

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Information Sheet

All children can occasionally be inattentive, impulsive or overactive. For students with ADHD those behaviors are typical and often severe.

Deciding if a child has ADHD is a several-step process. There is no single test to diagnose ADHD. Mental health professionals use the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth edition (DSM-5) to help diagnose ADHD.

Symptoms of Inattention

- Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork
- Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
- Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork or chores
- Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Often avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort
- Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities
- Often distracted by extraneous stimuli
- Often forgetful in daily activities

Symptoms of Hyperactivity and Impulsivity

- Often fidgets with objects, taps hands or feet, or squirms in seat
- Often leaves seat in situations when remaining seated is expected
- Often runs about or climbs in situations where it is inappropriate
- Often unable to play or engage in leisure activities quietly
- Often "on the go," acting as if "driven by a motor"
- Often talks excessively
- Often blurts out an answer before a question is completed
- Often has difficulty waiting his or her turn
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others

ADHD Diagnosis for OHD Categorical Area

In the case of ADHD, there must be written and signed documentation of a medical diagnosis by a licensed physician, an advanced practice nurse or a licensed psychologist. The diagnosis must include documentation that criteria of the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual are met. (Minn. R. 3525.1335 and Minn. Stat. 125A.02) All other eligibility criteria for OHD apply to the ADHD health condition. In comparison with peers, the health condition adversely affects the pupil's ability to complete educational tasks within routine timelines as documented by three or more of the criteria described in Minnesota Rule 3525.1335. For initial evaluation, all documentation must be dated within the previous 12 months.

Educational Implications

Some students with ADHD can pay attention to an activity that they like or select, such as reading a book of choice or reporting on a favorite subject. Acting before thinking, such as running across the street before looking for oncoming traffic, is seen in some students. Other students may recite the rules, but have difficulty delaying gratification.

Hyperactivity presents as movement – walking when told to stand, standing when told to sit and wiggling when told to sit still. As a result, movement may improve concentration for some students, for example standing or using a “fidget” (an object that is manipulated silently by the hands) when listening to instruction. These minor movements may provide major concentration.

Educational Options

Those students whose ADHD adversely affects their educational performance may benefit from special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). To qualify under IDEA, a student must meet eligibility criteria in one of thirteen specific disability categories. Under IDEA, a student with a disability is entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and an individualized education program, including individual goals, objectives, related services, accommodations and modifications.

Students that do not qualify for services under IDEA may qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. To qualify under Section 504, a student must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (for example learning, breathing, thinking, concentrating, walking, bodily functions). Under Section 504, a student is entitled to equal opportunity, and may qualify for a Section 504 plan that provides regular or special education and related aids and services.

A student with a health condition who does not require special instruction and related services can receive, as appropriate, a wide range of supports in the general education classroom, including accommodations, individualized health plans (IHP), emergency care plans (ECP) and local education agency supports.