

# What is ADHD?

ADHD is a disability where the brain develops differently. Children can be up to 3 years delayed in their emotions, behaviour, and social skills. Children with ADHD are not “naughty”, their behaviour is caused by differences in their brain.

ADHD affects 10% of a school’s population: of 30 children at least 3 may have ADHD. More boys than girls are diagnosed to a ratio of 4:1. Girls are not less likely to have ADHD, but can often be missed as they try harder to fit in.

ADHD is a spectrum – there are 3 types: **Inattentive type**, **Hyperactive/Impulsive type**, and **Combined type**. There are core features that make up these types:

## Inattentive

- Difficulty listening to and following instructions
- Short attention span and easily distracted
- Appearing forgetful, losing things or poor working memory
- Difficulty ‘sticking to’ an activity
- Difficulty starting and finishing tasks
- Disorganised / poor concept of time
- Day dreaming

## Hyperactive

- Lots of energy
- Restlessness, difficulties sitting still
- Fidgety / squirmy
- Excessive talking / random noises
- Problems winding down (transitions)
- Sleep issues

## Impulsive

- Poor sense of danger/risk taking
- Saying or doing without thinking of the consequences
- Shouting out / interrupting
- Struggle to wait their turn
- Living in the moment
- Easily frustrated

**Emotional regulation:** Intense emotions are common with ADHD. Children have difficulty understanding or expressing their emotions properly. This causes “meltdowns”, which may be a result of a few issues. Being overwhelmed is common.

## ADHD Tips

Techniques used with other children might not work well with children who have ADHD. The best results come from clear communication, simple instructions, having a small number of important rules and using regular, repeated rewards.

## ADHD Medication

ADHA medication works for about eight out of 10 people. It may help improve the ability to concentrate, control impulses, plan ahead, and follow through with tasks.

Medication doesn’t cure ADHD, however. It can relieve symptoms while it’s being taken, but once medication stops, those symptoms may come back.