

Back to School with ADHD: Out of the Box Approaches

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Formed Families Forward - who we are...

- A family-led resource center in Northern Virginia supporting foster, adoptive and kinship families who are raising children, youth & young adults with special needs, and professionals who work with our families.
- We offer free training, consultations to families, events, resources, and systems navigation. Also - peer support groups; Resource Directory; *Learning Your Way* self-paced classes; youth and parenting classes; videos and other resources.
- Family partner to Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VDOE project)

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Road Map for Tonight

- Identification of ADHD and co-occurring disorders
- Delivery of services and school accommodations
- Parenting tips
- Advocacy approaches
- Open discussion



Activity

Put in the questions box descriptive words that come to mind when thinking about ADHD.



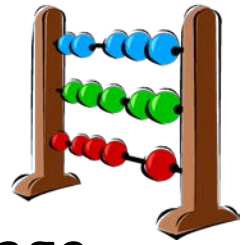
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ADHD Numbers!

- A neurodevelopmental disorder which effects 6 million (9.8%) school-age children. Specifically:
 - 2% of children ages 3-4
 - 10% of children ages 5-11
 - 13% of children ages 12-17
- 13% of boys; 6% of girls have been identified with ADHD.
- 10.8% of Virginia children ages 3-17 ever had a diagnosis of ADHD

Sources: CDC & HRSA

The Formed Families ADHD numbers!



- 26% of adoptive parents report their adopted children age 6 and older were ever diagnosed with ADHD (vs. 7-10%).
- 38% of parents who adopted from domestic foster care report the same (NSAP, 2007)
- 5 years post-international adoption, 25% had diagnosis of ADHD (most common of all diagnoses) (Glennen & Bright, 2005)
- Children who live in kinship care with a relative have more special health care needs, mental health problems such as ADHD and depression, and dental problems compared with children who live with their parents (Eleoff, 2010)

What Might ADHD Look Like?

Problems with attention (appear not to listen, lose things, easily distracted, require more redirection, poor recall)

Problems with Inhibition (interrupt others, talk excessive, act on impulse, have difficulty postponing self-gratification)

Problems with Excessive or “Hyper” Activity (being nearly in constant motion, restless, touch things or other people, act more forcefully and abruptly than others, engage in attention seeking antics, getting into inappropriate things)



How ADHD is Diagnosed Based on DSM-5 Criteria

- No single test to diagnose ADHD.
- Many other problems, like sleep disorders, anxiety, depression, and certain types of learning disabilities, can look similar.
- First, talk to a healthcare provider, such as a mental health professional, psychologist, psychiatrist or pediatrician.
- They will ask caregivers, teachers, and other adults who care for the child about behavior in different settings.
- Provider will use rating scales and other sources to document the symptoms and ensure that DSM-5 criteria have been met.

Diagnosis of ADHD- 3 types of ADHD (DSM 5)

(1) predominantly inattentive type;

(2) predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type;

(3) combined type (symptoms of first 2 types are equally present)

A persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development, characterized by **Inattention**: Six (or more) symptoms and/or **Hyperactivity and impulsivity**: six or more symptoms which have persisted for at least 6 months, inconsistent with developmental level and that negatively impacts directly on social and academic/occupational activities

* Symptoms before age 12 * More than one setting

* Interferes with functioning * Other mental disorders are ruled out

ADHD: What do we know about causation?

Probable Causes of ADHD:

- **Neurodevelopmental Disorder**

Strength of Evidence: Strong (Barkley, 2021; CDC, 2022)

- **Genetic Predisposition**

Strength of Evidence: Strong (Barkley, 2021; NIH, 1997)

- **Other/Environmental (Low Incidence Rate)**

- Abnormal fetal development
- Prenatal alcohol exposure
- Head trauma/Injury
- Consumption of lead

