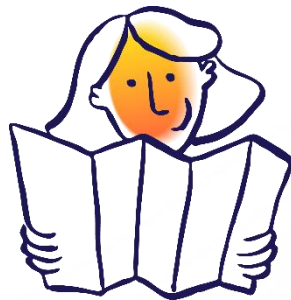


ADHD Diagnosis Resource Pack

For Parents and Caregivers of Children (Aged 6–17)





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1. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RECEIVING A DIAGNOSIS

Thank you for choosing Psicon for your assessment – it’s a privilege to have been able to work with you on such a significant and potentially life-changing process. This guide has been created to help you, and your child, navigate life after receiving a diagnosis of ADHD. The strategies and resources in this pack are designed to support your family in a positive, respectful and neuroaffirmative way.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

What is ADHD?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects how a person focuses, manages energy, and handles impulses. It’s usually present from early childhood, though it may not be recognised until later. ADHD isn’t a result of bad behaviour or poor parenting - it’s simply a different way the brain works.

Children with ADHD might seem constantly on the go, find it hard to concentrate, or act without thinking. Others may be more daydreamy, forgetful, or struggle with staying organised. Many have a combination of these traits. ADHD can also show up differently depending on the setting - some children manage well at school but find home life overwhelming, or vice versa.

ADHD isn’t all about difficulties. Many children with ADHD are creative, energetic, curious, and quick-thinking. They may be natural problem-solvers, deep thinkers, or full of ideas. Understanding ADHD means recognising both the challenges and the unique strengths it can bring.

You might also hear terms like “inattentive type,” “hyperactive-impulsive type,” or “combined presentation.” These just describe how ADHD shows up for your child right now - they aren’t fixed categories and can shift over time.

It’s also common for ADHD to occur alongside other conditions such as anxiety, autism, or dyslexia. These overlaps can sometimes make diagnosis and support more complicated, so it’s important to look at the whole picture.

Receiving a diagnosis is never about labelling your child or limiting their future. It’s about understanding them better - and giving you the tools to support them in a way that fits who they are.

This may be an emotional time. Some parents feel relieved, others feel overwhelmed. You might revisit past worries or wonder what the future holds. That’s completely normal. What matters most is that you and your child feel supported as you move forward.



3. TELLING YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR DIAGNOSIS

When and how you talk to your child about their ADHD diagnosis is entirely up to you. Some parents choose to explain it early, using simple, positive language. Others wait until their child starts asking questions or is better able to understand.

Tips:

- Choose a quiet time and a calm environment.
- Begin with strengths - talk about what makes your child brilliant, funny, energetic, or unique.
- Use language they understand and don't try to explain everything at once.
- Reassure them: ADHD isn't something wrong or broken. It's just a different kind of brain wiring.
- Keep the conversation open - questions might come later, when they've had time to think.
- Stories, books, videos, or characters they relate to can help make it feel normal and safe.

Explaining ADHD with a Metaphor

For younger children, metaphors can help make sense of ADHD. One helpful example is the race car brain.

“You’ve got a race car brain - it goes really fast, full of amazing ideas and energy! But sometimes the brakes (the parts that help you stop, slow down, or wait your turn) don’t work quite as well as they do for other people. That’s not bad - it just means you might need some help learning how to steer that amazing brain.”

It’s not about slowing down the brain - it’s about learning how to drive it well.

For older children, another helpful metaphor is the ‘multiple tabs open’ image:

“Having ADHD can feel like having loads of tabs open on a computer all at once. There’s music playing on one, a video loading on another, three half-written essays, a funny meme flashing somewhere, and you’re not sure which one you were meant to be working on. Your brain is doing a lot - which is powerful - but it can be exhausting too.”

These metaphors help children understand that they’re not broken or lazy - their brains just work differently. And now that we understand how their brain works, we can support them in ways that actually help.



4. PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT

These suggestions are grounded in real experiences of families and children with ADHD. Not every idea will work for every child - try them out, adapt what fits, and leave what doesn't. You're the expert on your child.

4.1 EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Children with ADHD often feel things intensely and may find it hard to recognise or manage big emotions like frustration, excitement, or disappointment.

