

ADHD at a Glance

A one-page overview for students, families and educators. Full guide, with a numbered source for every fact: inchyapp.com/adhd-basics

What it is

ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) is a neurodevelopmental disorder. It involves inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity that happen often, in more than one setting, and get in the way of daily life. It usually starts in childhood and often lasts into adulthood. (NIMH; CDC)

Three presentations (DSM-5-TR)

Inattentive

Hard to organize, finish tasks, follow instructions; easily distracted; forgetful.

Hyperactive-impulsive

Fidgets, talks a lot, restless; interrupts; hard to wait a turn.

Combined

Symptoms of both kinds. Presentation can change over time.

How common

- 11.7%** of U.S. children aged 3–17 have a current diagnosis (about 7 million), parent survey, 2024 (CDC)
- 6.0%** of U.S. adults reported a current diagnosis, 2023; about half were diagnosed as adults (CDC, MMWR 2024)
- 5.9%** of young people worldwide meet the criteria; 2.5–2.8% of adults (Faraone et al., 2021)

Myths vs. evidence

- **Sugar causes ADHD.** Controlled studies found sugar doesn't change children's behavior or thinking (Wolraich et al., 1995).
- **Bad parenting causes it.** Many genetic and environmental factors combine; heritability is about 74% (Faraone & Larsson, 2019).
- **Kids grow out of it.** Symptoms often continue into adulthood, though they may look different (CDC).

Who can diagnose it

A qualified clinician: a psychologist or psychiatrist, or a primary care provider such as a pediatrician (CDC). There is no single test. An evaluation gathers information from several people and settings and rules out other causes. Teachers can share observations but can't diagnose. A symptom list, quiz or this sheet can't diagnose anyone.

Treatment approaches

- Ages 4–5: parent training in behavior management first (AAP, 2019).
- Ages 6–17: medication together with behavioral approaches; school supports are part of the plan (AAP, 2019).
- Adults: medication, therapy or both (CDC).
- Medication questions, including whether it fits at all, are for a conversation with a clinician.

Support at school, college and work

- **K–12:** an IEP under IDEA (ADHD can qualify as an "other health impairment") or a 504 plan under Section 504. sites.ed.gov/idea
- **College:** no IEPs. Students ask the disability services office for academic adjustments and may need documentation. ed.gov
- **Work:** the ADA covers employers with 15+ employees. Accommodation ideas: askjan.org. ada.gov

General information, not medical or legal advice.

If you need help now

Crisis or thoughts of suicide: **call or text 988** (U.S.) or chat at 988lifeline.org. Emergency: 911.

Questions about ADHD: CHADD's National Resource Center, **1-866-200-8098**, chadd.org

Reviewed against sources on October 5, 2026. Sources: CDC ADHD pages (cdc.gov/adhd); NIMH; American Psychiatric Association, DSM-5-TR (2022); Wolraich et al. (2019), *Pediatrics* 144(4); Staley et al. (2024), *MMWR* 73(40); Faraone et al. (2021), *Neurosci. Biobehav. Rev.* 128; Faraone & Larsson (2019), *Mol. Psychiatry* 24; Wolraich et al. (1995), *JAMA* 274(20); 34 CFR 300.8; U.S. Dept. of Education OCR. Full list with links on the web page.