meet expectations. Establish simple and predictable rituals for meals, homework, play, and bed. Have your child lay out clothes for the next morning before going to bed. Make sure whatever he or she needs to take to school is in an obvious space agreed to by your child which is ready to grab.

Use clocks and timers (for example egg timers):

Consider placing clocks throughout the house, with a big one in your child's bedroom. Allow enough time for what your child needs to do, such as homework or getting ready in the morning. Use a timer for homework and other routine tasks like getting ready for bed. Break daily tasks such as homework in to small time slots e.g. 15- 20 minutes to avoid overwhelm and help with focus and attention, incorporate 2-3 minute movement breaks in-between each subject if required.

Simplify your child's schedule:

This will require some trial and error, experiment a bit and find what works for the family. Make a weekly calendar. This will help with daily structure and setting a schedule for the day.

Create a quiet place:

Make sure your child has a quiet, private space of his or her own e.g. their bedroom or a quiet sitting room/den. It is important that this is a safe, positive and comfortable space that your child is happy with.

Do your best to be neat and organized.

Set up your home in an organised way. Make sure your child knows that everything has its place. It will help your child to develop a pattern of behaviour if you role model organisation at some level. However, this does not have to be taken to the extreme.



HOME ORGANISATION

Checklists and Visual Schedules

Checklists are a simple visual aid that can be incredibly helpful for children with ADHD. Checklists can aid concentration and improve focus, without causing the child to become too overwhelmed with tasks.

Having a checklist can help children with ADHD stay on task and avoid forgetting important tasks. They can also provide the child with a sense of achievement upon completing their tasks.

Schedules can also be very helpful for children with ADHD. Schedules provide structure and organisation in an environment that they might find chaotic or overwhelming.

Visual schedules are a great way to support your child. Visual schedules communicate the order of upcoming activities or events through the use of objects, photographs, icons, words, or a combination of tangible supports.

A visual schedule helps a child understand where he/she should be and when they should be there. Visual schedules should be designed to meet the individual needs of a child, and may vary in length and form. It can also be helpful to incorporate the use of timer when using visual schedules to aid transitioning between tasks.

See the next page for some examples of visual schedules. Blank templates are also available online if you google “visual schedule templates”.



HOME ORGANISATION

Daily Schedule

 breakfast	 bathroom	 brush teeth	 snack	 lunch
 school work	 nap time	 relax	 dinner	 jobs
 shower	 bath	 get dressed	 put on pyjamas	 bed time



Using a Timer to Help with Transitions & Tasks



<p>Time to watch some television</p> <p>Timer set for ____ min.</p>	<p>Time to fold</p>	<p>Time to go outside</p>	<p>Place my dirty dishes in the sink</p>
<p>Time to Clean up</p>	<p>Time to place dirty clothes in laundry basket</p>	<p>Time to make my bed</p>	<p>Time to check my schedule</p>
<p>Time for dinner</p>	<p>Time to clear table</p>	<p>Time to feed</p>	<p>It is time to go to bed</p>



HOME ORGANISATION



Reward Systems



What are they?

A Reward System can be very beneficial for your child's daily functioning, as it supports discipline and behavioural modifications necessary to keep moving, keep trying, or start and finish a task.

Reward Systems & ADHD

Having ADHD can impact a child's ability to get going or stick to a task. This is due to a variation in brain chemistry (i.e. reduced levels of dopamine and noradrenaline) which cause difficulties with attention and concentration.

An ADHD brain is not as easily adaptable as a non-ADHD brain and what may stimulate a non-ADHD brain can go almost unregistered to someone with ADHD.

ADHD brains also lack sufficient dopamine levels, which means that any behaviour that causes dopamine to surge will strongly appeal to a child with ADHD. Therefore, it is difficult for a child with ADHD to engage in behaviours that do not increase dopamine levels.

An example of a rewards system is as follows, each time that your child completes a task, put a marble/coloured stone in a jar or a star on a chart. Your child can see their rewards building up visually. To involve your child and increase motivation in the use of a rewards system, create it with them e.g. they can design the jar or chart.

