

ADHD information for Parents, Carers and Professionals



ADHD Solutions is a not for profit charitable company that works with children, young people and adults with ADHD, their families and any professional that works with them

As with many things the information that is available about ADHD in books and on the Internet is often confusing and contradictory. We have tried to provide factual information to enable a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by someone with ADHD and their carers.

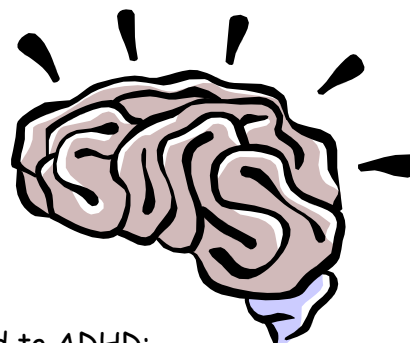
We hope to show you how with careful and patient understanding ADHD can be managed to enable children, young people and adults to lead an active, fulfilling and productive life.

The information contained in this pack has been collated from a wide range of sources. In it we give you a broad outline of ADHD, how it affects the child, strategies for overcoming some of the difficulties faced by families, strategies that can be used in the classroom, and places that you can go to for help and advice.

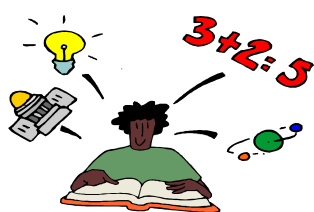
What is ADHD?

ADHD is a common, complex medical condition, which significantly interferes with everyday life. It is a neurobiological condition, which like asthma is often inherited. Although research is still continuing, findings show that:

- ❖ There are abnormalities in the development of the brain, particularly in the areas of the brain which affect alertness, executive function (see pages 10 to 12), the ability to control shifts from one activity to another, and the ability to transfer information between neurons.
- ❖ Blood flow to the brain is often reduced to some areas at the front of the brain. These areas control functions such as attention, impulsivity (the ability to stop and think before acting), sensitivity to rewards, punishment, emotions and memory.
- ❖ There are approximately 13 genes that have been linked to ADHD; however 3 in particular are of interest to researchers - these are 2 dopamine receptor genes and 1 dopamine transporter gene. These genes control the level of dopamine in each neurone, and researchers have shown that people with attention deficits have 70% higher levels of dopamine in specific areas of the brain. Because the receptors and transporters are not working properly the neurones are not receiving the right amount of dopamine and too little dopamine has been shown to interfere with attention, learning and appropriate behaviour (see page 3).



- ❖ It has been shown that problems with neurotransmitters (dopamine and norepinephrine for example) can cause the brain to be underactive or inefficient in people with ADHD. It is neurotransmitters, which allow the chemical messages to move through the brain; so if there is too little or too much, messages are unable to complete their journey throughout the body. This can cause lack of attention, irritability and argumentative behaviour, difficulty with schoolwork - problems comprehending what is read, poor memory, poor organisation, sleepiness in class, and problems retrieving information from stored memory.



- ❖ Following research of MRI scans from sufferers of ADHD it has been shown that although there was no damage, 3 areas of the brain are smaller than a brain with out ADHD. These areas control alertness, the ability to make decisions, the ability to move from one task to another and the ability of the brain to transfer information from one neuron to another.

What is not ADHD?

Before ADHD is diagnosed it is important that the G.P. / Consultant rule out the possibility that one of the following causes might be responsible for a child's symptoms

- ❖ Anxiety disorders
- ❖ Depressive disorders
- ❖ Epilepsy
- ❖ Thyroid dysfunction
- ❖ Nutritional problems - Iron deficiency
Food intolerance
Food allergy
- ❖ Socio-environmental causes



Once it has been established that none of these are present, the diagnostic process for ADHD can be commenced.

How is ADHD diagnosed?

