

## Knowing What to Expect: Beginning Treatment for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



Has your recently been diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)? If so, this document is a suggested guideline to follow as you work with your main treatment professional and a team of key people to develop your child's management plan.

ADHD is a chronic, or ongoing, condition. The following areas are important to include in your plan for successful management of ADHD.

- **Parent Understanding:** It is very helpful to learn all you can about ADHD and how to work with your child. ADHD behaviors are not the result of your child purposely behaving badly. Instead, they come from your child's response to his/her environment. This response is related to the make-up of your child's neurological system and will require you to respond differently to your child than you might to other children. Parent training courses can offer helpful solutions for responding to ADHD behaviors in a positive way.
- **Teamwork:** Your child will need to learn to manage this disorder in all places where he/she lives, works, or plays. You will need the help of a team of key people to develop, monitor and coordinate a treatment plan for your child. This will involve working with a team of professionals, such as teachers, counselors, a psychologist, psychiatrist, primary care doctor or pediatrician, and daycare workers - along with your family and friends. The members of this team may change through the years, but they will be your main resource for monitoring your child's treatment plan and for reaching the goals set as part of that plan.
- **Observation:** Family, friends, school staff, and daycare workers can all be observers of your child's behaviors. This information is used to identify problem areas, choose treatment options, create goals, and monitor the results of treatment for long-term planning.
- **Treatment:** There are many types of effective treatment options that are available for ADHD such as medication, parent training, and behavioral therapy.

### Your Child's Resource Team

**Medical Health:** Your child's primary care doctor, pediatrician or psychiatrist may offer a recommendation as to whether medication would be a practical treatment option for your child. Your child's health care professionals will evaluate and monitor your child's health and growth.

- Schedule a complete physical exam for your child.
- Get a copy of your child's growth chart to share with your child's behavioral health professional.
- Sign a release of information form to allow communication between team members.
- Get information on medication including when and how it is to be taken.

**Family/Friends:** You and your family/friends are the best resource for observing your child in settings both inside and outside your home. It's important to provide a structured routine, ongoing monitoring and positive support for your child to be successful.

- Set a regular schedule for homework, dinner, playtime and bedtime.
- Create a study space for your child that offers limited distractions.

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- Maintain eye contact with your child when giving instructions. Have your child repeat the instructions back to you to help them learn to focus.
- Fill out any behavioral checklists and return them to your doctor.
- Look for signs of low self-esteem, poor peer relationships, few close friends in age group, and low expectations for success.
- Check out local community support groups related to ADHD.
- Enroll in a parent training course.

**Behavioral:** Your child's behavioral health professional will work with you to create a long-term treatment plan that will help your child to learn to improve his/her behaviors for successful outcomes. They may also work with you and your child to plan interventions such as organization of work, use of praise and rewards, practicing new and appropriate behaviors and structuring the environment to support changes in your child's behavior.

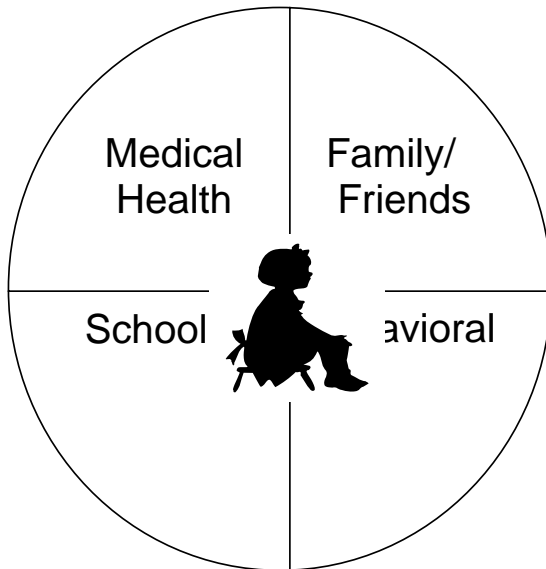
- Discuss evidence-based treatment approaches with your child's behavioral health professional.
- Talk about involving other members of your child's resource team in the creation of the treatment plan.
- Get behavioral checklists to be filled out by parents, teachers and others on the team to create a treatment plan and measure progress.
- Develop a goal-oriented, behavioral treatment program with your child's behavioral health professional.
- Ask about establishing a School-Home Daily Progress Report focused on targeted behavior.

**School:** School and/or daycare can take up a large part of your child's day. Daycare workers, teachers, counselors, the school nurse and the principal can all be a part of your child's resource team. They may be able to help with dispensing medication, carrying out a part of the behavioral management plan, and offering their observations of the impact of treatment and reaching your child's goals.

- Meet with your child's teachers before school begins to let them know what to expect from your child.
- Take the behavioral checklists and the release of information forms to the teachers who are most familiar with your child and who have an opportunity to observe your child in different settings or different times of day.
- Help your child with the transition to a new teacher or classroom. Change can be difficult for children with ADHD.
- Identify which school staff members will be on your child's resource team.
- Ask for information about tutoring or other educational resources available to your child.
- Ask about your child's educational rights by talking with the staff about *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* or the *Individuals with Disability Act of 1997*.

**Comment [c1]:** I like that the illustration helps to depict the importance of the relationships and collaborations between the resource team. However, whether we can use this depends on where the picture came from. If it's clip art, we won't be able to use it due to copyright restrictions.

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## Other Steps You Can Take:

As you work with your child's team to develop a management plan, consider also using the following helpful tools and resources:

1. Use "Knowing What to Expect: ADHD Resource Guide" to learn more about ADHD, investigate local support groups, and identify available parent training classes.
2. If medications are prescribed, complete the "Weekly Medication Log" and share it with your health care professional at each visit. The record will help your health care professional evaluate positive benefits and alert them to possible side-effects.
3. Once your management plan for ADHD is showing results, use "Knowing What to Expect: Ongoing Management of ADHD" and "Parent Calendar for ADHD Management" as a guides to work with professionals to identify ongoing tasks required for monitoring or maintaining results.

## References:

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2001). Clinical practice guideline: Treatment of the school-aged child with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Pediatrics*, 108(4), 1033-1044.

American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality. (2002). *ADHD toolkit*. Retrieved September 10, 2009 from <http://www.nichq.org/initiatives/>

NIH Publication No. 96-3572, Reprinted 1996. <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/adhdmnu.cfm>

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**Knowing What to Expect:  
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*Information in this document is taken from the resources cited and developed for use by the general public. It is not intended as medical/clinical advice or treatment. If you feel that your child may have symptoms of ADHD, you should consult your doctor or a behavioral health professional. Only your healthcare provider can make a diagnosis or recommend a treatment plan. For more information about your behavioral health benefits you can call the member services or behavioral health telephone number listed on your healthcare identification card.*

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