



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

MARGARET MEAD

ADD/ADHD Series – Part 1

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This is the first in a series of articles about ADD/ADHD

When many people think of ADD/ADHD, they picture an out-of-control kid in constant motion, bouncing off the walls and disrupting everyone around. But this is not the only possible picture. Some children with ADD/ADHD are hyperactive, while others sit quietly (with their attention miles away). Some put too much focus on a task and have trouble shifting it to something else. Others are only mildly inattentive but overly impulsive.

The 3 primary characteristics of ADD/ADHD are inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. The signs and symptoms a child with ADD/ADHD has depends on which characteristics predominate. Children with ADD/ADHD may be:

- Inattentive, but not hyperactive or impulsive.
- Hyperactive and impulsive, but able to pay attention.
- Inattentive, hyperactive, and impulsive (the most common form of ADHD).

Which one of these children may have ADD/ADHD?

- A. The hyperactive boy who talks nonstop and can't sit still.
- B. The quiet dreamer who sits at her desk and stares off into space.
- C. Both A and B

The correct answer is "C."

Children who only have inattentive symptoms of ADD/ADHD are often overlooked, since they're not disruptive. However, the symptoms of inattention have consequences: getting in hot water with parents and teachers for not following directions; underperforming in school; and clashing with other kids over not playing by the rules.

The symptoms of ADD/ADHD change as someone with ADD/ADHD develops from a child into a teenager and then into an adult. While the core problems of hyperactivity, impulsiveness, and inattentiveness remain the same, the specific symptoms manifest differently. Typically, the

symptoms of hyperactivity decrease and become more subtle, while problems related to concentration and organization become more dominant.

According to Dr. Thomas E. Brown of the Yale University School of Medicine, “ADD/ADHD is essentially a name for developmental impairment of executive function.” Executive functions are the skills involved in planning, selective attention, motivation, and impulse control. Adults with ADHD have problems in six major areas of executive functioning:

- Activation — Problems with organization, prioritizing, and starting tasks.
- Focus — Problems with sustaining focus and resisting distraction, especially with reading.
- Effort — Problems with motivation, sustained effort, and persistence.
- Emotion — Difficulty regulating emotions and managing stress.
- Memory — Problems with short-term memory and memory retrieval.
- Action — Problems with self-control and self-regulation.

SOURCE Jeanne Segal, Ph.D.