Before a diagnosis of ADHD is given a rigorous assessment /consultation process is undertaken by the Consultant Paediatrician or Psychologist. This is likely to include some or all of the following:

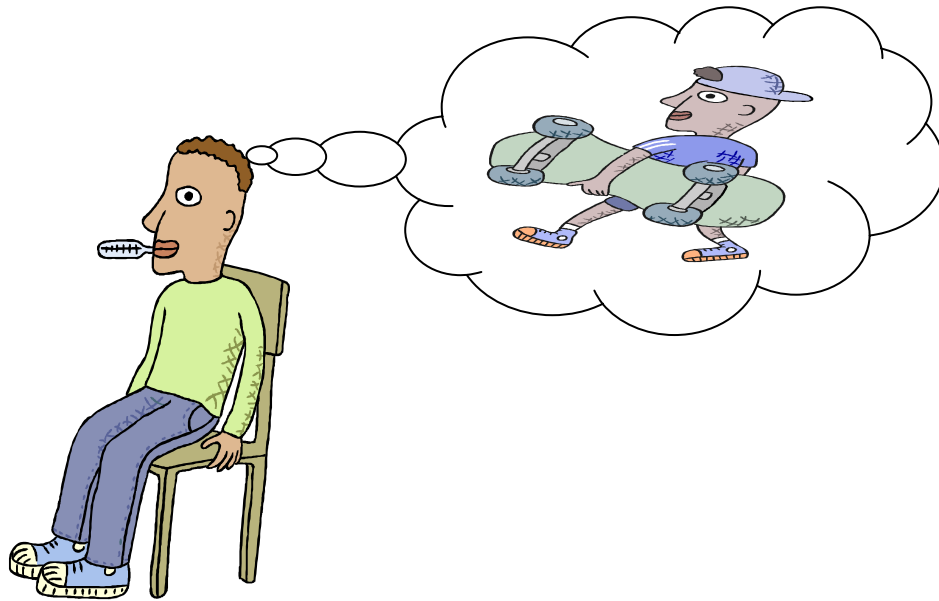
- ❖ A detailed childhood / family history from the parents
- ❖ Child interview
- ❖ School history and report cards from current and previous schools
- ❖ Educational Psychology Assessment
- ❖ Continuous Performance Tests
- ❖ EEG

For ADHD to be diagnosed the main features that must be present are **inattentiveness** and /or **hyperactivity and impulsiveness**.

It may be that only one feature is present or it may be that all 3 are present. They must also be:

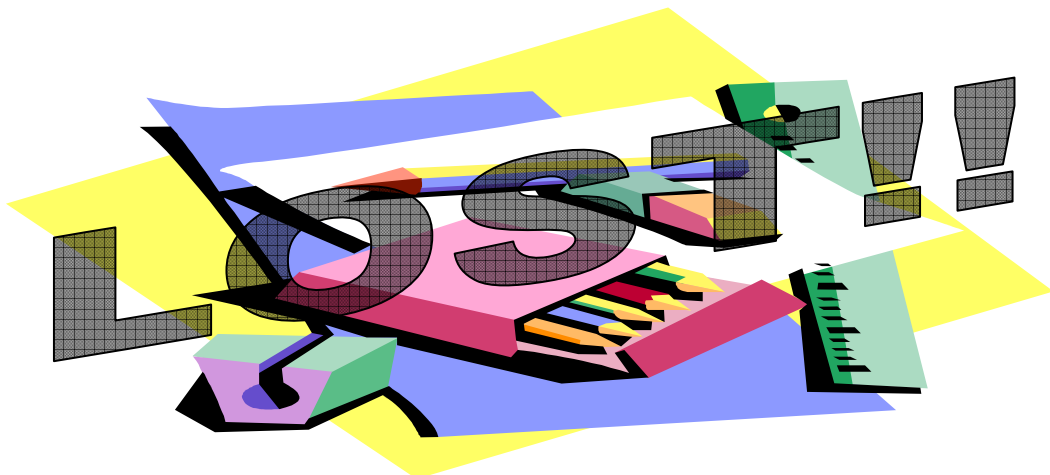
- ❖ Present in 2 or more situations e.g. at home and at school
- ❖ Excessive and interfering extensively with everyday life
- ❖ Inappropriate for age and developmental level
- ❖ There must be no other reason for the symptoms
- ❖ Have been present for at least 6 months
- ❖ Usually symptoms will have been apparent before the age of 7 years

Inattentiveness - 6 of the following 9 criteria should be met



- ❑ Often fails to give close attention to detail
makes careless mistakes with school work, work and other activities → Things get missed out, make silly mistakes, get distracted easily
- ❑ Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities → May not be able to filter out unrelated sounds, little or no concentration if uninterested in activity, may focus intently on something that interests them
- ❑ Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly → often in a world of their own, daydreaming, often switch off during conversations, miss much of what is going on at school
- ❑ Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or work duties (but not because of oppositionality or failure to understand) → often fail to finish schoolwork because bored and distracted. Children are unable to follow multiple instructions because they get distracted and forget

