



## DCDSB Understanding & Supporting All Learners

### What is ADHD?

Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental condition occurring in about 5% of Canadian children. More boys than girls are diagnosed with ADHD. Difficulties usually continue into adulthood, but many adults learn how to effectively manage the symptoms.

ADHD causes difficulties with one or more of the following:

- focusing (i.e., inattention)
- controlling behaviour (i.e., impulsivity)
- regulating activity level (i.e., hyperactivity)

Based on the symptoms, there are 3 subtypes:

Predominantly Inattentive (used to be called ADD),  
Predominantly Hyperactive/ Impulsive, and Combined  
(includes both presentations).

### How having ADHD can impact learning and behaviour at home

Behavioural difficulties are a key feature of ADHD. At home, you may observe some of the following:

- Difficulty listening
- Easily distracted
- Difficulty following instructions
- Difficulty with organization
- Restlessness
- Difficulty sitting still
- Always “on the go”
- Interrupting
- Difficulty waiting their turn
- Acting or answering quickly without thinking

### Helpful Resources

For more information you may wish to explore:

Centre for ADHD Awareness - Canada (CADDAC):  
[caddac.ca](http://caddac.ca)

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity  
Disorder (CHADD): [chadd.org](http://chadd.org)

### Strategies to support Children & Adolescents with ADHD at Home

- Carefully review Assessment reports and learning profile
- Teach study skills (or ‘Executive Functioning’ skills)
- Break down tasks into smaller, more manageable steps; for teens give mini-deadlines for steps of a larger assignment
- Use a visual schedule with clear expectations (e.g., math for 30 min. or Questions 1-5)
- Make sure you have their attention before giving instructions; ask your child to repeat in their own words what they have to do
- Give one direction at a time; repeat as needed
- Praise or reward on-task behaviour (i.e., working without distraction); consider using a reward system and gradually increase expectations
- Provide planned (structured) breaks
- Plan workspace to minimize distractions (e.g., away from window)
- Provide structure and regular routines; give advance warnings of changes
- Model good planning & organization
- Use an easily accessible calendar with family and school activities/deadlines
- Gently redirect your child back to task when they are distracted
- Teach self-calming, relaxation, and problem-solving skills (see: <https://www.dcdsb.ca/en/parents/resources/Coronavirus/Well-Being-Apps-for-Youth2020.pdf>)
- Encourage exercise & healthy eating
- Encourage good sleep habits, including no screens for 1 hour before bedtime
- Consult with school board staff when needed

*This resource is not intended for diagnostic purposes. It is to be used as a reference for your own understanding and to provide information about the different kinds of difficulties you may encounter in your classroom.*

