

# Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) And Attention Deficit Hyper Activity Disorder (ADHD)

## What Parents and Teacher should know

### Mrs. Rukmini Krishnaswamy

Director-spastics Society Of Karnataka, Bengaluru  
M.S.(Child Development) and Early Child Education, Harvard University,U.S.A.  
M.Ed.,Sp.Ed.,Boston University,U.S.A.  
Diploma in Child Psycho-Therapy,Harvard University,U.S.A.

The main thing new about Attention Deficit Disorder or ADD, is the use of these words to describe a learning disability. The problem has been around ever since teachers have attempted to teach students the subjects that didn't interest them. In most cases, it should be described not as learning disability, but as a teaching disability.

There is a genuine medical disorder called ADD that prevents a person from maintaining attention. It would certainly hinder performance in school if it were the problem, for parents whose child is being forced to take medications. One should look up to Manual DSM-V, the standard diagnostic guides used by physicians. See whether it actually describes your child.

Currently, many students who cannot maintain fixed attention on a task for very long are being diagnosed as suffering from ADD. They are said to be "easily distractible". They shift their attention to other things in the environment instead of sticking to what the teacher has assigned.

Sometimes the ADD problem is accompanied by a second condition called hyperactivity.

Both are rooted in the developmental differences of dyslexic children during early childhood.

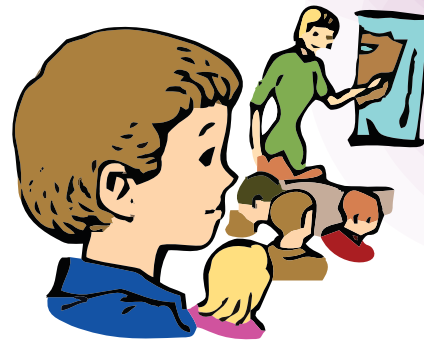
A highly regimented classroom is not a real-life situation by any stretch of the imagination.



If a teacher does not appeal to the curiosity of a student and has failed to make the subject being taught the most interesting thing in the environment, the teacher has created the perfect environment for ADD. This teacher will eventually tell the parents of dyslexic child that the child can't stay on task, is easily distractible and should be tested.

## Signs of inattention may include

- Have difficulty listening and paying attention
- Need lots of reminders to do things
- Get distracted easily
- Be disorganized and lose things
- Not sit still, wait their turn, or be patient
- Lose things necessary for tasks or activities  
eg. pencils, books, eyeglasses
- Start tasks, but quickly lose focus and get easily sidetracked
- Avoid and dislike tasks that require sustained mental effort
- Forgetful in daily activities
- Rush through homework or other tasks or make careless mistakes
- Interrupt a lot, or talk, or call out answers in class, intruding on others conversations, games or activities
- Do things they should not, even though they know better
- Feel restless, fidgety, frustrated and bored



## Hyperactivity

When ADD is accompanied by hyperactivity, it creates a bigger problem in the classroom, so the child is more likely to be singled out for diagnosis and treatment.

The mechanism of hyperactivity is easy to understand when viewed from the following perspective.

First the student isn't interested in what is going on, and doesn't understand what the teacher is saying. The resulting boredom and confusion activates the perception-altering function of the brain, and the student becomes disoriented. The student's internal clock speeds up, so perceived external time seems to slow down. For every minute of actual time, this student must endure two minutes of trying to stay out of trouble, pay attention, concentrate or sit still.



### ADHD – What is it?

- Inattention (difficulty in paying attention)
- Hyperactivity (being overactive)
- Impulsivity (acting without thinking)



Learning to become oriented stops the disorientation symptoms, but it will never make a student interested in a subject that is poorly taught. It is interesting that very good teachers rarely seem to have students with ADD in their classes, even though some of the same students are labeled as suffering from ADD in other classes

## Diagnosing ADHD

- Done by a Professional- like a Psychiatrist, Neurologist
- Several symptoms are present in 2 or more settings (like home, school) for a period of 6 months or more
- Need to rule out health issues, medications causing similar symptoms
- Need to ensure learning issues are not the cause
- Age- Symptoms present before age 12



## Teaching and learning strategies

- Clear and concise instructions will enhance their ability to comply
- Ask questions to actively engage the student
- Help them to participate in the lesson. Do not assume they are dull & inattentive so they cannot, actually they may not be (most children with ADHD are curious, creative, energetic, entertaining)