- Often has difficulty organising tasks and activities ⇒ People with ADHD are often unable to appreciate time and have an inability to forward think
- Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork or home work) ⇒ ADHD children often procrastinate which is very frustrating for parents. 10 minutes home work can often take several hours, as the child find multiple excuses like going to the toilet, sharpening pencils etc.
- Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g. toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools) ⇒ Things get put down and then the child becomes distracted and moves on to the next thing
- Is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli ⇒ Children are often distracted by other children talking birds singing, or any other out side noise or movement
- Is often forgetful in daily activities ⇒ Children forget to pass on messages, forget homework, keys. They have difficulty getting organised for work or school, and often have to re-read things



Hyperactivity-Impulsivity - 6 of the following 9 criteria should be met

Hyperactivity



- Often fidgets with Hands and feet or squirms in seat

⇒

People with ADHD are often unable to sit still they are constantly wriggling and fiddling with any object in reach. This is very annoying particularly in the classroom

- Often leaves seat in classroom or other situations in which remaining seated is expected

⇒

People with ADHD are often unable to sit still for long and are constantly getting out of their chair to wander. This is particularly difficult in the classroom or the work place as children get older and are expected to sit for long periods. This can be very disruptive for lessons and other people

- Often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate (in adolescents or adults, may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness)

⇒

Children with ADHD often run around and climb with no thought to danger either to themselves or others

- Often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly

⇒

Children with ADHD are often excessively noisy

- Is often 'on the go'
Or often acts as if
'driven by a motor' ⇒ Pre- school children with ADHD
seem as though they never stop.
This becomes less of a problem
as the child gets older
- Often talks excessively ⇒ Children with ADHD talk non-
Stop, often about nothing.
Parents, teachers and their
peers are often driven to
distraction by their incessant
chattering

Impulsivity



- Often blurts out
answers before
questions have been
completed ⇒ School children with ADHD
will interrupt to answer a
question and will often not be
answering the question asked
- Often has difficulty
awaiting turn ⇒ Children with ADHD are often
unable to wait their turn and
follow rules - they will often jump
in front of other children
- Often interrupts or
intrudes on others
e.g. butts in to
conversations or games) ⇒ Children with ADHD are often
unable to wait while a
conversation finishes,
particularly when it's a phone
call. This is very frustrating
for both teachers and parents

Children with ADHD have difficulty managing their behaviour - they have no control over their reaction to situations, they are unable to stop before acting and often find themselves saying, doing or reacting emotionally to a trigger without any thought to their actions or its consequences.

This is partly because there are differences in the development of the brain that support the **executive functions**. These are skills required to regulate behaviour. Not all children with ADHD will have issues with all of the following and some aspects may be particularly strong or very weak for some individuals.

This means that children with ADHD will often:

- ❖ Run across the road to a friend or chase a ball across the road without any thought for their safety or anyone else's
- ❖ Have difficulty following rules and keeping within boundaries
- ❖ Say cruel and hurtful things to friends and family with no appreciation of the effect of their words
- ❖ Leap out of windows with out any thought of how far they may fall
- ❖ Climb to the top of a tree or up a cliff or on to a roof without a strategy to get down, or any thought of danger
- ❖ Will use unacceptable language with out realising it and then deny it
- ❖ Will have temper tantrums, and react physically or verbally and then forget the outburst and wonder why the family / school are so distressed by their behaviour
- ❖ Rarely learn from their experiences and repeatedly make the same mistakes over and over again
- ❖ Will be easily 'set up' by their peers to misbehave
- ❖ If a group is misbehaving and teacher approaches every other child will stop but the ADHD child will carry on and be caught. He /she is then unable to understand why they are the only one in trouble!

What should we do if we suspect our child might have ADHD? Where do we go first?

If you suspect that your child has ADHD, or if your child's teacher has suggested to you that your child may have ADHD, you will need to follow the ADHD Pathway (a copy of the pathway is at the back of this booklet).

- ❖ The first step should be to ask school to arrange a CAF (Common Assessment Framework meeting around the child). At the meeting help will be put in place to support you at home and the school,
- ❖ This will then be followed up at a second meeting and if your child is still presenting with similar difficulties, they will then be referred to a Consultant Paediatrician at either the Community Paediatric Service or Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) for diagnosis and treatment.