Strategies that may help

- **Name the emotion first.** Help your child learn to label their feelings (“It looks like you’re feeling angry or really full of energy”) before jumping to solutions. This builds emotional awareness and safety.
- **Co-regulation before self-regulation.** Children need us to stay calm and regulated so they can begin to calm themselves. Think “connect before correct.”
- **Visual tools:**
 - Try using something like the *Incredible 5-Point Scale* to help your child describe how they feel.
 - Use mood thermometers or colour charts to show what their body and brain are doing at different energy levels.
Book: *The Incredible 5-Point Scale* by Kari Dunn Buron
- **Movement and sensory input.** Some children regulate emotions better after running, jumping, or squeezing a stress ball. A quick walk or bouncing on a trampoline can help release built-up energy.
- **Regulation kits.** Put together a small kit with calming items - like fidget toys, putty, a chewy necklace, or a calming bottle - to use when emotions run high.
- **Prevention is powerful.** Emotional outbursts often follow a build-up of stress or overstimulation. Notice the early signs and step in with a break, a snack, or a cuddle before things escalate.



4.2 SENSORY NEEDS AND MOVEMENT

While sensory processing challenges aren't part of the ADHD diagnostic criteria, many children with ADHD are sensory-seeking or sensitive to their environment - especially to noise, textures, light, or movement.

Strategies that may help

- **Build in movement.** Children with ADHD often need to move in order to focus. Let them stand, fidget, or walk around during homework or long conversations. Movement is not a sign of misbehaviour - it often helps with regulation.
- **Create a sensory toolkit.** Consider items like ear defenders, fidget tools, chewy jewellery, squishy balls, or weighted lap pads to support sensory needs at home or school.
- **Offer sensory breaks.** Jumping on a trampoline, swinging, doing star jumps, or pushing against a wall are all ways of releasing energy and improving focus.
- **Watch for overstimulation.** Loud classrooms, bright lights, crowded shops - these can overload your child. Have an exit strategy or plan regular downtime.
- **Explore what's soothing.** Some children calm down with soft music, rocking, warm baths, or a favourite soft texture.

4.3 COMMUNICATION

Children with ADHD may struggle to follow long instructions, stay on topic, or explain what's going on inside. They might talk a lot, interrupt, or shut down - especially when overwhelmed.

Strategies that may help

- **Keep it short and simple.** Use clear, concise instructions and break things down into one or two steps at a time. Instead of "Get ready for bed," try "Put your pyjamas on first."
- **Visual supports.** Use checklists, pictures, or written reminders to help with tasks and routines. Some children find visual schedules or cue cards easier to follow than spoken instructions.
- **Check understanding.** Ask your child to repeat things back, or model tasks together. Instead of "Did you hear me?", try "What are you going to do first?"
- **Give time to respond.** Processing delays are common - especially when your child is emotional. Pause, stay calm, and give them a chance to gather their thoughts.
- **Praise clarity, not just compliance.** Celebrate when your child tells you what they need, even if they're frustrated ("Thanks for letting me know you need space. Let's figure it out together.")



4.4 FRIENDSHIPS AND SOCIAL LIFE

Friendships can be a source of joy - and also stress. Children with ADHD may struggle with social cues, impulsivity, or managing conflict. They might feel left out or find socialising exhausting.

Strategies that may help

- **Talk through social situations.** Before a party, sleepover or playdate, help your child think about what to expect - and what to do if they feel overwhelmed or unsure.
- **Debrief afterwards.** Ask open questions: “What went well? What was tricky?” This helps build insight without shaming.
- **Support healthy friendships.** Help your child identify people who make them feel accepted and safe. Focus on quality over quantity.
- **Practice social skills gently.** Role-playing, watching TV together, or discussing characters' choices can help children learn about turn-taking, tone of voice, or picking up on others' feelings.
- **Validate their needs.** Some children are more introverted and need time alone to recover from socialising. Others may struggle with rejection sensitivity and need reassurance.

4.5 SUPPORT IN EDUCATION

School can be a difficult environment for children with ADHD - high demands, low autonomy, and lots of transitions. Even bright children may struggle with focus, organisation, or behaviour expectations.

