

ABOUT ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)



Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that is usually first diagnosed in childhood and often lasts into adulthood. It's characterised by symptoms of inattentive, impulsive and sometimes hyperactive behaviour and often includes emotional regulation challenges (Parents for ADHD Advocacy Australia, 2019).

Each learner with ADHD is a unique individual and adjustments to their educational program and learning environment should be tailored to their needs. When you understand the impact of ADHD on the individual learner, you'll be better able to adjust to their needs.



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for Education

Understanding ADHD

ADHD affects about 1 in 20 children and is the most prevalent neurodevelopmental condition in Australia (Deloitte Access Economics, 2019). ADHD can be associated with academic, behavioural and social difficulties for learners.

Types of ADHD

There are 3 types of ADHD: inattentive, hyperactive and impulsive, or a combination of the 2.

Executive functioning and ADHD

Executive function refers to the ability to control our attention, remember instructions, manage emotional reactions and behaviours and organise our thinking (Australian Education Research Organisation, 2021). ADHD affects the brain's ability to manage thoughts, actions and to self-regulate (Barkley et al, 2008).

Strengths of learners with ADHD

The strengths of learners with ADHD may include being:

- imaginative
- innovative
- creative
- curious
- enthusiastic
- great at brainstorming and thinking outside of the box.

ADHD ADJUSTMENTS



EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS



Executive functions and self-regulation

- Play memory games to develop working memory, for example, memory, snap, pairs, bingo, guess who, Simon says, card games like fish, uno, crazy 8's.
- Explicitly teach tools for self-monitoring such as self-talk where the learner talks themselves through the steps of a difficult task.
- Provide opportunities for goal setting, planning and monitoring by identifying something specific that the learner wants to accomplish and supporting them to establish meaningful goals that are achievable.



Setting tasks and activities

- Make learning concrete, contextual and visual. Use visual timetables and checklists to support organisation.
- Keep instructions simple and short and begin with the learner's name to gain their attention.
- Repeat instructions more than once throughout the lesson or write them on the board or the learner's desk.



Visual supports

- Provide lists, timetables, timescales and regular reminders to support the learner's organisation.
- Write down homework in the learner's diary or use pre-prepared stickers.
- Create visual reminders of what equipment needs to be brought to each lesson – keep 1 copy in their school bag and 1 at home.



Learning areas or zones

- Consider seating arrangement and placement – seat the learner close to the teacher while reducing peripheral distraction as much as possible (for example, away from the windows or doors) and allow for easy access to exits if needed.
- Provide a range of resources to support attentional regulation, for example, standing desks, attentional or sensory tools, rocking chairs, privacy desk barriers, timers, headphones.



Transitions and changes

- Structure all transitions (for example in and between lessons, after school holidays).
- Provide support or give prior warning of any known or planned changes to the daily schedule, for example, an educator or staff absence, or upcoming excursions.
- Provide a countdown warning before transitions (use a timer if needed), for example, 'Sam, 5 minutes of literacy, then maths' or 'Sam, 5 minutes left in this classroom, then you will move to the gym for PE'.