Creating inclusive, supportive learning environments for students with ASD & ADHD

What every educator should know

Understanding the connections between autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is helpful for creating inclusive, supportive learning environments.

Rising prevalence

Incidence of ASD:

1 in 36

children in 2023, up from 1 in 150 children in 2000¹

11.4%

Incidence of ADHD:

in 2023, up from **7%** in 2000²

A Surprising Reality:

50-70%

of students with ASD also present with ADHD³

What's causing the surge?

The increase in ADHD and ASD cases is largely not due to over-diagnosis. Three contributing factors:

- Heightened awareness from practitioners and the general public
- DSM-5 starting in 2013

Dual diagnoses allowed under

• Diagnostics practices and assessment tools

The result? Greater recognition, earlier diagnosis, better support.



Symptoms of co-occurring ASD and ADHD

While ASD and ADHD have many separate symptoms, these are shared:

by processing delay Unresponsive to common

Easily distracted/impacted

- stimuli/over-responsive to sensory stimuli
- emotions and feelings Demonstrates impaired social interaction

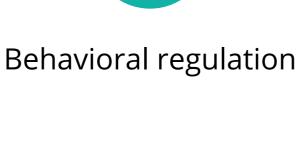
Lack of concern for/inability

to react to other people's

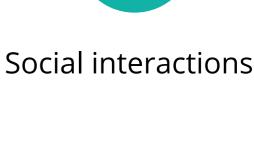


Co-occurring ASD and ADHD impact three critical areas:





Building a better classroom for students



Here are strategies that positively impact all students — including those with ASD and ADHD.

with co-occurring ASD and ADHD

Implement flexible



3

Active brain breaks

Sensory-friendly classrooms

instructional methods:

Visual schedules

Group projects

- Build social competencies: Conversational skills

Active listening

Problem solving

Conflict resolution

- - Use inclusive language and materials that reflect diverse backgrounds

achievements

Foster a positive

culture:

and inclusive classroom

support among students

Promote peer-to-peer

and conflict resolution skills Recognize student

Encourage active listening



To effectively support students with ASD and ADHD, incorporate these habits into your school community:

A team approach is vital

- Prioritize professional development to boost awareness.
- Reinforce the critical nature of early diagnosis.

Encourage educators to note atypical

behaviors.

with families.

understand and implement 504 plans and IEPs. Maintain open lines of communication

Work with school resource team to

For more information on co-occurring conditions, related assessments and other helpful tools, visit Pearson's Mental Health, ADHD, and Autism Resource Centers.

Want more information on how to support diverse learning needs?



1. https://www.cdc.gov/autism/data-research/index.html

2. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db70_tables.pdf#1 3. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8918663/