How does ADHD affect a child at school?

Socially and Emotionally children:

- ❖ May have difficulty in making and sustaining friendships
- ❖ Often have very poor self esteem
- ❖ Often have poor relationship with teachers and other adults - they are often seen as troublesome
- ❖ May become depressed,
- ❖ Are often rude, thoughtless, selfish, insensitive, anxious, and immature





Educationally children:

- ❖ At secondary school, often have difficulty with timing and organisational skills
- ❖ Often off task, leave things until the last minute, procrastinate
- ❖ Often fall behind with school work and underachieve
- ❖ Often have difficulty completing tasks. They forget instructions / explanations, fail to complete homework and project assignments
- ❖ Have poor motivation and are easily frustrated

Behaviourally children are:

- ❖ Often demanding
- ❖ Get easily frustrated
- ❖ Are restless, fidgety and talkative
- ❖ Often disruptive and accident prone
- ❖ Interfere with other students and things
- ❖ Have a general lack of self control
- ❖ Can be very bossy and volatile
- ❖ Easily distracted
- ❖ Find change in routine difficult
e.g. supply teachers, change of module



Children with ADHD have difficulty managing their behaviour. They have no control over their reaction to situations, are unable to stop before acting and often find themselves saying, doing or reacting emotionally to a trigger without any thought to their actions or its consequences

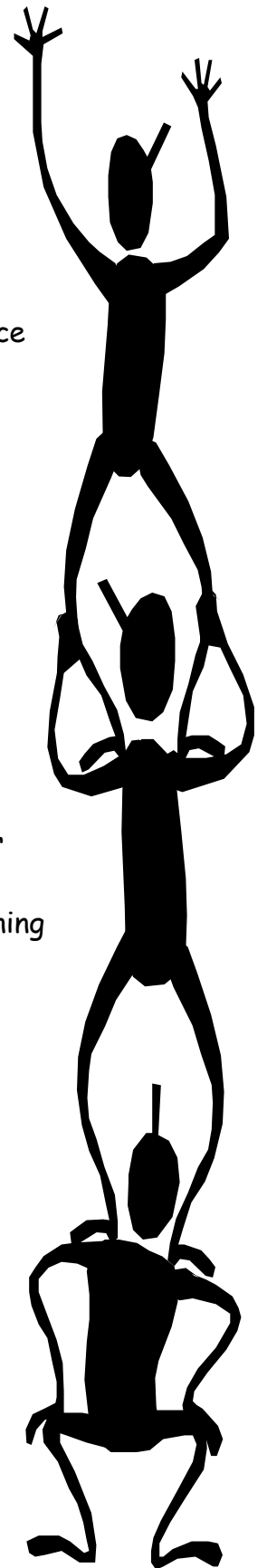
The ADHD child needs:

- ❖ Adults who will deal with his / her problems based on knowledge, compassion and respect
- ❖ Clearly specified and consistent rules and expectations
- ❖ Clearly specified instructions
- ❖ Frequent and consistent feedback on behaviour and task
- ❖ Reasonable and consistent consequences for both compliance and non-compliance

What do people who work with and support children with ADHD need?

TO POSSESS AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF PATIENCE AND GOOD HUMOUR!

- ❖ Understand the effects of ADHD and accept it as a factor in the child's educational life
- ❖ Be flexible about teaching strategies so that a child's learning style can be matched
- ❖ Speak clearly in short understandable sentences and look the child straight in the eye
- ❖ Maintain a close proximity to the student to reassure and help them maintain focus. Develop signals with the child to help stay on task



There are numerous publications and websites available to help those who work with children and young people to do so more effectively. Below are some strategies and suggestions to get you started. You will find a list of books and websites in appendix 1 at the back of the pack.