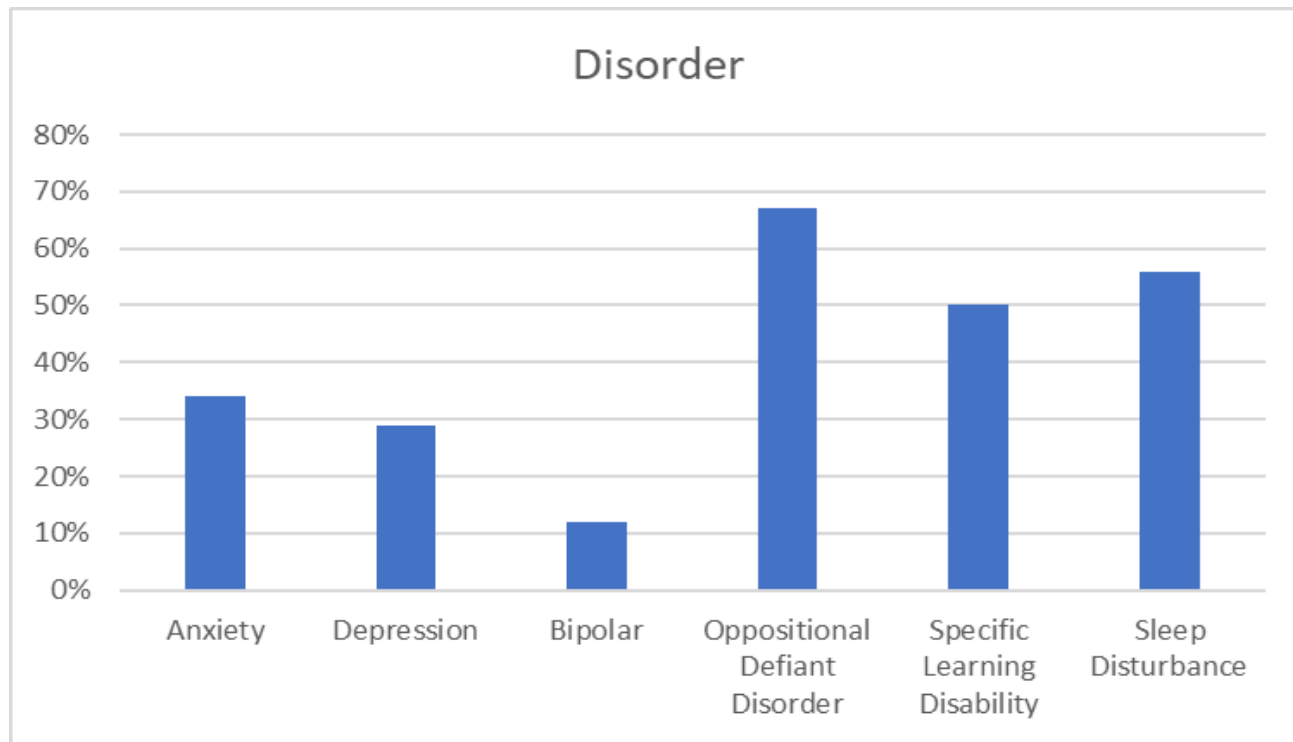
ADHD and Co-occurring Disorders

- 64% of children with ADHD had at least one other mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder



Source: CDC, 2022

ADHD and Co-occurring Disorders



Source: Dendy, 2022; <https://www.additudemag.com/download/explaining-adhd-to-teachers/>

The Connection to Trauma

- Many of the signs of trauma and ADHD are similar: irritability, impulsivity, inattention, trouble focusing, difficulty recalling information, difficulty following multi-step directions, poor relationships and social withdrawal, academic underachievement and engaging in risky behaviors

Poll

Mark the characteristics of the children you are raising (as many as apply):

1. Have or have had a 504
2. Have or have had an IEP
3. Evaluated and found ineligible for 504/Accommodations
4. Evaluated and found ineligible for special education/IEP
5. None of these experiences

Formal Options for Support

- Access/equal opportunity
 - Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Specialized Instruction
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its many parts
- Services and Supports through other systems