Rewards should be:

- Relevant
- External
- Frequent
- Immediate
- Simple
- Cost-effective



HOME ORGANISATION

Examples of rewards:

- Time with friends
- Having friends over
- Family time - going as a family for a walk or treat (e.g. cinema)
- Access to X-box and other game consoles
- Card games like snap/5 lives can improve memory, attention, taking turns, and coping with winning/losing

Helping your Child's Attention & Concentration through Play

Chose games that are short and set up quickly:

- Lego
- Dress-up
- Painting
- Cooking
- Gardening

Allow your child to choose the game, make up the rules and lead the game as it will promote motivation and attention.

You can expand your child's language through play, talking to the child during play, encouraging and praising your child during play and by talking about times you did nice things together.



SLEEP





SLEEP

Research suggests that as up to 70% of children with ADHD deal with some type of sleep problem. For instance, they may have trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or they may resist bedtime altogether.

Possible reasons for this include:

- Lower melatonin production (a hormone that helps induce sleep).
- Stimulants that treat ADHD can cause trouble sleeping (however even if children doesn't take these medications, they can still have sleep issues)
- ADHD impairs the regulation of brain activity and therefore affects sleep patterns.

Regardless, there are steps you can take to help your child with ADHD get a better night's sleep.

Do's and Don'ts for Bedtime

- Limit Screen time (phones/tablets/ iPads/ computers/ gaming devices/ tv) for one to two hours before bedtime- especially any programme that may be over stimulating.
- Your child should not engage in stimulating, active play such as wrestling, tickling, teasing one hour before bedtime. Quiet activities such as reading, drawing or writing are more helpful in the hours before bedtime.
- Try to eliminate caffeine from your child's diet. Cola drinks and chocolate have significant caffeine.
- Try a warm bath.
- Some children with ADHD find restrictive bedding helpful. Being wrapped tightly in blankets or using a sleeping bag.
- Spend ten minutes with your child. This will build a sense of love and security as well as provide a time to calm down.



SLEEP

- Try some self hypnosis. Focus eyes on one spot and slowly counting to twenty, allowing eyes to get heavy. Take slow deep breaths and allow the body to relax starting from the head down. Talk your child through this and eventually they will learn to do it themselves. Imagine a safe sleepy inviting scene.
- Mindfulness, for instance practicing a meditation before bed can help your child relax and get more rest. Mindfulness has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, as well as improve sleep and concentration. You can read your child a self-guided meditation (loads available online) or listen to a meditation together (loads of free meditations available on YouTube).
- Use the bed and bedroom only for sleep. Maintain a rising time as well as bedtime.
- Avoid rests during the day.
- A mixture of warm milk, a teaspoon of vanilla and a teaspoon of sugar can be helpful. This increases serotonin in your brain and aids sleep.
- Use lavender or other aromas in your child's room. The scent may help to calm your child.



NUTRITION





NUTRITION

Eating small meals more often may help your child's ADHD.

Oftentimes, children with ADHD do not eat regularly. Without parental guidance these children might not eat for hours and then binge on whatever is around. This pattern can be problematic, affecting the child's physical and emotional health. Prevent this pattern by scheduling regular healthy meals or snacks for your child no more than three hours apart. Physically, the child with ADHD needs a regular intake of healthy food; mentally, meal times are a necessary break and give a routine to the day.