Support for students

This should be adult lead and proactive rather than reactive

- ❖ Identify with the student where they feel they need support
- ❖ Suggest areas where you feel it appropriate
e.g. start of lessons, organising work and projects, explaining / keeping on task, making to do lists
- ❖ Make contact with the parents / carers of the student and keep them informed of the work you are doing and how they can help



Teaching / instruction techniques

- ❖ Ensure classroom rules are clear and simple, actively reinforcing desirable behaviour
- ❖ Provide an outline for the lesson so that the student knows what to expect
- ❖ Arrange the class room so that the child can be away from distractions such as windows etc and be near to the teacher without it looking like he / she is being punished
- ❖ Make use of pictures, coloured paper, cartoons, CD Roms, computers, music and videos / DVD's to keep the child stimulated
- ❖ Teach routines for everyday activities and encourage the child to follow them
- ❖ Make sure the child has all the necessary equipment and materials for the lesson
- ❖ Use visual prompts to let child know that they are on task, too noisy, fidgeting etc
- ❖ Make sure that you have eye contact and check child's understanding when giving instructions



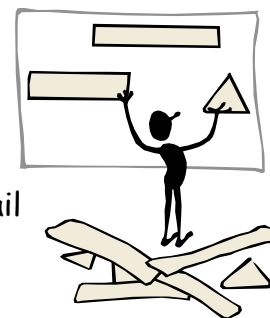
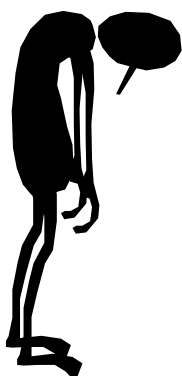
Suggestions for the classroom

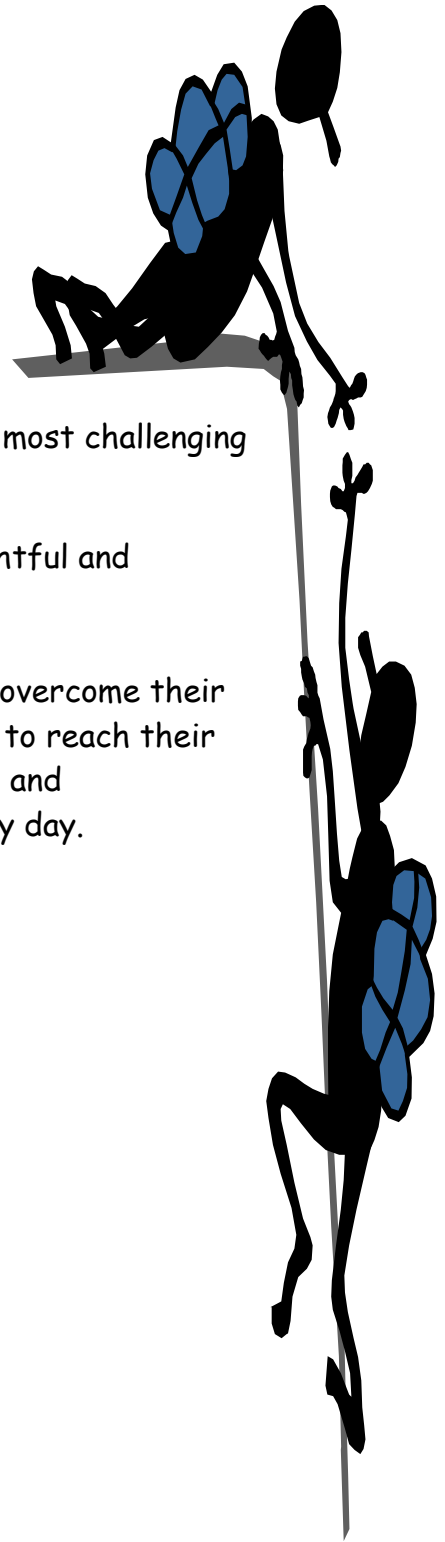
- ❖ Allow children to take frequent breaks
- ❖ Allow student to move around.
- ❖ Play soft music in the classroom during independent work
- ❖ Try to use visual materials in lessons
- ❖ Provide handouts
- ❖ Make a quiet study corner in the classroom
- ❖ Ensure that the student has a clear view of the teacher when they are speaking
- ❖ Allow students to use a tape recorder instead of taking notes
- ❖ Use stories and mnemonics to help memory and demonstrate a point
- ❖ Break projects down, use mind mapping to help student plan



Keeping on task

- ❖ Agree a way with the student to give prompts when attention wanders - this could be a touch on the desk or arm, saying their name etc
- ❖ Use specific genuine praise when on task
- ❖ Give help to settle in to task, ensuring expectations are reasonable. Don't give tasks that the child will fail at and make sure that unobtrusive help is at hand
- ❖ Build in out of seat, hands on or talking activities to appeal to different learning styles and keep child motivated
- ❖ Give tasks in small bite sized chunks to keep child motivated and stimulated rather than overwhelmed. Allow a short break between chunks
- ❖ Help child to develop a checklist system so they can check off jobs! Stress one step at a time
- ❖ Remember to reward work completed well - this only needs to be a word of praise, but be specific
- ❖ Be sensitive to the time of day and environmental factors, too hot or cold, stuffy, lunch time, medication time etc.
- ❖ If long spells of quiet, listening or sitting still are required, provide Blu-Tack, a stress ball, tangles etc to keep hands occupied, or allow the child to play a game instead of expecting them to wait





Children and young people with ADHD are some of the most challenging that you will ever come across!

