



What Is ADHD?

Lisa's son Jack had always been a handful. Even as a preschooler, he would tear through the house like a tornado, shouting, roughhousing, and climbing the furniture. No toy or activity ever held his interest for more than a few minutes and he would often dart off without warning, seemingly unaware of the dangers of a busy street or a crowded mall.



It was exhausting to parent Jack, but Lisa hadn't been too concerned back then. Boys will be boys, she figured. But at age 8, he was no easier to handle. It was a struggle to get Jack to settle down long enough to complete even the simplest tasks, from chores to homework.

When his teacher's comments about his inattention and disruptive behavior in class became too frequent to ignore, Lisa took Jack to the doctor, who recommended an evaluation for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

ADHD is a common behavioral disorder that affects an estimated 8% to 10% of school-age children. Boys are about three times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with it, though it's not yet understood why.

Kids with ADHD act without thinking, are hyperactive, and have trouble focusing. They may understand what's expected of them but have trouble following through because they can't sit still, pay attention, or attend to details.

Of course, all kids (especially younger ones) act this way at times, particularly when they're anxious or excited.

Charleston Promise Neighborhood is a non-profit organization that works to improve the lives of children and families in the 5.6 square mile area of the "neck" between Charleston and North Charleston. KidsWell is Charleston Promise Neighborhood's health and wellness initiative that includes School-Based Health Clinics at Sanders-Clyde Creative Arts School, James Simons Elementary, Chicora School of Communications, and Mary Ford Elementary. www.charlestonpromise.org

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But **the difference with ADHD** is that symptoms are present over a longer period of time and occur in different settings. These symptoms impair a child's ability to function socially, academically, and at home.

The **good news** is that with **proper treatment**, kids with ADHD can learn to successfully live with and manage their symptoms.



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