



BACK-TO-SCHOOL GUIDE TO ADHD:

## How to Know if Your Child Has ADHD

All children are unique in their own special ways. Most children can be categorized as high energy, antsy, creative, hyper-focused, and inattentive.

However, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a mental health condition. It's one of many conditions on the spectrum of neurodiversity. ADHD is often misunderstood. While the name can be misleading, not everyone with ADHD becomes hyperactive. It's important to note, there are three distinct subtypes of ADHD, and each present with different signs and symptoms:

### ● Hyperactive/Impulsive

A child with this type of ADHD may have trouble with quiet activities or taking turns. They may appear antsy, fidget with toys and other belongings, or run and climb things even when it's inappropriate.

### ● Inattentive & Distractible

This type of ADHD has symptoms opposite of hyperactive/impulsive ADHD. You might notice your child daydreams frequently, loses things easily, or has trouble focusing. They may also struggle with keeping things organized.

### ● Combined

When a child has symptoms of both hyperactive/impulsive and inattentive & distractible ADHD, they may have what we call combined ADHD. This also happens to be the most common type of ADHD.

Children with undiagnosed ADHD may have trouble performing well in school, so it's important to discuss any concerns you have about ADHD with your child's pediatrician. If your child does have this condition, there are several options to help achieve success in school and at home.



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We've hyperlinked resources you may want to access. Just hover and click!

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Behavioral therapy helps children build habits for improving social skills and strengthening executive function. Planning and executing goals are contingent upon these skills. In certain circumstances, medication may be prescribed to help manage a child's ADHD symptoms enabling them to focus and enhance their concentration capabilities.

If you have reason to believe your child may have ADHD, schedule an appointment with their Primary Care Physician (PCP). Call the Health Advocate number on your BCBSIL member ID card or [log on to Blue Access for Members<sup>SM</sup> \(BAM<sup>SM</sup>\) bcbsil.com](#) and use the Provider Finder if you need assistance with finding a pediatrician. This fast, easy-to-use tool improves members' experience when searching for in-network healthcare provider.



## TIPS FOR PARENTS & TEACHERS OF CHILDREN WITH ADHD

ADHD can be overwhelming not only for children but also for their parents and teachers alike. Review the following tips and suggestions to best learn how to help nurture your child's needs and regulate their behaviors.

- **Get Involved:** Children with ADHD benefit from engaged and supportive parenting. Structure helps kids with ADHD make sense of their challenges and fosters success. Research how ADHD affects your child and implement interventions that work best for their unique needs. Focus more time nurturing your child's needs and less time panicking over their challenges.
- **Doctor's Orders:** Typically, when a doctor diagnoses a child with ADHD, they usually recommend a customized treatment plan. If your pediatrician prescribes medication, it's imperative that you administer doses at the same time and as prescribed. Always speak up and advocate for your child if you have any concerns regarding their ADHD treatment plan.
- **Fidgeting:** Fidgeting isn't unique to children who have ADHD. Many people fidget with things when they're bored, feeling anxious, or just because they feel inclined to do so. Consider purchasing a toy that's meant for fidgeting to help your child manage their impulses and to expend pent up energy. Explore the market of fidget toys and learn which one works best for your child. With time your child may learn to use the fidget to help regulate themselves.
- **Schedule Frequent Breaks:** Focusing large blocks of time on schoolwork can be especially tough for a child with ADHD. Therefore, schedule brain breaks, or activities that allow your child to get out their "wiggles," so their fidgeting or lack of focus doesn't interfere with your objectives. A dance break, trip to the park, or even a game are great ideas to consider incorporating into your daily routine.
- **504 School Advocacy:** A child with ADHD has different needs and limitations than a neurotypical child. Therefore, prioritize consulting with your child's school counselor and/or school child therapist. These professionals will explain how to navigate the process for obtaining a 504 plan. Accordingly, this means your child's school will be required to provide accommodations for their ADHD condition. Such measures will help your child achieve academic success.



### "HEALTHY WAYS TO FIDGET"

*Fidgeting is a behavior that may help regulate emotions and increase focus. Allowing your child to fidget is normal and healthy—just make sure they have something safe to fidget with, like:*

- Fidget spinners
- Pop-its
- Stress balls
- Putty or slime
- Fidget rings
- Textured toys
- Age-appropriate magnets



SOURCES: [ClevelandClinic.org](#), [PsychologyToday.com](#), [Understood.org](#)