They can also be some of the most loving, caring, delightful and enthusiastic children you will ever meet.

They are vulnerable young people who need support to overcome their challenges, raise their self esteem and to enable them to reach their full potential. I hope that we have given you an insight and understanding into the challenges that face them every day.

What help is available for you?

- ❖ Your SENCO
- ❖ Behaviour Support Team
- ❖ ADHD Solutions CIC
St Gabriel's Community Centre
Kerrysdale Avenue
Rushey Mead
Leicester, LE4 7GH
Telephone: 0116 261 0711
E-mail: info@adhdsolutions.org.uk
Website: www.adhdsolutions.org.uk

Our ADHD support groups are held at the centre. The daytime group is the third Wednesday of each month 10am to 12 noon and evening group is the last Wednesday of each month 7pm to 8.45pm. Supervised activities for children and young people run alongside the evening group.

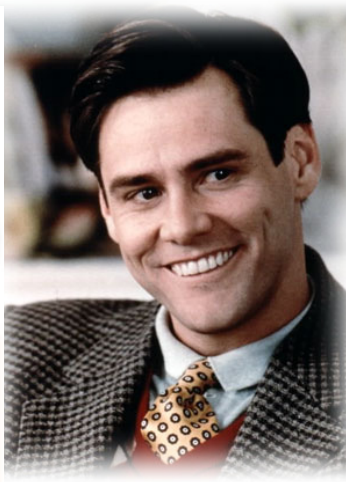
We also have an ADHD library, with books, videos and DVD's at the centre.

Positive Attributes of ADHD

Many of the attributes listed below are often true of children with ADHD. Some people find it difficult to see these positive attributes because of the disruption caused by some ADHD behaviours.

If you can find any of these attributes in your child / children who has (or you think has ADHD), then you might be able to bring them out - which will be very much for the benefit of the child all round.

- ❖ Ability to focus deeply on selected items
- ❖ Able to adapt quickly to changed circumstances
- ❖ Creative
- ❖ Divergent thinker i.e. think 'outside the box'
- ❖ Good at individual sporting activities
- ❖ Good at visual thinking
- ❖ Highly aware of the environment around them
- ❖ Highly questioning
- ❖ Imaginative
- ❖ Innovative
- ❖ Inquisitive
- ❖ Keen to take part and contribute
- ❖ Perfectionist
- ❖ Persistent
- ❖ Sensitive
- ❖ Sharp observational skills
- ❖ Single minded when pursuing an opportunity or interest
- ❖ Thoughtful
- ❖ Tremendous energy
- ❖ Unusual outlook
- ❖ When motivated responds very well indeed with great energy
- ❖ When motivated can change strategies quickly
- ❖ Willing to try despite problems
- ❖ Willing to take risks



ADHD

Difference
or Disorder?



