

A Guide for Parents

Notice Possible ADHD in Your 7-Year-Old Daughter

It can present differently than you imagine. Early diagnosis is crucially important.

Introduction:

Many people do not realize that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) presents differently in girls than in most boys. This lack of awareness leads to delayed diagnosis, harming their academic and social development. For the best possible outcome, all girls with ADHD need to be identified and supported before their 8th birthday.

Dear Parents,

If you've noticed certain behaviors in your 7-year-old daughter that concern you, it's essential to consider whether ADHD might be a factor. Below is a detailed questionnaire to help you assess for possible ADHD. If your daughter struggles with many of these behaviors at home and school at least three times a week, and the behaviors persist over time, discuss your concerns with your family physician.

Inattentiveness:

- Makes careless mistakes in schoolwork
- Frequently overlooks or misses details
- Takes excessive time to complete tasks, such as self-care

Difficulty Maintaining Attention:

- Is easily distracted, especially in unstructured environments
- Has trouble staying focused during tasks or conversations
- Is quickly bored unless the subject interests her
- Has an extreme focus on things that greatly interest her

Poor Listening Skills:

- Seems to be elsewhere, even without distractions
- Requires frequent repetition of instructions
- Engages in activities instead of listening
- Has trouble following directions

Organization and Forgetfulness:

- Has a poor sense of time
- Often forgets what someone said
- Needs frequent reminders
- Has difficulty with starting and completing tasks
- Is disorganized and messy (in appearance and physical space)
- Frequently misplaces personal items

Restlessness and Impulsivity:

- Fidgets or squirms excessively
- Leaves seat when expected to remain seated
- Interrupts or butts in on others' conversations or activities
- Is often asked to quiet down
- Quickly becomes impatient

Emotional dysregulation

- Gets upset or angry about minor things
- Over-reacts to criticism or perceived rejections
- Cries easily or has meltdowns
- Behaves well in school but is reactive and irritable upon arrival at home

Social awkwardness

- Has difficulty making and keeping friends
- Is aggressive and bossy with peers
- Is shy and introverted
- Prefers solitary activities

Anxious and depressed behaviors

- Is reluctant to go to school or asks to stay home
- Has trouble falling asleep
- Complains of physical ailments without a clear medical cause
- Constantly worries about seemingly small things
- Is clingy and reluctant to try new things
- Fearful to be separated from parents
- Fears making teacher angry
- Makes negative comments about herself
- Seems unhappy or cries a lot
- Isolates herself

Heightened sensory issues

- Is fussy about how clothing fits and feels
- Can't tolerate certain food textures and tastes
- Gets overwhelmed by loud or visually stimulating environments

*Additional behaviors sometimes observed in girls with ADHD: bedwetting, acting silly, nail biting, picking at cuticles or skin, and poor handwriting.

If your daughter frequently exhibits several of these behaviors and they interfere with her daily functioning, it's crucial to seek a professional evaluation. Discussing your concerns with your child's school, including possibly involving a behavior specialist, can be beneficial.

If your daughter doesn't have many symptoms now, it doesn't rule out ADHD as sometimes the behaviors become more apparent when the demands on the child increase.

****This questionnaire is derived from ADHD symptoms in the DSM-V and the DIVA V with additional input from two family physicians with ADHD who solely diagnose and treat it, and three psychologists, including Kathleen Nadeau, who diagnose ADHD in young girls.*

The questionnaire was produced by FINDtheADHDgirls.org and is copyright free. It may be copied and distributed freely. CCO