



Understanding your child's ADHD diagnosis

A guide for parents

Your child was just diagnosed with ADHD — what does that actually mean?

Take a breath. This is one of the most common, well-understood, and treatable conditions in childhood medicine. You haven't done anything wrong, and your child isn't broken.

What is it, really?

ADHD means your child's brain manages attention, impulse control and activity level a bit differently than most kids their age. It's not about intelligence — plenty of very smart, capable kids have ADHD. It's not about discipline or parenting either. The brain circuits involved in focus and self-control develop and work a little differently, largely due to genetics.

Why does my child act this way?

Depending on the type, your child might:

- Struggle to focus on homework or chores, even when they want to do well
- Seem to not listen, even when spoken to directly
- Be constantly moving, climbing, or unable to sit still
- Blur out things or interrupt without meaning to be rude
- Lose things constantly — jackets, homework, water bottles
- Get overwhelmed by multi-step instructions

None of this is your child being "bad" or you being a bad parent. It's the natural result of a brain wired for a different style of attention and impulse control.

Will this hold my child back?

Not with the right support. Kids with ADHD grow up to be doctors, artists, entrepreneurs, athletes, engineers — the condition affects how they learn and manage themselves, not their ceiling. Many are creative, energetic, and think outside the box in ways that serve them well later in life.

What actually helps

1. Medication, if recommended. Stimulant medications are very well-studied in children and are often the single most effective treatment. They don't "drug" your child into being someone else — done right, they simply help your child reach the focus and self-control they already have but can't access consistently. Side effects (appetite, sleep) are usually manageable and monitored closely by the prescriber.

2. Behavioural strategies at home and school. Structure, consistent routines, clear short instructions, breaking tasks into steps, and positive reinforcement.

3. School accommodations. Many kids qualify for extra time, preferential seating, or other supports that make a big difference.

4. Parent training / family therapy. Not because you're doing anything wrong, but because specific strategies really do help — and they help you feel less exhausted too.

A reassurance to hold onto

The earlier ADHD is recognised and supported, the better kids tend to do — academically, socially and emotionally. You caught this early. That's the best thing that could have happened for your child.

This handout is for general education and does not replace personalised medical advice from your child's treating clinician.

Helping them study? Cadence turns their notes into calm, ADHD-friendly study rounds — cadenceadhd.com