Strategies that may help

- **Use your rights.** ADHD is legally considered a disability. Ask to meet with the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) and explore reasonable adjustments.
Resources: [SENDIASS](#)
- **Request a support plan.** Ask about an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or EHCP if appropriate. These outline how your child will be supported in school.
- **Ask for environmental support.** Things like fidget tools, seating choices, movement breaks, or time-out passes can make a huge difference.
- **Communication is key.** A home-school diary or regular check-ins with staff help you stay on the same page and advocate for your child.
- **Focus on strengths.** ADHD comes with challenges, but also creativity, hyperfocus, and enthusiasm. Ask teachers to notice and celebrate what your child brings to the classroom.



4.6 ROUTINES AND TRANSITIONS

Many children with ADHD find it hard to move between activities, especially if they're hyperfocused or overwhelmed. Transitions can trigger meltdowns or resistance - even for things they enjoy.

Strategies that may help

- **Use visual or timed cues.** Timers, countdowns, or checklists help your child know what's coming. Try: "You have 10 minutes left, then we'll pack away."
- **Make routines visual.** Use pictures, whiteboards, or magnetic planners to show the steps in your morning or bedtime routine. This reduces arguments and gives your child more control.
- **Build in transition time.** Moving from one activity to another can take longer - especially if your child is engrossed. Add buffer time so you're not always rushing.
- **Be playful.** Turn transitions into a game (e.g. "beat the timer"), use music to guide routines, or let your child choose a 'transition song.'
- **Use connection before correction.** A calm, empathetic moment ("I know it's hard to stop - let's do it together") is more effective than commands shouted from another room.

4.7 ORGANISATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Executive functioning difficulties are at the heart of ADHD. These affect planning, remembering, prioritising, and following through - not because your child isn't trying, but because their brain is wired differently.

Strategies that may help

- **Externalise tasks.** Use whiteboards, sticky notes, phone alarms, or apps like Tiimo, EaseeDo, or Brili to bring tasks out of your child's head and into the environment.
- **Chunk tasks.** Break jobs into small, clear steps - "Find your shoes," not "Get ready." Celebrate completion at each stage.
- **Use body-doubling.** Just being near your child while they do a task can help. Try "parallel play" during homework or tidy-up time.
- **Create 'launchpads.'** Set up a spot by the door with everything your child needs for the day - bag, water bottle, keys. This makes mornings smoother.
- **Reframe forgetfulness.** Forgetting isn't a failure. Talk about tools and systems that support memory, rather than punishing slips.



4.8 SLEEP AND REST

Sleep can be elusive for children with ADHD - their brains may struggle to slow down, regulate melatonin, or feel sleepy at the “right” time.

Strategies that may help

- **Wind-down time.** Help your child shift gears with a predictable pre-bed routine - think dim lighting, calming activities, and quiet connection.
- **Reduce stimulation.** Avoid screens, sugary snacks, and intense games or conversations close to bedtime. Even gentle stretches or breathing exercises can help settle the nervous system.
- **Sleep-friendly environment.** Try blackout blinds, weighted blankets, or white noise. Let your child customise their space to feel safe and calm.
- **Flex when needed.** Some children need longer to fall asleep or may wake early. Talk with your GP if sleep difficulties persist.
- **Resources:** [Cerebra Sleep Service](#) offers tailored sleep advice for neurodivergent children.

4.9 EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND BIG FEELINGS

Children with ADHD often feel things intensely - excitement, frustration, sadness, joy. They may struggle to manage these emotions in the moment, leading to outbursts or shutdowns. This isn't defiance - it's a sign they're overwhelmed.

Strategies that may help

- **Name it to tame it.** Help your child label emotions (“You’re feeling really frustrated”) to make sense of what’s happening. Use emotion wheels, faces charts, or books like *The Colour Monster*.
- **Use co-regulation.** Your calm presence helps your child regulate. Sit nearby, offer a drink, or gently narrate what’s happening (“You’re safe, I’m right here”).
- **Create a regulation toolkit.** Build a personalised box or bag with calming items: soft toys, fidget tools, scented putty, drawing materials, headphones - anything your child finds soothing.
- **Practice strategies when calm.** Techniques like deep breathing or grounding games are more effective if learned during calm moments and practised regularly.
- **Visual scales.** Tools like the *Incredible 5-Point Scale* can help your child recognise escalating emotions and know what to do at each level.
- **Self-esteem matters.** ADHD-related struggles can chip away at confidence. Celebrate effort, not just outcomes - “You kept going even though it was tricky.”