Federal Policy Tools

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973)**
- **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 1975)**- guarantees right to a free, appropriate public education to children 0-22 who have a disability that creates an adverse effect on learning, thus creating an educational need. **Think: Specialized instruction...**
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA; 1990)**- protects the civil rights of people with disabilities in all aspects of employment, in accessing public services such as transportation, and guaranteeing access to public accommodations such as restaurants, stores, hotels and other types of buildings to which the public has access. **Think access, reasonable accommodations, & modifications of policies, practices and procedures.**

Interplay between the Laws

Section 504/ADA

IDEA/IEP

- Students with disabilities may be protected under two or three federal laws simultaneously.
- IDEA defines disability differently (categories) from 504 and ADA
- All students with disabilities are eligible for special education and related services under IDEA are protected by 504 and Title II of ADA but inverse is not true.

Section 504



- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects rights if individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance, including public schools.
- Prohibits discrimination of those with disabilities- physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, including learning, communicating, concentrating, reading, etc.
- Eligible students may have a 504 plan that lays out accommodations and supports



Two KEY 504 guidance documents!

- *Students with ADHD and Section 504: A Resource Guide*, July 2016
- *Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools*, December 2016 (not specific to ADHD but inclusive of)
- Both by US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights

Section 504- eligibility

For purposes of §504, a “*qualified individual with a disability*” is one who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment which *substantially limits* one or more major life activities;
- Has a record of such impairment, or;
- Is regarded as having such an impairment.



In Schools- MLA doesn't have to be LEARNING

- A student may have a disability and be eligible for 504 services **even if disability does NOT limit major life activity of learning.**
- School staff must consider how an impairment affects ANY major life activity and if necessary, assess what is needed to ensure students have an equal opportunity to participate in the school's programs. SO...
- A student may have a disability and be eligible for section 504 services, including modifications, even **if the student earns good grades.**

Major Life Activities include

- Performing manual tasks
- Caring for oneself
- Seeing, hearing, etc.
- Walking, standing, etc.
- Speaking
- Learning
- Reading
- Concentrating
- Thinking
- Communicating
- Working

**MLAs includes
certain acts AND
bodily functions**

Eligibility Considerations under 504

- Not just Learning- all major life activities MAY impact school performance.
- Every type of ADHD affects the functioning of the parts of the brain related to thinking, concentrating, and planning. A determination that a student has any type of ADHD, therefore, is a determination that a student has an impairment for purposes of meeting one of the prongs of Section 504's definition of disability.



Mitigating Measures

- When determining if a person has a disability, the school cannot consider ameliorative effects of mitigating measures when determining how the impairment impacts the major life activities.
- Mitigating measures including assistive devices (but NOT ordinary eye glasses), **learned behaviors, medications, and adaptive neurological modifications** that an individual may use to eliminate or reduce the effects of an impairment.



Section 504's Evaluation and Placement

- Schools must conduct an initial evaluation at no cost to family when school has reason to believe a student needs special education or related aides and services due to a disability (including when a student's behavior indicates they may have a disability).
- If a student is doing well academically, that fact does not justify denying or delaying an evaluation when school has reason to believe child has disability. Must respond in writing to a parent/family requests for evaluation and denial of the request can be challenged under procedural safeguards.

Source: July 2022 OCR Fact Sheet

504 plan per Federal Guidance (2022)

- A student's Section 504 plan COULD include: the behavioral supports the student needs to address behavior interfering with their own or other students' ability to learn.
- A description of specific disability-based behavior for which the student will not be disciplined under the school's code of conduct.
- For example, Section 504 team may decide that a particular student with a disability needs a behavioral intervention plan based on the results of a functional behavioral assessment.

Source: July 2022 OCR Fact Sheet

IDEA Legislation Guarantees:



- ★Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- ★Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with disabilities
- ★Placement in the least restrictive environment
- ★Parent* participation in educational planning



“Parent” is an inclusive term

Legal Status of Caregivers

Definition of **parent** in Virginia special ed regulations:

- a. A biological or adoptive parent of a child;
- b. A foster parent, even if the biological or adoptive parent's rights have not been terminated (school has to provide written notice to biological parent that foster parent is acting as parent; school is "entitled" to rely upon actions of foster parent until biological parent attempts to act as parent);
- c. A guardian generally authorized to act as the child's parent, or authorized to make educational decisions for the child;

d. An individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare;

e. If none of above can serve, a surrogate parent appointed by school; **or**

f. An emancipated minor.