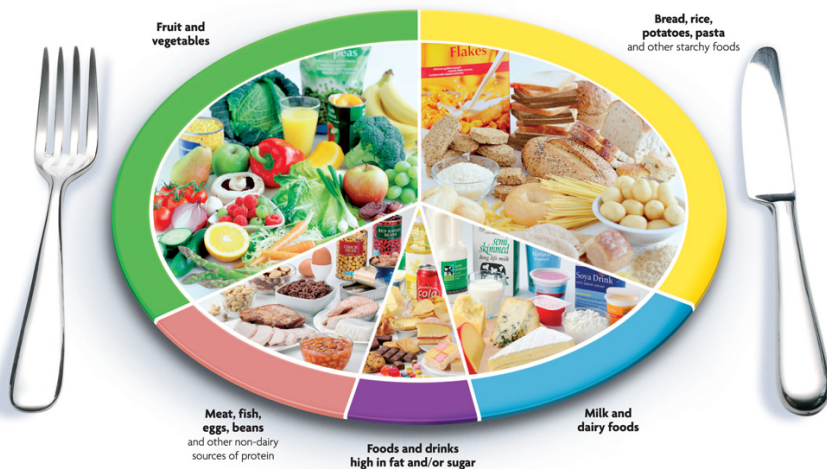
- Reduce the junk foods in your home.
- Limit fatty and sugary foods when eating out.
- Make sure your child is getting enough zinc, iron and magnesium in your diet. Consider a daily multi-vitamin if you're unsure.
- Try to include a little protein and carbohydrates at each snack or meal. These foods will help you feel more alert while decreasing hyperactivity.
- Add more omega-3 fatty acids to your child's diet. A growing number of studies show that omega-3s improve mental focus in people with ADHD. Omega-3s are found in salmon, tuna, sardines, and some fortified eggs and milk products. Fish oil supplements are an easy way to boost your intake.
- Ask for advice and information from your community dietician and pharmacist.



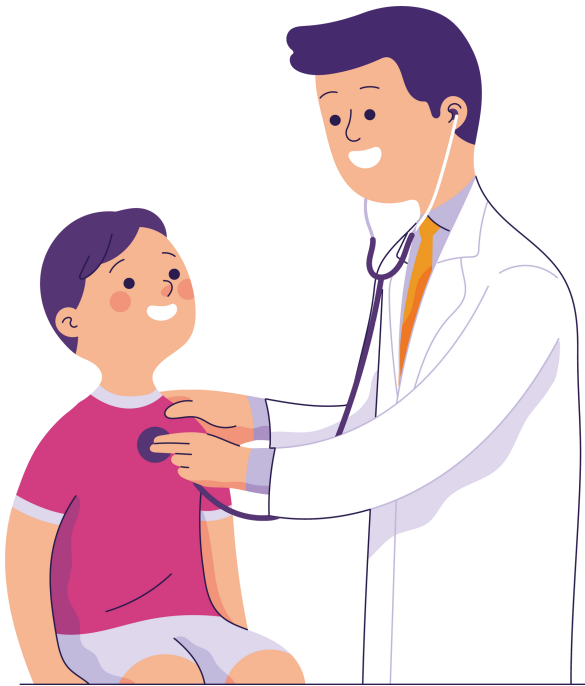
NUTRITION

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



~ MEDICATION FOR ~ ADHD





MEDICATION FOR ADHD

Stimulant Medication for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Introduction

Medication can affect the action of certain chemicals in the brain. In children, medication can increase attention and reduce hyperactivity, and can be used as one part of the treatment for ADHD.

Medication should be considered if ADHD negatively impacts your child across multiple settings. Medication should be prescribed only after your child has been fully assessed by a specialist. Stimulant medications may be worth trying if your child experiences serious difficulties with:

- **Concentration** – For example: struggles to concentrate for periods of time, finds it difficult to remember information, may struggle with organisation, may attempt to start a task and struggle to complete it, may be easily distracted by external stimuli.
- **Activity levels**- For example: struggles to sit still, may struggle to control the speed at which they speak or volume of their voice.
- **Impulsivity** – For example: Struggles to wait their turn, may interrupt others without realising, may engage in behaviours or activities without thinking about the consequences first.

Children with ADHD may also find the following settings difficult:

- **At school** – may struggle with concentration or find it difficult to complete tasks, may struggle with hyperactivity in the classroom setting.