4.10 WHEN THINGS FEEL TOO MUCH (MELTDOWNS AND SHUTDOWNS)

Some children experience explosive meltdowns or quiet shutdowns when emotionally or sensorily overloaded. These are not tantrums - they're moments of distress, not control.

Strategies that may help

- **Reduce demands.** If your child is on the edge, now is not the time for reasoning, consequences, or explanations. Focus on safety and calm.
- **Create a safe space.** Have a quiet area your child can retreat to, filled with comfort items and minimal stimulation.
- **Decompress together.** After a meltdown, reconnect with gentleness: "That was really hard. I'm here, and we'll figure it out."
- **Reflect later.** Once calm, gently explore what happened and what might help next time. Don't overdo it - even one small idea is progress.
- **Track triggers.** Use a diary to spot patterns - certain times of day, transitions, hunger, noise, or sensory input might be contributing.
- **Professional support.** If emotional dysregulation is affecting daily life, seek advice from your GP, CAMHS, or local support services.

4.11 FINDING WHAT WORKS (AND DROPPING WHAT DOESN'T)

There's no one-size-fits-all approach. ADHD is a spectrum, and what works beautifully for one child might not suit another.

Suggestions for moving forward

- **Experiment and observe.** Try strategies one at a time and watch how your child responds.
 - **Adapt rather than abandon.** If something almost works, tweak it rather than throwing it out.
 - **Use your instincts.** You know your child best - trust your judgment, even if it goes against some advice.
 - **Involve your child.** Where possible, get their ideas on what helps them feel calm, focused, or understood.
 - **Celebrate small wins.** Notice and acknowledge what's going well - for both of you.
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5. UNDERSTANDING ADHD AT DIFFERENT AGES

ADHD can look very different depending on a child's age and stage of development. Recognising how it shows up across time can help you tailor support as your child grows.

Early Childhood (0–5 years)

- May show as constant movement, emotional outbursts, and difficulty with sleep or transitions.
- Often struggles with impulse control, waiting, or sitting still for stories or meals.
- May be described as “busy,” “spirited,” or “hard to settle.”

Primary School Age (5–11 years)

- Challenges may become more noticeable in structured settings like school.
- Might struggle with focus, organisation, following instructions, or peer relationships.
- Can experience low self-esteem if constantly corrected or compared to others.
- May also start masking - holding things in at school but releasing emotions at home.

Teenagers (12–18 years)

- Increased academic pressure, independence, and social expectations can intensify ADHD challenges.
- Teens may struggle with emotional regulation, time management, risk-taking, and motivation.
- Identity, friendships, and rejection sensitivity can all be difficult to navigate.
- ADHD-related difficulties may be mislabelled as laziness, defiance, or moodiness.

Transitions Matter

Whether it's starting school, moving to secondary, or preparing for adulthood - transitions are key times where support may need to shift. Reassess what's working, revisit accommodations, and communicate proactively with schools or professionals.

Supporting your child's ADHD is an evolving process. Being aware of how needs may change over time can help you feel more prepared and responsive - not just reactive.



6. LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Parenting a child with ADHD can be joyful, intense, and sometimes exhausting. You matter too.

Ways to protect your energy:

- **You don't have to be perfect.** You're doing your best with the resources you have.
- **Find your people.** Connecting with other parents who understand can make a world of difference.
- **Take breaks.** Rest is not a luxury - it's essential. Even short pauses to breathe, stretch, or drink tea matter.
- **Ask for help.** Whether from friends, family, or professionals - you don't have to do this alone.
- **Use humour.** Many families find that laughter helps carry them through the tough bits. ADHD can bring chaos - and also creativity, warmth, and sparkle.