Famous people with (or suspected of having) ADHD

Present

- ❖ Michael Phelps (Olympic swimmer)
- ❖ Susan Boyle (singer)
- ❖ Tom Cruise (actor)
- ❖ Paul O'Grady (comedian/tv presenter)
- ❖ Wayne Rooney (footballer)
- ❖ Michael Jordan (basketball player)
- ❖ Bill Gates (entrepreneur / founder of Microsoft - worth over £20 billion!)
- ❖ Cher (singer/actress)
- ❖ Jim Carrey (actor)
- ❖ Richard Branson (entrepreneur / founder of Virgin - worth over £4 billion!)
- ❖ Donald Trump (businessman - worth over £1 billion!)
- ❖ Oprah Winfrey (chat show host/businesswoman)
- ❖ Whoopi Goldberg (actress)
- ❖ Steven Spielberg (film director)
- ❖ Ben Elton (comedian/writer)
- ❖ Fergie (singer - Black Eyed Peas)
- ❖ Solange Knowles (singer - Beyonce's sister)
- ❖ Will Smith (actor/rapper)
- ❖ Daniel Bedingfield (singer)
- ❖ Natasha Bedingfield (singer)
- ❖ Robbie Williams (singer)
- ❖ Paul Gascoigne (footballer)
- ❖ Greg Louganis (Olympic athlete)
- ❖ Carl Lewis (Olympic gold medallist)
- ❖ Dustin Hoffman (actor)
- ❖ Jackie Stewart (racing driver)
- ❖ Paris Hilton (heiress)
- ❖ Magic Johnson (basketball player)
- ❖ Stevie Wonder (singer)
- ❖ Toyah Willcox (actress/singer)
- ❖ Robin Williams (actor/comedian)
- ❖ Jack Nicholson (actor)
- ❖ Henry Winkler - the Fonz (actor)
- ❖ Lindsay Wagner - the Bionic Woman (actress)
- ❖ Sylvester Stallone (actor)
- ❖ Bruce Jenner (Olympic athlete)
- ❖ Danny Glover (actor)
- ❖ Alexei Sayle (comedian/writer)
- ❖ Bill Cosby (actor/comedian)
- ❖ Duncan Goodhew (swimmer)

Past

- ❖ Albert Einstein (famous for Theory of Relativity)
- ❖ Elvis Presley
- ❖ Walt Disney (founded Disney!)
- ❖ Abraham Lincoln (American President)
- ❖ John Lennon
- ❖ F.W. Woolworth (founded Woolworths!)

- ❖ Charlotte & Emily Bronte (authors who wrote 'Jane Eyre' & 'Wuthering Heights' respectively)
- ❖ Evel Knievel (motorcycle stuntman)
- ❖ Howard Hughes (millionaire inventor - the film 'The Aviator' is about him)
- ❖ Alexander Graham Bell (inventor of the telephone)
- ❖ Hans Christian Andersen (author of fairy tales including 'The Little Mermaid' & 'The Ugly Duckling')
- ❖ John F. Kennedy (American President)
- ❖ Pablo Picasso (artist)
- ❖ James Stewart (actor who starred in 'Rear Window' & 'It's A Wonderful Life')
- ❖ Ludwig Van Beethoven (composer)
- ❖ Cole Porter (songwriter who wrote the musicals 'High Society' & 'Kiss Me Kate')
- ❖ Agatha Christie (author of Miss Marple & Hercule Poirot books)
- ❖ Winston Churchill (wartime Prime Minister)
- ❖ Salvador Dali (artist)
- ❖ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (composer)
- ❖ Leonardo da Vinci (inventor, artist who painted 'The Mona Lisa')
- ❖ Thomas Edison (inventor of the light bulb)
- ❖ Steve McQueen (actor who starred in the 'Great Escape' & 'The Magnificent Seven')
- ❖ Edgar Allan Poe (author who wrote 'The Raven' & 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue')
- ❖ Sir Isaac Newton (scientist & mathematician - famous for theory of gravity)
- ❖ Lewis Carroll (author who wrote 'Alice in Wonderland')
- ❖ Benjamin Franklin (scientist)
- ❖ Vincent van Gogh (artist)
- ❖ George Bernard Shaw (author who wrote 'Pygmalion')
- ❖ Nostradamus (prophet/physician)
- ❖ Jules Verne (author who wrote 'Around the World in 80 Days' & '20,000 Leagues Under The Sea')
- ❖ Ansel Adams (photographer)
- ❖ Michael Faraday (physicist/chemist)
- ❖ F. Scott Fitzgerald (author who wrote 'The Great Gatsby')
- ❖ Henry Ford (automobile innovator - produced Model T Ford, the first mass produced car)
- ❖ Woodrow Wilson (American president)
- ❖ Galileo (mathematician/astronomer)
- ❖ George Frederick Handel (composer who wrote 'Water Music')
- ❖ Ernest Hemingway (author who wrote 'For Whom The Bell Tolls')
- ❖ Napoleon Bonaparte (French emperor)
- ❖ Louis Pasteur (scientist who discovered most infections are caused by germs)
- ❖ Socrates (philosopher)
- ❖ Leo Tolstoy (author who wrote 'War and Peace')
- ❖ Orville & Wilber Wright (some of the first people to fly)
- ❖ John Denver (singer who wrote 'Annie's Song')
- ❖ August Rodin (sculptor famous for 'The Kiss' & 'The Thinker')

Notes

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