

# What Is ADHD?

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition that makes it hard for a child to control their activity level and reactions to what's going on around him or her. A child with ADHD can also have trouble keeping their attention on what they want to do. The condition emerges in early childhood – although it is not usually diagnosed until they are older – and can last all the way through adolescence and into adulthood.

The signs can vary depending on the child. However, there are three main types of ADHD:

- inattentive ADHD (previously called ADD)
- hyperactive-impulsive ADHD
- combined ADHD – a combination of the above

When diagnosing a child with ADHD, a medical professional generally considers whether the symptoms have been present in more than one setting and for a period of longer than six months. As such, the symptoms are believed to be negatively affecting the child's school and home life.

A child displaying several of the following indicators may have ADHD:

- hyperfocus (a period of disproportionately intense concentration)
- a lack of focus during work or play activities
- difficulty listening to and following directions
- failure to take turns in play or conversation
- excessive moving, talking or 'fidgeting'
- lack of organisation
- low impulse control