Celebrate who your child is. ADHD brings strengths too - spontaneity, hyperfocus, kindness, problem-solving, passion. Your child is not broken. They're wired differently, and with your support, they can thrive.

7. POST-ASSESSMENT SUPPORT & RESOURCES

7.1 WORKSHOPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

After a diagnosis, it's normal to feel a mix of relief, questions, and uncertainty. You're not alone - many parents find that connecting with others and learning more about ADHD helps them feel more confident in supporting their child.

- **Explore your Local Offer.** Every local authority must publish a 'Local Offer' website listing services for children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). Search "[Your Council] Local Offer".
- **SENDIASS.** Free, impartial advice on education and support for children with SEND, including help with EHCPs and school communication. [Council for Disabled Children – SENDIASS](#)
- **ADHD support charities.** National and local charities offer helplines, Facebook groups, workshops, and in-person events. Examples include:
 - [ADHD Foundation](#)
 - [ADDISS](#)
 - [The ADHD Alliance](#)
- **Online parent communities.** Many parents find community on platforms like Facebook, Reddit, or Netmums - just look for trusted, moderated groups.
- **Workshops and webinars.** Post-diagnostic support sessions, parenting programmes, and webinars can offer tools and connection. Check the "local offer" or ask the local authority about what's available.



- **Speak to school.** Your child’s school SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) is a key ally. You can request support even without an EHCP or official plan.
- There’s no rush - if you don’t feel ready now, you can return to these options when the time is right.

7.2 RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Books for Children

- *Cory Stories* – Jeannine Garsee
- *My Brain Needs Glasses* – Annick Vincent

Books for Parents

- *ADHD 2.0* – Edward Hallowell & John Ratey
- *You Mean I’m Not Lazy, Stupid or Crazy?* – Kate Kelly & Peggy Ramundo
- *The Queen of Distraction* – Terry Matlen (focused on women with ADHD)
- *Faster Than Normal* – Peter Shankman

Websites

- [YoungMinds](#)
- [ADDitude Magazine](#)
- [ADHD Foundation](#)
- [Mind UK](#)
- [The ADHD Adults UK](#)

Apps and Digital Tools

- **Tiimo** – Visual daily planning and routine-building app.
- **Thriday** – A visual planner with mood tracking and journal features.
- **Braintoss** – Helps children or parents “brain-dump” tasks to reduce overwhelm.
- **Brain in Hand** – Offers structured support, strategies, and reminders.
- **EaseeDo** – Helps with scheduling, visual checklists and routines.

7.3 MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

While not everyone with ADHD struggles with mental health, emotional wellbeing is important - especially when your child may feel misunderstood or overwhelmed. If concerns arise:

For Children and Young People

- Contact your GP or school SENCO about **Early Help services** or a **referral to CAMHS** (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services).
- YoungMinds offers useful guidance: [YoungMinds Parent Support](#)
- In a crisis, call 111, contact your local Single Point of Access (SPA) team, or go to A&E.



For Parents

- Parenting a child with ADHD can be tiring, emotional, and at times isolating. Support for yourself matters too.
- If you're feeling low, overwhelmed, or anxious, consider self-referral to NHS Talking Therapies (IAPT), or contact local charities such as Mind.
- Apps like **Calm Harm**, **The WorryTree**, or **Feeling Good** offer tools to manage stress and mood.
- In an emergency, contact Samaritans (116 123) or Shout (text 85258).

7.4 DRIVING AND ADHD

This may not apply immediately, but when your child becomes a young adult, it's worth knowing that ADHD is a notifiable condition for the DVLA. ADHD symptoms and medication can affect driving safety, and it's important to discuss this with a doctor when the time comes.

8 FINAL THOUGHTS

Every child with ADHD is different - and so is every parent's journey. You don't have to have all the answers today. The most important thing is that your child knows they are understood, supported, and loved for who they are.

- ADHD isn't about bad behaviour or poor parenting - it's about different brain wiring.
- You're allowed to feel tired, unsure, or emotional - support is out there for you too.
- Small steps can lead to big change. You're doing better than you think.

When you advocate for your child and help them understand their brain, you're setting them up to thrive - not just to cope.