

## ADHD Resources

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is estimated to affect 2% of preschool-aged children<sup>1</sup>, 5% of school-aged children, and 2.5% of adults<sup>2</sup>. People with ADHD may experience trouble paying attention, following directions, sitting still, staying calm, or controlling impulsive behaviors more than other children his/her age. One thing that not every parent knows is that **variability in behavior** is central to ADHD. However, this variability (for example, a child following directions easily one day and not following directions the next day) can easily be misinterpreted as a child deliberately misbehaving or as the child appearing to "only listen when s/he wants to". ADHD can be associated with a number of other difficulties including aggression, difficulty controlling their emotions, poor self-esteem, anxiety, aggression, defiance, and can be at a higher risk for physical injuries and sleep difficulties, learning difficulties, and trouble making or keeping friends<sup>3-5</sup>. Early interventions can be most impactful<sup>6</sup>, so talk with a professional about your concerns early on!

**How is ADHD diagnosed?** An ADHD diagnosis can be determined by talking with a professional, typically a Pediatrician or a Psychologist who can conduct an evaluation on your child's ability to pay attention and impulsivity. Your child's school may be able to conduct an evaluation for free through the School Psychologist, particularly if your child is struggling academically. A diagnosis of ADHD may be difficult to determine before age 4.

**Will my child grow out of ADHD?** The research on this topic is unclear. However, we do know that symptoms of ADHD can change or look different over time. For example, "hyperactive" symptoms can present as excessive running or climbing on furniture in school-aged children, but can present as a sensation of restlessness in adolescents. If you feel your child is experiencing behaviors that are impairing their daily functioning, it may be time to talk to a professional about your concerns about your child's behaviors.

**What are the treatments available to children with ADHD?** The great news is that a substantial amount of research has focused on the treatment of ADHD. This research has shown behavioral treatment (therapy), medication, and some combination of these two are effective in managing the impairments and symptoms of ADHD<sup>7</sup>. If your child is experiencing difficulty in the classroom, you may want to ask your child's teacher or school's Psychologist about accommodations in the classroom.

**Parenting Resources:** Parenting a child with ADHD can be stressful on many levels. It can also lead to parents feeling isolated or alone, which highlights the importance of parents having a good social support system for themselves, and to have good coping skills. Here are some resources for parents to better understand ADHD in children:

**CHADD.org** - National nonprofit; provides information about ADHD and an online support community

**Russellbarkley.org** - World-renowned expert on ADHD; provides information and books on ADHD

**Centerforactiveminds.com** - a local psychologist that provides therapy and evaluations for ADHD; provides a blog that discusses tips and tricks for parenting an ADHD child and information about ADHD

<sup>1</sup> Lavigne JV, Gibbons RD, Christoffel KK et al. (1996). Prevalence rates and correlates of psychiatric disorders among preschool children. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 35, 204–214.

<sup>2</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-5®)*. American Psychiatric Pub.

<sup>3</sup> Wehmeier, P. M., Schacht, A., & Barkley, R. A. (2010). Social and emotional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD and the impact on quality of life. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 46(3), 209–217.

<sup>4</sup> Lahey, B. B., Pelham, W. E., Stein, ... & Gold, E. (1998). Validity of DSM-IV attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder for younger children. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 37(7), 695–702.

<sup>5</sup> Sung, V., Hiscock, H., Sciberras, E., & Efron, D. (2008). Sleep problems in children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: prevalence and the effect on the child and family. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 162(4), 336–342.

<sup>6</sup> Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group. (1992). A developmental and clinical model for the prevention of conduct disorders: The FAST Track Program. *Development and Psychopathology*, 4, 509–527.

<sup>7</sup> MTA Cooperative Group (1999). A 14-month randomized clinical trial of treatment strategies for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 56, 1073–1086.