



The WHALE Study  
Family Newsletter  
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## All About ADHD!

As the caregiver of a young child, you are probably familiar with common child behaviors such as distractibility, inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Nearly all young children display these behaviors at times, so how can you tell if your child is struggling with something more? If they are struggling, when should you seek help? And what are some tools to help regulate this behavior? In this newsletter we will explore these questions and more as we discuss attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD.

First, it is helpful to know that ADHD symptoms can be split into two categories: **inattentive behaviors** and **hyperactive/impulsive behaviors**. Typical inattentive behaviors include making careless mistakes, appearing not to listen when spoken to, being forgetful or disorganized, and avoiding/disliking tasks that require sustained focus. A child who displays hyperactive/impulsive behaviors may talk excessively or interrupt others, have difficulty waiting their turn, fidget or squirm in their seat, or seem to be constantly “on the go” ([Mayo Clinic, 2019](#)). While some children with ADHD only exhibit one category of symptoms, the majority of them experience a combination of both, known as the “combined presentation”.

While these behaviors may be common in young kids, those with ADHD display them at a much higher rate that interferes with their school or social functioning. If you notice that your child is *consistently struggling* with these behaviors across *multiple settings* (i.e., school, home), ask your primary care provider about an ADHD evaluation. Some providers may be able to assess directly, while others will provide you with a referral for a more comprehensive evaluation. It is important not to assume any diagnoses without guidance from a licensed mental health professional, as some behaviors associated with ADHD may actually be caused by other things like anxiety or trauma ([Child Mind Institute, 2022](#)). For families affected by symptoms of ADHD, we recommend seeking professional help to best address your child’s specific needs and implement appropriate strategies.

ADHD symptoms tend to differ by gender\*. Boys are more likely to be hyperactive/impulsive, while girls are more likely to be inattentive or display less obvious signs of hyperactivity/impulsivity. Since these less obvious symptoms may go unrecognized, there are [specific recommendations](#) from the Child Mind Institute on how to support girls with ADHD.

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Check out the page below for **ADHD** and **community** resources!

Click [here](#) to tell us what topics you want covered in future newsletters!



Please reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding The WHALE Study or the COVID-19 situation. Staff can be reached by call, text, or email: [whalestudy@unc.edu](mailto:whalestudy@unc.edu) | 919-914-0588  
Find us on Twitter: [@circlelab\\_unc](#), Instagram: [circlelab\\_unc](#), and [Facebook!](#)

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You can also support your child and work to regulate their behaviors at home. Here are five suggestions adapted from the [Mayo Clinic](#):

1. **Praise your child** when they display good behaviors like rule-following. Be specific in describing their appropriate behavior to increase the likelihood they do it again!
2. **Give clear, concise, and simple directions.** Avoid multi-step instructions as children with ADHD symptoms may quickly forget the steps or become distracted along the way.
3. **Support healthy habits** (i.e. adequate sleep, a well-balanced diet, exercise) to help minimize symptoms.
4. **Establish structured routines** for daily chores and utilize tools (e.g., visual checklists, timers) to keep your child on task.
5. **Prioritize one-on-one time** with your child to strengthen your relationship, **model behaviors** you want to see in them, and **support their efforts to develop social skills** and form friendships.

Providing emotional support is also important in managing your child's ADHD. Children with ADHD may often feel like they are disappointing themselves and others. You can build up your child's self-esteem through regular reminders that you believe in them and can see all the good they have to offer. Though it can be difficult, try to practice empathy, understanding, and acceptance. Caring for a child with ADHD brings a unique set of challenges, so it is important to be patient with yourself and your child as you navigate through these moments together.

*\*Historically, research has been conducted using the gender binary. We recognize that not all children fit into this binary and more inclusive research is needed.*

### Local Providers for ADHD Concerns

- [Duke ADHD Clinic](#)
  - 919-681-9185
  - 2608 Erwin Rd Suite 300 Durham, NC 27705
- [UNC Psychological Services Child and Family Clinic](#)
  - 919-962-6906
  - Finley Community Research Center and Clinic
  - 212 Finley Golf Course Rd, Chapel Hill, NC 27517
- [Triangle Center for Behavioral Health](#)
  - 919-794-5477
  - 5015 Southpark Dr Suite 200, Durham, NC 27713

### Resources for Parenting a Child with ADHD

- The [Complete Guide to ADHD](#) from the Child Mind Institute.
- For more specific parenting tips, read [this article](#) from KidsHealth.
- Read [this article](#) from the Mayo Clinic to learn how to help your child with ADHD develop social skills.
- Learn about [common ADHD medications and treatments](#).
- Click [here](#) and [here](#) to learn about an intervention called Parent Behavior Therapy.
- Read [this article](#) from the CDC on supporting your child with ADHD in school.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### HOUSING

- [Durham Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)
  - Eviction Information: 216-965-5095
- [Durham Rescue Mission](#)
  - 919-688-9641
- [Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness](#)
- [Urban Ministries of Durham](#)
- **Social Services:**
  - [Durham County](#)
  - [Orange County](#)
  - [Wake County](#)

### FOOD & GROCERIES

- [Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina](#)
- [No Kid Hungry NC](#) - Text FOODNC or COMIDA to 877-877 to receive information about 3 drive-thru or pickup sites with meals for kids closest to you.
- **Free/Reduced Price School Meals:**
  - [Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools](#)
  - [Durham County](#)
  - [Wake County](#)
- **Food Resources by County:** [Orange County](#) (Updated Nov. 2022), [Durham County](#), [Wake County](#)