MEDICATION FOR ADHD

- At home - may struggle to follow instructions or have difficulty remembering things, may struggle with concentration or have trouble sitting still.
- With friends - may have difficulty taking turns or sharing with others, may have difficulty picking up on social cues

There are two types of medication used to treat ADHD:

- Stimulant
- Non-Stimulant

How stimulant medication works

Stimulants act on the parts of the brain involved in self-control. This helps focus attention, and may also help filter out unnecessary information. The child's behaviour becomes calmer, more focused and less impulsive. Stimulant medication creates a 'window of opportunity' when children can be focused and concentrate better. They can therefore learn better at school, they can think more clearly, and find it easier to understand requests from parents and teachers. School work becomes more interesting and enjoyable, and they make more friends.

Stimulant medication is probably the most highly researched of any medication prescribed for children. They greatly improve concentration, impulse control and overactivity in about eight children in every 10 with ADHD. However, medication does not work for everyone.

Which stimulant medications are used?

The stimulant medication most commonly used is methylphenidate, (Ritalin L.A.- Ritalin S.A., Medikinet MR), Concerta XL, Equasym XL. When it works, the effect begins within 30-60 minutes. The exact amount of each dose needs to be carefully monitored and adjusted by a specialist. There are also long-acting forms that last up to 12 hours.



MEDICATION FOR ADHD

Methylphenidate is a short acting medication which lasts 3-4 hours and needs to be given 3 times per day, morning, lunchtime and afterschool. There are 3 long acting preparations of Methylphenidate, Equasym XL, Concerta XL, and Ritalin LA. They last from 8 to 12 hours and are given once in the morning.

Lisdexamphetamine is chemically very similar to methylphenidate. It sometimes works when methylphenidate does not. Up until recently, dexamphetamine has only been available in short acting form, however, there is now a long acting dexamphetamine product called Tyvenese.

Tyvenese: is indicated as a treatment for ADHD when response to previous methylphenidate products has been clinically inadequate.

Non-stimulant medication

If stimulants don't work, your specialist may suggest one of a number of alternatives, such as Atomoxetine, Imipramine or Clonidine.

What are the side effects?

As with any effective treatment, there might be side effects. Because of the effect on appetite, the child's height and weight should be measured regularly. Giving medication with meals may help.

The most common side effects are:

- reduced appetite
- staying awake later.

Less common side effects to look out for include:

- being 'over-focused', quiet and staring- this may be a sign that the dose is too high
- anxiety, nervousness, irritability or tearfulness
- tummy pains or feeling sick
- headache, dizziness or drowsiness
- tics or twitches.



MEDICATION FOR ADHD

Side effects are less likely if the dose is increased gradually when the tablets are started. Some parents naturally worry about addiction, however this is unlikely as long as the medication is prescribed and monitored by a doctor.

How long should the medication continue?

Medication may need to be continued for several years. Some children will be able to stop completely as teenagers, others may be able to stop even sooner. Some may still need medication as adults. There are no known harmful effects from using these medications over several years. A review of diagnosis and need for medication may happen when your child transitions to secondary school or to third-level education

Treatment will be monitored by a specialist and will be reviewed regularly. Medication may need to be adjusted. Physical health observations will be carried out routinely under the discretion of the medic.

LOOKING AFTER ~ YOURSELF AS A ~ PARENT





LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AS A PARENT

The Power of being positive about your child

Your best assets for helping your child are your positive attitude and common sense. When you are calm and focused, you are more likely to be able to connect with your child, helping him or her to be calm and focused as well.

Keep things in perspective.

Remember that your child's behaviour is not intentional. Try to focus on their strengths and needs.

Be willing to make some compromises.

One chore left undone isn't a big deal when your child has completed two others plus the day's homework. Don't create impossible expectations for your child with ADHD.

Believe in your child.

Think about or make a written list of everything that is positive, valuable, and unique about your child. Trust that your child can learn, change, mature, and succeed.

Looking after yourself as a parent

As your child's role model and most important source of strength, it is vital that you live healthily. If you are overtired or have simply run out of patience, you risk losing your ability to maintain the structure that your child needs.



LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AS A PARENT

Take care of yourself.

Eat right, exercise, and find ways to reduce stress, whether it means taking a nightly bath or time out for you. If you do get sick, acknowledge it and get help.

Seek support.

