



[This section prints out on 4 sheets]

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Learn what the signs of ADHD are. If your child has ADHD, get help early.

Read this page if:

- Someone told you your child has **ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)**. Some people just call it **ADD**.
- Your child has trouble paying attention.
- Your child is a lot more active than other children his age.

ADHD is a common problem for children. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing may have ADHD, just like other kids. But sometimes it's hard to tell if the way your child is acting is because of the hearing loss or if he has ADHD.

What ADHD looks like

Children with ADHD are not all alike.

- Some are a lot more active than other children. This is called being **hyperactive (hi-per-AK-tiv)**.
- Some children may do things without thinking about what might happen later. This is called being **impulsive (im-PULS-iv)**. Here are some examples:
 - They may have a hard time sitting still when they need to, like in class.
 - They may get into trouble for running around or climbing on things too much.
 - They may run out into the street without looking to see if a car is coming.
- Some children have trouble paying attention. This is called being **inattentive (in-a-TEN-tiv)**. They may also have a hard time focusing on one thing at a time. Here are some examples:
 - They may make mistakes because they weren't paying attention.
 - They may lose things easily.
 - They may forget what they were told.
 - They may not be able to focus on a story or lesson in school. So they may miss part of it.
 - When they're supposed to be paying attention to one thing, they may not be able to "tune out" other things like noises or people moving around the room.
 - They may stare off into space.
- Some children have problems with short term memory. This means they may forget something you just told them. Or what they wanted to say.

Some children have all of these problems. Other children only have some of them. But many children with ADHD have problems because:

- They get frustrated easily.
- They have trouble keeping up at school.
- They have trouble making friends because they act different than other children.

Sometimes it's hard to tell if a child with hearing loss has ADHD

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing may look like they have ADHD when they don't because:

- They look around the room all the time to see who is talking. A teacher may think they aren't paying attention.
- They use their hands and bodies to communicate. This may look like they are over active.
- They have trouble doing what they are told because they don't understand.
- They get frustrated and "act up" because they can't communicate well enough.

Get your child tested if you think he has ADHD

It's hard to know if a child has ADHD. There's no blood test that tells you if your child has it.

Find someone to check your child out for ADHD. This person could be a therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, or pediatrician who:

- knows how to test for ADHD in children with hearing loss. Some of the tests used with hearing children don't work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- understands how children who are deaf or hard of hearing usually act
- can communicate well with your child. If your child uses sign language, the therapist should know how to sign or use an interpreter.

There are 4 parts to seeing if your child has ADHD

- a. An evaluator may give your child some tests for attention and impulsivity. Ask the evaluator if these tests work with children who have a hearing loss.
- b. You and your child's teachers may be asked to fill out some forms that ask questions about how your child acts at school and home.
- c. The evaluator will talk to you and your child about the problems that are coming up.
- d. The evaluator will want to rule out other things that might be causing your child's problems.
 - Not eating right or not getting enough sleep can cause problems like being too active and not paying attention.
 - If your child has a [learning disability](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/special/ld/) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/special/ld/>) or can't see well, he may also seem like he's not paying attention.
 - If your child has a hard time understanding the teacher, he may look like he's not paying attention.

If your child has ADHD, get help

Some of the things that are helpful for some children are:

- Medicines that help some children pay attention better. These medicines are called **stimulants (STI-myoo-lants)**. Ritalin is one of the most common ones used but there are others that can help too. These medicines are safe for most kids. But they can have side effects.
 - Some children don't eat as much and lose weight.
 - Some kids have trouble sleeping.
 - Some kids get headaches or feel sick to their stomachs.
 - Some kids get grouchy.
 - Some kids get upset when the drug wears off at the end of the day. This is called rebound.
 - A few kids have short, or quick repeated movements called "tics". For example, they may blink their eyes a lot.

If your doctor suggests medicine, watch out for side effects. Sometimes the dose can be changed to lower the side effects.

Or sometimes the doctor will want to try a different drug.

- Working to help your child change how he acts. This is called **behavioral treatment (be-HAY-vyoo-ral TREET-ment)**. A therapist can help you make a plan for this.
- Work with your child's teachers and the school to find out how you can help your child.
- Make sure your child's IEP includes what he needs to help him deal with ADHD.

Learn more about treating ADHD at ADHD.com

We finally found some medicine that helped my son

My older son has a severe hearing loss and has ADHD/inattentive. We've had a hard time with meds, finally going to Adderall and it's been nearly a miracle. He's gone from getting 35-40% on timed math tests to a string of at least 10 tests in a row with 100%. The change in focus has been incredible. I had very mixed feelings about putting him on medication. But he clearly responds well to it and it's the difference between focus and no focus. And he feels so good

about himself!

— Parent of a deaf child with ADHD

(http://www.strattera.com/1_3_childhood_adhd/1_3_4_treatment.jsp).

Learn all you can about ADHD

Learn all you can about ADHD in children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- Talk to other parents. Ask them what they do that helps.
- Talk to your doctor or psychologist. Ask them what they recommend.

Check out these websites:

- [ADHD.com](http://www.adhd.com/) (<http://www.adhd.com/>) has a lot of information about ADHD. But nothing about ADHD in children with hearing loss.
- [CHADD](http://www.adhd.com/) (<http://www.adhd.com/>) is an organization for people with ADHD. They offer parent support and lots of information.
- [ADHD and Hearing Loss: Deficit or Boredom](http://www.deafed.net/PublishedDocs/99061fa.html) (<http://www.deafed.net/PublishedDocs/99061fa.html>) has a lot of information and references if you want to know what research has been done.

Read this book to learn about things you can do to help your child learn to behave better:

- *Kid-Friendly Parenting with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children: A Treasury of Fun Activities Toward Better Behavior*, by Daria J. Medwid and Denise Chapman Weston.

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You can find this page online at:
<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/special/adhd/>