



Cornerstone Psychological Services

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Understanding ADHD and Services: A Resource for Parents

Receiving a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) for your child can bring about a lot of clarity for parents as to why their child has been struggling, but it also can be confusing and overwhelming. Below are some key first steps to supporting your child as well as you as a parent of a child with ADHD.

1. Learn more about ADHD.

- A few key facts!
 - Affects about 3-10% of children
 - Is a neurological (brain) disorder and so a child with ADHD does not choose whether to pay attention, sit still, be patient, etc.
 - Has nothing to do with how smart your child is
 - About 70% of children with ADHD continue to have symptoms during their teen years and about 50% have symptoms into adulthood
 - The cause is best explained by genetics and has nothing to do with good or bad parenting
- Websites
 - Centre for ADHD Awareness: <https://caddac.ca/adhd/>
 - CHADD: <https://chadd.org>
 - Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance: www.caddra.ca
 - TotallyADD: <https://totallyadd.com>
 - Understood: <https://www.understood.org/en>
 - Parents Resource Network: <http://prntexas.org/adhd/>
 - Attention Deficit Disorder Association: <https://add.org>
- Books and Magazines
 - Taking Charge of ADHD (Barkley)
 - ADDitude Magazine www.additudemag.com
 - Smart but Scattered (Dawson & Guare)
 - What Your ADHD Child Wishes You Knew (Saline & Markham)
 - The Explosive Child (Greene)
 - The Whole Brain Child (Siegel & Bryson)
- YouTube: Type in ADHD/children/parents and you'll find lots of helpful videos!

2. Talk to your child's school. Schools play an important role in supporting children with ADHD seeing as attention impacts learning. Fortunately, school staff have become increasingly skilled and knowledgeable about effective ways to teach students with ADHD. Below are a few areas to focus on when talking with your child's school.

- *Identifying your child is critical to his/her success.* Though parents worry about "labels", it is better to acknowledge that your child has ADHD than for him or her to be "mislabeled" by the school as "careless", "lazy", "oppositional" or "not smart".
- *Individual Education Plan (IEP):* Once you share your child's psychological assessment report with the school psychologist or special education resource teacher, they likely will begin preparing an IEP that will include accommodations your child is eligible for. As a parent, you also will be part of this process and this helps ensure more success.
- *Technology:* If technology has been deemed essential for your child to access the curriculum, discuss options with the school regarding a personalized computer for your child. Another option is to have your child trained on using apps specific to an iPad that support reading, writing, and executive skills. Also, this can be done privately (Dana Sahian; SLP4ALL; 647-926-4255)
- *Speak with your child's teacher* to ensure that they, too, have read your child's assessment report and set up a home-school communication system if needed.

3. If you wish, meet with your child's doctor to discuss medicine for ADHD. Properly adjusted medication for ADHD has the potential to sharpen your child's focus and it increases their ability to control their own behaviour. Studies show there's an over 80% chance that your child will respond to medication. A physician can help you understand the options and answer your questions. You can also ask for a referral to a pediatrician or psychiatrist who specializes in ADHD. To learn more about ADHD medication check out the following websites:

- <https://childmind.org/article/the-facts-on-adhd-medications/>
- <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/medications/adhd-medication>

4. Find community supports/services that are a good fit for your child and family. Navigating services offered in your area can be overwhelming because there are so many options in terms of settings and types of services. Children with ADHD can benefit from participating in social skills group, mindfulness training, camps for children with special needs, and support for organization and time management. Parents can also benefit from support groups or individual parent coaching.

Settings in the Greater Toronto Area where you can find such services include: Cornerstone Psychological Services; Behaviour Matters; Kids CAN; Springboard Clinic; The Possibilities Clinic; Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO); Pediatric and Teen Health (PATH); and The Integra Foundation.

Skill/activity-based books for kids and parents can also be useful. For example, Putting on the Brakes: Activity Book for Kids with ADD or ADHD (Patricia O. Quinn) and ADHD: Non-Medication Treatments and Skills for Children and Teens (Debra Burdick)

5. Take a deep breath and know that some days will be hard, but it will be okay ☺

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