One of the most important things to remember in rearing a child with ADHD is that you don't have to do it alone. Talk to your child's therapists, and teachers. You might wish to join a support group for parents of children with ADHD. These groups provide a safe space to vent feelings and share experiences. There is more information on this in the 'Resources' section.

Take breaks.

It is better to take some time for yourself and be clear about how best to handle your child. Ask friends and family for support when necessary.



LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AS A PARENT



At the end of the day,
the most overwhelming
key to child's success is
the positive involvement
of the parents.

Jane D. Hull



HealthyPlace.com

COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUR CHILD





COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Most children with ADHD have difficulty with communicating, but therapy can be of significant help. The Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT) has produced a “Speech and Language Therapy Guide to ADHD Support”.

Three main areas of communication that can be affected are:

1) The child’s ability to understand or comprehend language

This is a child’s ability to understand, including listening skills, following instructions and understanding words and sentences. Children with ADHD can often have difficulty processing language, which can be impacted by the environment and by their communication partner.

Speech and Language Therapy Advice:

- Less is more! Generally, when you’re talking to a young person with ADHD it’s best not to talk too much, stick to the point and be brief- that way it’s easier for them to stay focused.
- Try to be face-to-face when you expect your child to listen
- Limit the distractions in the environment when you’re talking- turn off the TV/radio/computer etc.
- Give your child a prompt before you start an instruction. For example, say ‘listen!’ or use their name and wait for them to look at you at the beginning. This way you have his attention before you give the instruction.



COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- If you have to give a longer instruction, try breaking it up in to shorter parts (e.g. “pick up your socks and jeans, [pause], bring them in to the bathroom, [pause], and put them in the pile with the other dark clothes”). Then, check back in and see if they got it! Sometimes, it’s easier to remember the whole instruction by repeating in your head over and over while you complete it- encourage your child to do this.
- Using visuals can help a young person’s ability to process the instruction – visuals are another way to take in information!

2) The child’s ability to express themselves

ADHD often affects a child’s ability to get their message across well, make meaningful sentences and express feelings appropriately. Children who have ADHD often seem to rush when they’re talking, and need some help to make sure they’re making good sense. Also, behavioural difficulties are often associated with ADHD- children with ADHD often act out their frustrations and need help to express their feelings in appropriate ways, using words not actions.

Speech and Language Therapy Advice:

- Speak to your child slowly and in a fairly quiet, calm voice- often, we match the person we’re speaking to in the way we speak. Careful though! You may need to be more animated at times, just to keep their attention!
- If you lose the thread of what your child is saying, pause them and ask them to clarify, while at the same time reassuring them that you were listening by letting him know some of what you did understand. For example, “ok, wait a second, so I heard you were in the park and you wanted to play something, (pause), but tell me who was there and what did you want to play?”



COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- (cont) This not only gives your child the message that what he says is important, it also shows them how to ask *clarification*, a very important skill.
- Be a good example in terms of expressing your feelings well. Use lots of feeling words and “I” statements e.g. “thanks for helping with the garden in granny’s today- I am so proud of you!” Also, acknowledge your child’s feelings and label them if you can, for example, “I know this maths is hard and you’re feeling frustrated but you need to speak nicely to me. We’ll do three more, then we’ll finish”.

3) The child’s social thinking

This type of communication is needed to have successful relationships with others, including conversation skills (e.g. not interrupting, staying on topic, etc.), body language (e.g. eye contact, facial expression, etc.) and social problem solving skills. ADHD means that a child may be distractable, impulsive, and inattentive in conversations and in play. So, a child with ADHD often interrupts, talks at length, has problems taking turns, can be loud and take over social situations. Non-verbal skills can also be affected, for example, a child who is easily distracted often doesn’t make eye contact and this makes others feel they are not interested. Children with ADHD often find it really hard to figure out better solutions to problems and find it hard to see the consequences of their behaviour.

