

What is ADHD?

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder and comes under the heading of neurodiversity alongside other conditions or disorders such as Autism Spectrum Condition, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and many more.

Research tells us that about 1 in 5 of us have ADHD. The condition can often be diagnosed from about the age of 7, but it is important to remember that lots of the traits of ADHD can be present in natural child development.

There are 3 traits when looking for ADHD- Inattention, Impulsivity and Hyperactivity. For children who do not have hyperactivity the disorder is known as ADD or 'Attention Deficit Disorder'.

Some of these traits are:

Inattention

- . Can struggle to follow instructions.
- . Finds it hard to retain information.
- . The adult has to repeat the child's name before they respond.

Impulsive

- . Acts before thinking.
- . Short repeated play sequences.
- . Not always aware of risks.
- . Likes to climb.

Hyperactivity

- . Lots of energy
- . May experience sleep difficulties.
- . Can talk a lot.
- . May find it difficult to sit still.

Children with ADHD may also find it hard to regulate their emotions and can become very angry and upset or very over excited and require help to calm and settle.

What does it feel like to have ADHD?

- Imagine that lots of people are all talking at the same time, and you just cannot work out what everyone is saying. This is how it can feel for some children when they struggle to give attention. They find it hard to focus on one thing at a time.
- Some people talk about finding it really hard to start a task. Imagine have a big ball of string and it is all knotted. You need to find the start of the

ball of string but just can't find the end. When you do it is so knotted you don't know what to do next. You can feel overwhelmed and then forget what you were supposed to do.

- Some people talk about needing to move to think. It is not that they are wanting to distract others, but need to move to enable their brains to give attention and focus on an activity or when someone is talking to them.
- Some children can find transitions very difficult. They need to know what they are doing, when it will finish, how long they have and what they will be doing next.
- Some people talk about knowing that someone is talking to them, but it seems far away, and they just can't focus.
- Some people talk about feeling very angry and frustrated when they can't focus, and they really want to scream and shout or get out of the situation they are in.
- Some people talk about just not being able to stop themselves from doing an action. When someone starts to talk, they feel as if they finish the sentence in their heads and do the action before the person talking has finished.
- Some talk about having lots of thoughts on in their head and it just goes on and on and it can be very tiring.
- Some people talk about needing to know how to start a task and how to finish it before they will start.
- Some people describe having sensory processing difficulties particularly when trying to manage their body position and balance and coordination.
- Some people say they get distracted very easily and when this happens and the distraction has gone, they can't remember what they were doing first and so struggle to return to an activity.
- It is important to remember though that many people talk about having ADHD as having a strength. Some say they feel they can multi-task more easily as they like to have lots of different tasks going on at the same time.

How can we help?

- Let children move. Having time to move the big muscles in the body such as their arms, and legs can really help children to develop their

awareness of their body position and balancing and coordinating their body. This helps them to calm down and think. They can try:

- ❖ Bouncing,
- ❖ Rolling forwards and backwards
- ❖ Star jumps
- ❖ Running on the spot.
- ❖ Skipping



- Focus on establishing consistency, routines, and structures.
- Break up tasks into small pieces.
- Help your child learn time management using a clock timer or sand timer. This can help them to focus on an activity – then have a break and then return to it.
- Provide visual reminders of what the children need to do.
- Prepare for school the night before such as having shoes, coat, bag etc ready to pick up.
- Have fidget toys or stress toys to fiddle with when thinking or talking to someone.



- Have a quiet space to sit when needing to calm down. You can provide a warm 'hot water bottle' to hug and a blanket and cushion to snuggle into.
- Provide an area for children to throw objects such as throwing rolled up socks into a bucket. This can help children to focus and calm down.
- Sometimes having music on in the background can help children to think and focus on a task.
- Some people find it helps to draw, colour in, bake or make their own fidget toys.

Home-made fidget toys

It can be fun to help children to make their own fidget toys. As they are making them it can help them to calm down or settle. Have a go of the following ideas.

Playdough recipes * Health Warning – Check for allergies. These recipes are not to be eaten!

Basic Play Dough

- 2 cups of flour, 1/2 cup of salt
- 1 cup of hot water (possibly a 1/2 cup more)
- 2 tablespoon of cooking oil, 2 tablespoons of cream of tartar
- food colouring.

Mix the dry ingredients together and then add the wet ingredients. Mix and roll into a ball.

‘Cloud Dough’

- 1/4 cup baby or cooking oil, 2 cups of Flour
- Mix these ingredients together to create a different play dough!

‘Textured and soothing’ Oat Play Dough

- 1 cup of flour, 2 cups of porridge oats
- 1 cup of water Food colouring (optional)

‘Silky and Smooth’- Bubble Dough

- 1 cup of corn flour, 1/2 cup of shower gel or washing up liquid
- 2 tsps of olive/cooking oil.

‘Light and Fluffy’- Snow Dough!

- 2 cups of cornflour
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup of vegetable oil
- 3-4 tbsp silver glitter (optional)

Relaxing Rosemary (Prepare away from the children as it uses boiling water)

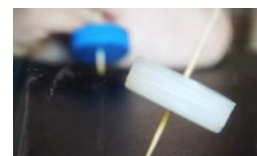
- 1 cup of salt, 2 cups of flour, 1.5 cups boiling water
- 2 tsps oil, A few drops of fresh lemon juice
- Rosemary (Herb)

Frozen gloop

- Add about 1 cup of cornflour to a bowl. Slowly add about 1/2 cup of warm water. Add food colouring. Put the mixture into moulds. Let the mixture cool. Place the moulds in the freezer for at least a few hours.

Spinning Top

You will need a bottle top and a cocktail stick.
Make a hole in the bottle top and put the cocktail stick through. Now turn and spin!



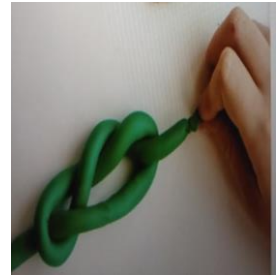
Lego Spinner

You can use Lego pieces to make your own finger spinner.



Balloon Twisters.

Take a long balloon and fill it with a mixture made from a cup of baking soda and half a cup of hair conditioner. Pour it into the balloon, tie a not and begin to twist and make different shapes.



Bead Paperclip.

Take a large paperclip and thread beads onto the paperclip.