NOTE: A judicial decree or order identifying a specific person(s) to act as “parent” or make educational decisions on behalf of the child, trumps the above order of priorities.



(§ 20-124.6 and § 22.1-213.1 of the Code of Virginia; 34 CFR 99.4 and 34; CFR 300.30)

What is Special Education?

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Specially designed instruction
- At no cost to parents
- To meet the unique needs of a child with disabilities



IDEA Guarantee:



- A free, appropriate education for all children (FAPE)
- Placement in the least restrictive environment
- Protection for the rights of children and their parents
- ‘Parent’ participation in educational planning

Who gets Special Education Services?

- ★ Qualify through an evaluation and eligibility process
- ★ Must meet criteria for one of the Federal Disability Categories
- ★ Must demonstrate a need for special education & related services



Strategies



ADHD is Not a Choice

- Russell Barkley, PhD says that ADHD is a developmental disability because of the delay in developing skills.
- Children can lag behind their peers by 3-6 years developmentally.
- ADHD is a disorder of performance
“I know what to do but I can’t do what I know.”
- Ross Greene, PhD, says that even gifted children with ADHD have lagging skills that impact academic performance.
“Children do what they CAN.”

Executive Functions- definition

The executive functions are a **set of processes** that all have to do with managing oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal. It is an umbrella term for the neurologically-based skills involving mental control and self-regulation.



9 Executive Functions in developmental progression

- **Inhibition** - The ability to stop one's own behavior at the appropriate time, including stopping actions and thoughts. The flip side of inhibition is impulsivity; weak ability to stop yourself from acting on your impulses.
- **Working memory** - The capacity to hold information in mind for the purpose of completing a task.
- **Emotional Control** - The ability to modulate emotional responses by bringing rational thought to bear on feelings.
- **Shift** - The ability to move freely from one situation to another and to think flexibly in order to respond appropriately to the situation; flexibility.



Executive Functions, continued

- **Initiation** - The ability to begin a task or activity and to independently generate ideas, responses, or problem-solving strategies.
- **Planning/Organization** - The ability to manage current and future-oriented task demands. Time management.
- **Organization of Materials** - The ability to impose order on work, play, and storage spaces.
- **Persistence/sustained attention**- The ability to modulate emotional responses by bringing rational thought to bear on feelings.
- **Self-Monitoring** - The ability to monitor one's own performance and to measure it against some standard of what is needed or expected.

Proactive vs Exclusionary Discipline

“States and other entities that operate educational programs, including early childhood education programs, should consider enacting policies that restrict, or prohibit, the use of disciplinary practices such as suspension and expulsion in particular situations or for particular groups of children.”

“Proactive systematic approaches that focus on instruction and supports, and that are implemented with fidelity and cultural responsiveness, are likely to address disparities; reduce the use of exclusionary discipline; and result in positive developmental, academic, and behavioral outcomes for all children including those with disabilities. ...in ...OSERS’... view, exclusionary discipline should not be used for non-violent offenses such as, tardiness, absenteeism, or subjective offenses such as defiance or disrespect.”

Federal OSERS Guidance July 19, 2022

Targeted Supports

“For some children whose behavioral needs are not met with school- and program-wide strategies, the IEP team should determine what more targeted, individualized interventions and supports are necessary.”

Examples of targeted interventions:

- social skills instruction supports on developing social relationships
- self-management strategies
- check and connect (a mentoring intervention designed to spot early signs of disengagement, improve school performance, and reduce school dropout)
- restorative practices

Federal OSERS Guidance July 19, 2022

Functional Behavioral Assessment

FBA process is individualized and, at a minimum, should:

- Clearly define the interfering behavior
- Collect indirect and direct data on the occurrence and nonoccurrence of the behavior
- Analyze data to determine trends and develop a hypothesis of the function of the behavior.
- Lead to the development or revision of a BIP (which is monitored, evaluated, and adjusted as needed).