Speech and Language Therapy Advice:

- If your child has difficulty taking turns in conversation (e.g. hopping the turns, talking about his own interests too much, interrupting, dominating), there are a number of strategies you can use depending on their age, including signalling turns, using your hand or a tap on the table, using an egg timer, using verbal prompts (e.g. “your turn!”), or charts to reinforce good turn-taking in conversations.



COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Many children with ADHD fidget and this can be very distracting socially. Encourage your child to notice their own fidgeting and provide them with an alternative, like a special fidget toy. This can be as simple as a small rubber ball or an elastic band that they can still fidget with, but it isn't so distracting.
- Talking to your child about advocating for themselves can be helpful in certain situations, e.g. if your child has a habit of going off-topic, discuss how your child could let people know this at the start of conversations by saying "Sorry if I might start talking about something else, if I do this please politely let me know".

Social problem solving is a key skill for any child to learn, especially a child with ADHD.

There are four basic building blocks for difficult situations:

- a) Identify the problem
- b) Think of other solutions- what can the young person do and what can others do to help?
- c) Think of the positive and negative consequences for each solution
- d) Plan for future solutions

When your child has experienced a difficult situation, (for example if he has been aggressive with another child who teased him), use these building blocks to think about the situation together to try prevent it from happening again.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORTS IN SCHOOLS





ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORTS IN SCHOOLS

If you have concerns regarding your child in school, it's recommended that you first talk to your child's teacher and to the school's **Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO)**.

The SENCO oversees all aspects of leading, coordinating and supporting inclusive education for children with special education needs. They are responsible for managing and organising learning support and resource teaching under the direction of the principal.

The school principal may allocate resources to assist your child in school such as:

- **Special Education Teaching (SET):** Special education teachers must be deployed to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs in schools. An important aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability
- **Student Support Plan:** A student support plan is the outcome of a problem-solving process, involving school staff, parents/guardians and the student. Concerns are identified, information is gathered and a plan to support the child is developed which is regularly reviewed.
- If necessary, a consultation with a **NEPS** (National Educational Psychology Service) Psychologist can be arranged if the child's needs have not been met by existing supports in schools.
- **A Special Needs Assistant (SNA)** should your child have care needs (e.g. physical – toileting needs; safety – a risk to themselves or others, etc.) they may be eligible for access to SNA support. The school makes the final decision. It should be noted that an SNA will not be allocated on the basis of educational needs but on care needs alone.



ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORTS IN SCHOOLS

If you have discussed your child's needs with the school and feel they still require more support you can contact your local **Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)**.

The SENO is there to assess the child's resource needs taking all the information gathered into account and will also assist parents and schools as the child negotiates the school system. Resource allocations are due to be reviewed on an annual basis by the SENO.

For contact details of your local SENO:

- Contact NCSE head office at 01-6033200 and you will be put in touch with your SENO
- Visit www.ncse.ie/seno-contact-information

State Exams and Further Education

Many young people with ADHD go on to further education and there are supports available to help you do so. ADHD is classed as a disability in the education system.

Your child may be eligible for:

- **Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations:** If your child has significant difficulty with speed of handwriting, reading fluency or spelling, they may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations.
- **The DARE Programme:** The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. DARE offers reduced points places to school leavers who, as a result of having a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education. More information available at: www.accesscollege.ie/dare



THE
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RESOURCES THAT MAY HELP





RESOURCES THAT MAY HELP

Websites:

- **The National Attention Defecit Disorder Information and Support Service (ADDISS)**
 - Provides people-friendly information and resources about ADHD
 - www.adiss.co.uk
- **Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)**
 - ADDA is the world's largest organisation dedicated exclusively to helping adults with ADHD to live better lives
 - www.add.org
- **Young Minds**
 - Provides young people with tools to look after their mental health
 - www.youngminds.org.co.uk
- **ADHD Ireland**
 - Offers a phone and email helpline, available 10am - 1pm Monday- Friday
 - Offers support groups for Adults or Parents/Guardians
 - www.adhdireland.ie
- **Spunout**
 - Ireland's youth information website, created by young people, for young people
 - Offers a variety of factual information on mental health and well-being
 - www.spunout.ie



