



# The RITES FACTS

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## What is Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)?

AD/HD is one of the most common neurobehavioral disorders. It is usually diagnosed in childhood and often persists into adulthood. AD/HD is a chronic disorder that can negatively impact many aspects of daily life, including home, school, work, and interpersonal relationships. AD/HD is a neurobiological condition affecting 5-8% of school age children with symptoms persisting into adulthood in as many as 60% of cases. (i.e. approximately 4% of adults). It is characterized by developmentally inappropriate levels of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.

Around two-thirds of children with ADHD have at least one other coexisting disorder. Disruptive behavior, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, tics, and Tourette syndrome, and learning disabilities are among the most common conditions that occur in children with AD/HD.

### Common signs of AD/HD

It is important to seek a comprehensive evaluation from a licensed neurobehavioral professional to identify AD/HD in students and decide the best course of treatment, especially since there is no one test to determine a diagnosis of AD/HD. There are also different types of AD/HD – predominantly inattentive type, predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type, and combined type.

For the **inattentive type**, look for:

- Careless mistakes, rushing through work, failure to notice details
- Difficulty sustaining attention and avoidance of tasks requiring sustained mental effort
- An appearance of not listening
- Struggles to follow directions
- Trouble with organization
- Loses things
- Easily distracted
- Forgetful in daily activities

For the **hyperactive-impulsive type**, look for:

- Fidgety hands and feet
- Squirming or difficulty remaining in seat
- Runs or climbs excessively
- Difficulty with quietly engaging in activities
- Seems driven, as if by a motor
- Talks excessively
- Blurts out answers and often interrupts others
- Trouble with turn-taking and waiting

For the **combined type**, individuals exhibit signs of both other types of AD/HD.

## Treating AD/HD

Helping children with AD/HD often involves a multi-tiered approach, combining several types of support, including:

- Parent and child understanding of the diagnosis, ramifications and treatment
- Behavior management
- School support
- Medication<sup>1</sup>

Successful outcomes for AD/HD students most often come when occupational therapists, pediatricians, psychologists, teachers, and parents work together to craft and implement a plan of support as a team, working with the student toward improved skills and greater independence. Each child benefits from an individualized plan for his or her specific profile. Regular monitoring and assessment of that plan is essential to make sure the elements of the treatment are keeping pace with the growth (both physical and academic) of the student.

<sup>1</sup>*Data Source: Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)*  
<http://www.chadd.org>