Federal OSERS Guidance July 19, 2022

Parenting Tips for Children of All Ages

- Monitor for safety
- Establish good sleeping habits
- Plan healthy meals
- Encourage exercise
- Monitor screen time
- Make schedules and transitions predictable
- Use positive reinforcement to modify behavior



Parenting Tips for Children of All Ages, Continued

- Monitor interactions between siblings
- Set aside time regularly to be present with your child
- Teach child about ADHD and how it impacts brain functioning
- Take care of yourself
- Seek help from peer groups/professionals
- Have realistic expectations
- Practice forgiveness
- **Remember that no child wakes up in the morning intending to misbehave!!!!**



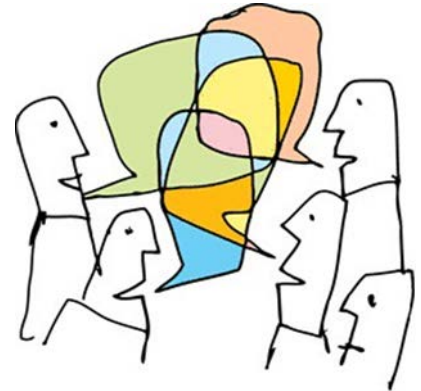
Poll

Which of these strategies can you use immediately? (choose one)

1. Monitor screen time
2. Make schedules and transitions predictable
3. Have realistic expectations
4. Set aside time regularly to be present with your child

Effective Communication Strategies

- Briefly impart information or directions in a neutral tone of voice.
- Do not give directions if the child/youth is distracted or clearly not focused
- Have the child/youth repeat back directions
- Connect before you redirect
- Chunk tasks into smaller parts Use pictures or checklists to reinforce instructions
- Stay regulated and calm
- Sound sincere when praising the child for good behavior



Barkley, 2022

What if I have a complaint?

Office of Civil Rights (Section 504 and ADA)

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

Complaints may be filed on behalf of your child or on behalf of a group of children who allegedly have been discriminated against.



dreamstime.com



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Disputes about Special Education/IDEA

- IDEA regulations provide for a set of robust procedural safeguards to ensure the guarantee of a free appropriate public education.
- Formal dispute resolution options include:
 - state complaints
 - mediation
 - due process hearing requests

Families and schools are encouraged to use informal resolution options including contacting the VDOE Special Education Ombudsman.

Advocacy

- Collaborate with important adults
- Coordinate behavioral plan with important adults
- Share information as appropriate, such as triggers or difficult transitions
- Ask for frequent feedback
- Teach and practice the ability to express needs



All About Me tool

All About Me

Name: Jillian Smith



You will see me for: Math Studies, 2nd block

I am good at:

- Group activities, I like working with other students, especially other girls
- Fractions are easy for me.
- Talking out problems

I have trouble with:

- Getting started on work by myself
- Working with too many bossy boys in a group
- Writing long answers to things

You should know:

- I live with my aunt. It is OK to share this information with other students.
- My mom is in jail until 2023; it is not OK to share this with students.
- I have ADHD and depression; I have a harder time with depression after I visit my sister and brother the first weekend of every month.

What works for me at school:

- Being able to tell teachers my answers instead of writing it out long.
- Taking a break when I can't focus. I like to read Under the Moon and other books by Lauren Myracle when I get overwhelmed.

Contact me by

Text 703-555-8944

Contact my parents/caregivers by

Aunt Kaye's email is auntkaye@gmail.com; her cell is 804-555-9088

Resources

- Come to love your state special ed. regulations & procedural safeguards notice!
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/state/regs_speced_disability_va.pdf
- CHADD & Attention magazine, <https://chadd.org/>; Attitude magazine, podcast, webinars <https://www.additudemag.com/>
- Parent Resource Centers in many divisions
- Virginia Family Special Education Connection
<http://vafamilysped.org/>
- PEATC.org, statewide parent training & info center
- Center for Family Involvement at VCU and family navigators
<http://www.centerforfamilyinvolvement.vcu.edu/>

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