Inclusive Education From Guide: ADHD and learning Understand: Understanding ADHD

Date 30 August 2025 Link inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/adhd-and-learning/understanding-adhd

Understanding ADHD

Ākonga with ADHD are often energetic, creative, and innovative problem solvers. They commonly need support managing hyperactivity, impulsivity, and concentration.

Definition

ADHD is a lifelong neurological condition. It affects the way the brain receives, processes, and responds to information.



Video hosted on Youtube http://youtu.be/jhcn1_qsYmg

Jessica McCabe of How to ADHD attempts to explain what it feels like to have ADHD, with the help of her online community.

Closed Captions

Source: How to ADHD https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhcn1_qsYmg Attention refers to the management system of the brain, it's **executive function** – the ability to:

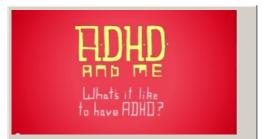
- pay attention
- organise and plan
- initiate tasks and stay focused on them
- regulate emotions
- self-monitor (keep track of what they are doing).

There are three main presentations of ADHD. Not everyone presents the same behaviours.

- Inattentive learners' need support with organising and completing tasks, following instructions or conversations, and attending to detail.
- Hyperactive-Impulsive -learners' need support with speaking at appropriate times, waiting their turn, listening to directions, thinking before they act.
- **Combined** a combination of the inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive behaviours.

Indications of ADHD

The impact of ADHD can vary significantly from person to person, especially if the person also has dyslexia or other learning support needs such as Autism or cognitive delay. This will mean their ADHD presents differently to others with a similar diagnosis.



Video hosted on Youtube http://youtu.be/Hl7Ro1PUJmE

ADHD can influence learning, particularly the ability to focus, pay attention, engage with a task, and use working memory.

Closed Captions

Source: ADHDVoices (UK) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8jqxZrjZII When the signs outlined below are significantly more pronounced in one child compared to other children of the same age, and when their behaviour undermines school and social life, the child may have ADHD. A full medical/psychological assessment is required for diagnosis.

Inattentive	Hyperactive	Impulsive
Easily distracted	Restless and overactive	Acts without thinking
Difficulty sustaining attention in tasks and play	Talking constantly	Interrupts people
Appearing not to listen when spoken to directly	Interrupting others frequently	Difficulty waiting for their turn in play or conversations
Difficulty organising tasks and activities	Trouble switching off/sleeping	Blurts out responses before questions have been completed

ADHD and other conditions

It can be difficult to identify ADHD specific indicators, as ADHD often co-occurs with common learning conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia.

ADHD and giftedness can also present together. However, it is also possible for a learner to present ADHD behaviours but actually just be gifted and bored or misunderstood.

TKI's Gifted and Talented webpage, **Twice-multi exceptional learners** provides more information.

How ADHD influences learning

Ākonga with ADHD will often thrive as learners if offered opportunities to develop their creativity, leadership and problem solving skills. To be successful, learners may need support managing themselves and their resources.



Video hosted on Youtube http://youtu.be/EQ71vgRzCA4

A short animated film that depicts a day in the life of a young student with ADHD.

No captions or transcript

Source: The Huffington Post (US) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/gut-wrenching-video-shows-adhd-from-a-kidsperspective_us_56cb8c2fe4b0ec6725e3a42c

Areas for support could include:

- activation organising, prioritising, and starting work
- focus focusing, sustaining, and shifting attention
- effort regulating alertness, sustaining effort, and processing information
- emotion managing frustration and regulating emotions
- memory utilising working memory and accessing recall
- action monitoring and self-regulation.

Specialist agencies in Aotearoa

If you want to explore further, these local and national agencies have a range of good information about ADHD.

- ADHD Association
- SPELD ADHD
- ADHD and gifted

Useful resources

The relationship between ADHD and learning disabilities

Read time: 5 min

Learning disabilities (LD) and ADHD often co-exist. An explanation of the connection between the executive functions of the brain – particularly the ability to focus, pay attention, engage with a task and use working memory – ADHD, and LD.

Visit website

What is ADHD?

An explanation of ADHD.

Visit website

Understanding ADHD

An online guide which contains sections on: what ADHD Is, signs and symptoms, other issues that can co-occur with ADHD, possible causes of ADHD, how ADHD is diagnosed, and how professionals can help.

Visit website

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