

FOCUS, ORGANIZATION & ADHD

ADHD is a common neurodevelopmental condition that affects attention, impulse control, and activity level. It can impact learning, relationships, and confidence.

ADHD Is Not a “Lack of Effort”

ADHD is a brain-based difference in self-regulation that can make it harder to start tasks, stay focused, remember steps, organize time and materials, and pause to think before acting.

Many people with ADHD are also creative, curious, energetic, and strong problem-solvers.

Common Signs

Ages 4-7

- “on the go,” climbing or running
- difficulty waiting or taking turns
- big emotions, fast reactions

Ages 8-12

- forgets homework, loses items
- trouble staying with tasks that are boring or hard
- interrupts or gets into conflicts
- needs lots of reminders to start/finish chores

Ages 13-21

- procrastination, time blindness (“Where did the time go?”)
- missed deadlines, inconsistent grades
- trouble planning, prioritizing, or studying
- may look like anxiety or low mood because of overwhelm

ADHD & Executive Functions

ADHD often involves challenges with executive functions - the brain’s “manager” skills - including memory, planning and organization, emotional regulation and self-control, and shifting between tasks.

What helps

A) Make the invisible visible using simple tools

Use simple tools such as checklists, a visible weekly schedule, one shared family calendar, and alarms or timers to support transitions.

B) Break tasks into bite-size steps

Instead of “clean your room.” Try:

- Put your dirty clothes in the hamper. *Pause.*
- Bring your dishes to the kitchen. *Pause.*
- Put your books on the shelf. *Pause.*

C) Use “Body doubling”

Working near a calm adult or study buddy helps follow-through.

D) Improve focus with short work blocks

Using a timer, work for 10–20 minutes, take a 2–5 minutes break. Reset for the next block.

E) Reward effort (not perfection)

ADHD brains respond well to quick, clear feedback. Notice starting, not just finishing.

F) Sleep, movement, and food

Consistent routines support attention and emotional regulation.

School Supports That Can Help

- extra time
- seating away from distractions
- written instructions, visual reminders
- chunked assignments
- regular check-ins

What Treatment Can Look Like

Helpful ADHD care often includes:

- skills and emotional regulation coaching
- parent support and school collaboration
- medication discussion with your family doctor (when appropriate)