

ADHD

What is the skill?

Attention, impulse control, and activity regulation are important executive functioning skills that allow children to learn, solve problems, and participate successfully at home and school. ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects these abilities.

What does normal development look like?

Children gradually become better at paying attention, following directions, controlling impulses, and staying focused on activities. These skills develop over many years through brain maturation and repeated experiences of co-regulation with supportive adults.

How does neglect interfere?

The effects of neglect and chronic stress can closely resemble ADHD. Children whose nervous systems remain focused on detecting danger often have difficulty concentrating on learning, remembering directions, or sitting still. This does not mean they necessarily have ADHD. Some children have ADHD, some have trauma-related attention difficulties, and many experience both. Understanding the child's developmental history is essential.

What might this look like?

Children may appear easily distracted, impulsive, constantly active, forgetful, disorganized, or unable to complete tasks. They may interrupt others, struggle to wait their turn, or seem unable to remain seated during activities.

Parenting implications

Caregivers should avoid assuming that inattentive or impulsive behavior always reflects intentional misbehavior or ADHD alone. Consistent routines, movement opportunities, visual supports, and co-regulation benefit many children regardless of the underlying cause. Comprehensive evaluation helps determine the most appropriate interventions.

From Understanding to Attunement

The behavior may resemble ADHD, but understanding *why* the behavior occurs is just as important as recognizing *what* the behavior looks like.