



## What Is ADHD?

Does your child have trouble sitting still or paying attention? You may have been told that ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may be the cause. A child with ADHD might have a hard time staying focused (attention deficit). He or she may also have trouble controlling impulses (hyperactivity disorder). A child with one or both of these problems struggles daily to perform and behave well. ADHD is no one's fault. But if left untreated, ADHD can deprive a child of self-esteem and limit success.

## Which of the Following Describe Your Child?

A partial list of symptoms common to attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder appears below. Your child may show traits from one or both groups.

### Attention Deficit

- Lacks mental focus
- Performs inconsistently
- Is distracted easily
- Has trouble shifting between tasks or settings
- Is messy, or loses things
- Forgets

### Hyperactive/Impulsive

- Has trouble controlling impulses; might talk too much, interrupt, or have a hard time taking turns
- Is easy to upset or anger
- Is always moving (sometimes without purpose)
- Does not learn from mistakes

## What Happens in the Brain?

The brain controls your body, thoughts, and feelings. It does so with the help of **neurotransmitters**. These chemicals help the brain send and receive messages. With ADHD, the level of these chemicals often varies. This may cause signs of ADHD to come and go.

## When Messages Are Not Received

With ADHD, chemicals in certain parts of the brain can be in short supply. Because of this, some messages do not travel between nerve cells. Messages that signal a person to control behavior or pay attention aren't passed along. As a result, traits common to ADHD may occur.

### Remember Your Child's Strengths

Children with ADHD can be challenging to raise. Because of this, it's easy to overlook their good traits. What's special about your child? Do your best to value and support your child's unique talents, strengths, and interests.