

# Does my child have ADHD/ADD or Autism?

## How to recognize these in your child

Many signs of these conditions overlap. Commonly recognized in both are:

- difficulty settling down,
- social awkwardness,
- only focusing only on things of interest to them, and
- impulsivity.

Still Autism and ADD/ADHD are two different conditions. Your provider can help you find the resources needed to diagnose and treat your child if you suspect they may have one of these conditions. The sooner diagnosis is made and treatment is started the better chance they have of living a happy healthy life.

### AUTISM

#### By 6 months

- Few or no big smiles or other warm, joyful, and engaging expressions
- Limited or no eye contact

#### By 9 months

- Little or no back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles or other facial expressions.

#### By 12 months

- Little or no babbling
- Little or no back-and-forth gestures such as pointing, showing, reaching, or waving.
- Little or no response to name

#### By 16 months

- Very few or no words

#### By 24 months

- Very few or no meaningful, two-word phrases (not including imitating or repeating)

#### At any age

- Loss of previously acquired speech, babbling or social skills.
- Avoidance of eye contact
- Persistent preference for solitude
- Difficulty understanding other people's feelings.
- Delayed language development
- Persistent repetition of words or phrases (echolalia)
- Resistance to minor changes in routine or surroundings
- Restricted interests
- Repetitive behaviors (flapping, rocking, spinning, etc.)
- Unusual and intense reactions to sounds, smells, tastes, textures, lights and/or colors.

### ADD/ADHD

While Hyperactivity is a common sign of this disorder it is important to note that many children, especially girls go undiagnosed because there is not hyperactivity. In fact, many times because of the low social skills, these children are seen as a joy to have in class. That doesn't mean they are any less effected by an Attention deficit disorder.

#### Symptoms of inattention in your child:

- Have trouble staying focused; be easily distracted or get bored with a task before it's completed.
- Appear not to listen when spoken to.
- Have difficulty remembering things and following instructions; not pay attention to details or makes careless mistakes.
- Have trouble staying organized, planning ahead, and finishing projects.

**West @ 4722 W. Kellogg Dr.**  
316-440-2565 fax 316-440-2750  
**Northwest @ 3560 N. Maize Rd.**  
316-669-3851 fax 316-358-9832



**East @ 5838 E. Central Ave.**  
316-440-4595 fax 316-440-4596  
**South @ 7030 S. Broadway St.**  
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- Frequently lose or misplace homework, books, toys, or other items.

**Symptoms of hyperactivity in your child:**

- Constantly fidget and squirm.
- Have difficulty sitting still, playing quietly, or relaxing.
- Move around constantly, often running or climbing inappropriately.
- Talk excessively.
- Have a quick temper or “short fuse.”

**Symptoms of impulsivity in your child:**

- Act without thinking.
- Guess, rather than taking time to solve a problem; blurt out answers in class without waiting to be called on or hear the whole question.
- Intrude on other people’s conversations or games.
- Often interrupt others; say the wrong thing at the wrong time.
- Be unable to keep powerful emotions in check, resulting in angry outbursts or temper tantrums.

## PARENTING A CHILD WITH ADD/ADHD

**Take care of yourself** so you’re better able to care for your child. Eat right, exercise, get enough sleep, find ways to reduce stress, and seek face-to-face support from family and friends as well as your child’s doctor and teachers.

**Establish structure and stick to it.** Help your child stay focused and organized by following daily routines, simplifying your child’s schedule, and keeping your child busy with healthy activities.

**Set clear expectations.** Make the rules of behavior simple and explain what will happen when they are obeyed or broken—and follow through each time with a reward or a consequence.

**Encourage exercise and sleep.** Physical activity improves concentration and promotes brain growth. Importantly for children with ADHD, it also leads to better sleep, which in turn can reduce the symptoms of ADHD.

**Help your child eat right.** To manage symptoms of ADHD, schedule regular healthy meals or snacks every three hours and cut back on junk and sugary food.

**Stay positive.** Both with your child and with yourself. It can be difficult to handle a child that is not socially “normal” but it is also rewarding. Reinforce positive behavior and remind yourself you are doing the best you can.

**Teach your child how to make friends.** Help them become a better listener, learn to read people’s faces and body language, and interact more smoothly with others.

Talk with your provider today if you suspect one of these conditions.

**MEMBERS: As always, your provider is just a phone call or text message away. It’s better to be safe than sorry. Reach out if you are worried or if this protocol isn’t helping.**