

# Understanding the Neurodivergent Student:

## Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a developmental disorder characterized by an ongoing pattern of inattention, hyperactivity and/or impulsivity. While these behaviors can be common in many people, those with ADHD exhibit the behaviors frequently and in multiple environments, such as school, home, and in the community.<sup>1</sup>



### Facts About ADHD

## 1 of the most common

ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood.<sup>2</sup>

**↑65%**

Since 2000, the percentage of American students diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has jumped from 6.9% to 11.4%, a 65% increase.<sup>3,4</sup>

**78%**

of children with ADHD have at least one other condition, whether behavioral or mental-health-related.<sup>5</sup>



## Key Traits of an Individual with ADHD

**ADHD often manifests itself through symptoms such as:**<sup>1,6</sup>

- **Inattention:** Difficulty paying attention, keeping on task or staying organized
- **Hyperactivity:** Moving around, feeling restless or talking excessively
- **Impulsivity:** Interrupting or having trouble waiting for activities or turns

**Students with ADHD may also present numerous strengths, including:**<sup>5</sup>

- Creative and innovative thinking, useful for writing, design and project-based learning
- High energy and enthusiasm, which contribute to collaboration and leadership
- Humor and expressiveness, which help enhance classroom engagement and peer interaction



## Supports that Help Students with ADHD<sup>7</sup>

Effective school-based supports for ADHD typically fall into three main categories. The great news is that these supports can benefit all students.

Here are some to consider:

### **Behavioral classroom management reinforces positive behaviors:**

- Create clear, specific expectations and review them regularly
- Provide immediate, behavior-specific praise
- Use reward systems for motivation

### **Organizational skills training focuses on executive functioning skills:**

- Model the use of planners, checklists and assignment trackers
- Break assignments into smaller steps with deadlines
- Use color-coded folders or other subject-based systems

### **Environmental and instructional supports improve focus and engagement:**

- Minimize visual and auditory distractions
- Incorporate movement breaks or flexible seating
- Offer choice in how students complete assignments



## Resources to Help Students with ADHD

Wondering how you can better support students with ADHD? The [Pearson ADHD Tools & Resources](#) site has a variety of training and other resources.

**Helpful assessments to have in your toolkit include:**



Rating scales like the [Behavior Assessment System for Children \(BASC-3\)](#)



Performance-based tests like the [Test of Everyday Attention for Children, Second Edition \(TEA-Ch2\)](#)



Interventions like [BASC-3 Intervention Guide & Materials](#)



Progress monitoring tools like [BASC-3 Flex Monitor](#)



Supplemental comorbid diagnosis tools like the [Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning, Third Edition \(WRAML3\)](#)

*\*The [Pearson Digital Assessment Library](#) offers unlimited access to these and numerous other assessments in an intuitive digital format.*

“For years, the common language of *disability* suggested something broken that needed to be fixed. But now we understand that these are *differences* to be understood and supported.”

**Kara Canale**

Certified school psychologist and clinical assessment consultant at Pearson



### Sources:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/adhd/about/index.html>
2. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd#hts-intro>
3. [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db70\\_tables.pdf#1](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db70_tables.pdf#1)
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/adhd/data/index.htm>
5. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12527501/>
6. <https://www.cdc.gov/adhd/signs-symptoms/index.html>
7. <https://www.cdc.gov/adhd/treatment/classroom.html>