RESOURCES THAT MAY HELP

Websites:

- **The National Attention Defecit Disorder Information and Support Service (ADDISS)**
 - Provides people-friendly information and resources about ADHD
 - www.adiss.co.uk
- **ADDITUDE**
 - Free online US magazine with links to latest research and best practice including free webinars and access to downloads from previous recordings on many topics
 - www.additudemag.com
- **CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD)**
 - US based non profit organisation which also provides resources and information on ADHD
 - www.chadd.org
- **NICE Guidelines**
 - The current UK national guidance for ADHD can be found by searching on the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE Guidelines).
 - www.nice.org.uk






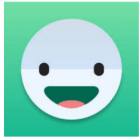








RESOURCES THAT MAY HELP

App	App Store (Apple)	Play Store (Android)
 <p>SuperBetter Supports personal resilience, the ability to stay strong, motivated, and optimistic even in the face of difficult challenges</p>		
 <p>Contains simple tools to help people with coping, relaxation, distraction, and positive thinking</p>		
 <p>Tide Aims to relieve stress, stay focused, relax with mindfulness, and sleep better at night</p>		
 <p>Guided meditation app to help reduce stress and enhance well-being</p>		

*Please note the above apps have not been developed by the HSE














RESOURCES THAT MAY HELP

App	App Store (Apple)	Play Store (Android)
 <p>Mood Mission Provides better ways of coping with low moods and anxiety using mental health strategies</p>		
 <p>Daylio A mood diary that allows you to rate and track your mood</p>		
 <p>Smiling Mind Developed by psychologists to bring balance through mindfulness</p>		
 <p>Nature Sounds: Relax and Sleep</p>		

*Please note the above apps have not been developed by the HSE



RESOURCES THAT MAY HELP

App	App Store (Apple)	Play Store (Android)
 <p>Adult ADHD app Provides self-care and signposting information regarding adult ADHD.</p>		
 <p>Provides techniques to help break the cycle of self-harm behaviours</p>		
 <p>Habit Tracker Helps you build good habits and reach your goals</p>		
 <p>Habitica Promotes organisational skills for younger children</p>		

*Please note the above apps have not been developed by the HSE



RESOURCES THAT MAY HELP



Books:

- ‘Putting on the Brakes: Young Peoples Guide to Understanding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder’, by Patricia Quinn.
- ‘A Walk in the Rain with a Brain’, by Edward Hallowell
- ‘Attention Girls! A Guide To Learn All About Your ADHD’, by Patricia Quinn.
- ‘Learning To Slow Down and Pay Attention: A Book for Kids about ADHD’, by Kathleen G. Nadeau.
- ‘The ADHD Workbook for Kids; Helping Children Gain Self – Confidence, Social Skills and Self Control’, by Laurence Shapiro.
- ‘I Would if I Could: A Teenagers Guide to ADHD/Hyperactivity’, by Michael Gordon.
- ‘Where’s my stuff – The Ultimate Teen Organizing Guide’, by Samantha Schwartz.
- ‘The ADHD workbook for Teens’ , by Lara Honos - Webb



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- Willcox, G. (1982). The Feeling Wheel A Tool for Expanding Awareness of Emotions and Increasing Spontaneity and Intimacy. Transactional Analysis Journal, 12(4), 274-276.



NOTES

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Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal dashed lines for tracing and writing.



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A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.





See contact details below for your local CAMHS team:

CAMHS Limerick:

East Limerick: 061 483 388

Central Limerick: 061 483 388

West Limerick: 061 483 388 / 069 79100 (Newcastle West Office)

CAMHS Clare:

East Clare: 065 670 6601

West Clare: 065 670 6601

CAMHS Tipperary

Nenagh: 067 46419

Thurles: 0504 25851

Closed for Lunch 1-2PM

If you have serious/immediate concerns about your child's mental health and your child's Keyworker is not available, tell the secretary and they will put you in contact with the person first on call.

If you develop acute/emergency concerns about your child's mental health in the evening or over the weekend, please contact your GP or your Local A&E Department



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive