

THE SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR

Kids with ADHD



John F. Taylor,
Ph.D.



free spirit
PUBLISHING®

CONTENTS

A Note About the Labels	vii
-------------------------------	-----

INTRODUCTION	1
---------------------------	---

How This Book Can Help You	2
----------------------------------	---

How to Use This Book	4
----------------------------	---

You Can Succeed with ADHD	5
---------------------------------	---

The Six Great Gripes of Kids with ADHD	6
--	---

CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS ADHD?	7
---------------------------------------	---

What Does ADHD Mean?	7
----------------------------	---

The Three Types of ADHD	11
-------------------------------	----

Why Do Some Kids Have ADHD?	13
-----------------------------------	----

What ADHD Does NOT Mean	14
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER 2: MAKE EACH DAY GO BETTER	19
---	----

Think on the Bright Side	20
--------------------------------	----

Fly Your Decision-Making KITE	22
-------------------------------------	----

LEAP Over Your Mistakes	26
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER 3: GETTING HELP FOR ADHD	30
---	----

Getting Diagnosed with ADHD	31
-----------------------------------	----

After You Have Been Diagnosed with ADHD	32
---	----

The Lowdown on Medicine	34
-------------------------------	----

Signs That Tell You Medicine Is Working	35
---	----

Side Effects of Medicine	37
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER 4: EATING THE RIGHT FOOD 41

Five Nutrients That Can Help You Manage ADHD... 42

Four Foods to Watch For 47

Helping Plan Your Menu 48

Grocery Shopping and Preparing Your Food 52

CHAPTER 5: LIFE ON THE HOME FRONT 54

Connect with Parents and Family Adults 55

Get Along with Brothers and Sisters 58

Tough Stuff in Families 61

Have Fun Together 67

CHAPTER 6: SIX WAYS TO SUCCEED AT SCHOOL 70

1. A Great IDEA at School 71

2. Work with Teachers and Counselors 72

3. Move in A-Okay Ways 74

4. Focus on the Right Things 76

5. Stay Organized 77

6. Study Smart 79

CHAPTER 7: SEVEN WAYS TO MAKE AND KEEP FRIENDS ... 85

1. Feel Good About Yourself 86

2. Use Polite and Kind Words 86

3. Listen and Show You Care 87

4. Take Turns and Share 89

5. Try New Activities 90

6. Offer to Help Others 91

7. Solve Conflicts Peacefully 92

CHAPTER 8: EIGHT WAYS TO DEAL

WITH STRONG FEELINGS 96

1. Use Your Own Traffic Light	98
2. Take Care of Yourself	100
3. Get Your Move On	100
4. Use Breathing and Muscle Relaxation Exercises ..	101
5. Get Creative	102
6. Hang Out with a Friend	103
7. Talk with an Adult	103
8. Work on ADHD Challenges	104

Glossary	108
----------------	-----

A Note to Parents, Teachers, and Counselors	111
--	-----

Index	116
-------------	-----

About the Author	119
------------------------	-----

LIST OF REPRODUCIBLE PAGES

What Are My ADHD Traits?	11–12
Chapter 1 Quiz	18
Fly Your Decision-Making KITE	25
Chapter 2 Quiz	29
Chapter 3 Quiz	40
Chapter 4 Quiz	53
Chapter 5 Quiz	69
Chapter 6 Quiz	84
Chapter 7 Quiz	95
My Progress Chart	106
Chapter 8 Quiz	107

CHAPTER 1

What Is ADHD?



What Does ADHD Mean?

ADHD stands for **attention deficit hyperactivity disorder**. Kids are given the ADHD label when it's hard for them to stay still, pay attention, and make good decisions. If you've been labeled ADHD, you probably have trouble focusing on your work at school. It might also be hard for you to show good behavior because you want to talk or move around a

lot. ADHD affects how you get along with adults and other kids. People might not understand or like what you do or say—even when you don't think anything is wrong.

FAST FACT:

About one out of every thirteen kids in the United States is labeled with ADHD.

The good news is that you can take action to manage ADHD. The first step is to understand how it affects you. You probably have some **traits** that create challenges for you.

Traits are different ways that you think, act, and feel. They affect how you do things and get along with others. If you have been labeled ADHD, you probably have one or more of these four traits:

Trouble keeping your mouth and body still. You might find it hard to be still when a parent or teacher wants you to sit quietly. You might move your feet, tap your fingers on a table or desk, talk a lot, or make sounds with your mouth. This trait is called being **hyperactive**. Sometimes people may say that you are *fidgeting* or being *hyper*.

Kids who are hyperactive say:

"I can't control what my hands and feet do."

"I get yelled at a lot for talking in class."

"I squirm in my chair at school and have to stand up sometimes."

Trouble staying focused on things that are hard or "boring." Maybe you have a difficult time taking tests

or doing homework. You might have trouble finishing things that you start. Or you may be easily bothered by noises when trying to study. This trait is called being **inattentive**. People might also say that you are *distracted* or that you have a *short attention span*.

Kids who are inattentive say:

"Any sound in class bothers me—like the lights buzzing or other kids coughing."

"My mind sometimes goes on a road trip."

"It's like I have ten TV channels in my head and I don't know which one to watch."

Trouble with making decisions too fast. You might make up your mind quickly without stopping to figure out the best plan. These decisions may end up getting you in trouble. This extra-fast decision-making is called being **impulsive**. Sometimes people may say that you are *careless*.

Kids who are impulsive say:

"Sometimes I can't help what I do."

"It's like there's an engine inside me that makes me act before I think."

"My mouth says things before I can think of what I *should* say."

Trouble with making decisions too

slowly. Maybe you take a long time to make decisions because you're afraid of making a mistake. This extra-slow decision-making is called being **indecisive**. People might also say that you are a *perfectionist*.



Kids who are indecisive say:

"It's like my mind gets stuck when I'm trying to figure something out."

"People are always telling me to hurry up and decide."

"Sometimes I won't make a choice because I can't figure out which one is perfect."

Which of these traits do you have? Here's an activity to help you figure it out.

1. Make a photocopy of the list of ADHD traits and behaviors on pages 11–12.
2. Use a pencil to check the boxes next to the behaviors that you have a hard time with. Ask your parents to look over the list to see if they agree with the things you've checked.
3. Add up the number of checkmarks under each trait and write it in the blank.
4. Circle the traits with the most checkmarks. These are your strongest ADHD traits.

What Are My ADHD Traits?

Hyperactive?

- ☐ I talk a lot—even when I’m supposed to be quiet.
- ☐ I make lots of clicks and sounds with my mouth.
- ☐ I squirm in my chair and move my hands and feet when I’m sitting.
- ☐ I run ahead of adults or groups of kids.
- ☐ I poke, touch, feel, and grab other people or objects.
- ☐ I say or do things without thinking about them first.

_____ = TOTAL

Inattentive?

- ☐ I’m bothered by noises when I’m trying to do schoolwork.
- ☐ I have trouble paying attention to anything that seems boring to me.
- ☐ I take longer to finish schoolwork than other students.
- ☐ I have a hard time concentrating when I take tests.
- ☐ I daydream or zone out a lot at school.
- ☐ I forget my teacher’s directions.

_____ = TOTAL

continued



What Are My ADHD Traits? (continued)

Impulsive?

- ☐ I make people angry because I say or do things without thinking of others.
- ☐ I often forget to plan ahead.
- ☐ I do or say things that are dangerous or hurt others.
- ☐ I get into fights with others.
- ☐ I blurt out in class without raising my hand.
- ☐ I have trouble waiting for my turn.

_____ = TOTAL

Indecisive?

- ☐ I worry a lot when trying to decide things.
- ☐ I start many new tasks but don't finish them.
- ☐ I take a lot longer to do schoolwork or tests than other kids.
- ☐ I need help from my parents or other adults when making simple decisions.
- ☐ I give up trying to do things because I can't do them perfectly.
- ☐ I get confused when I'm trying to make a decision.

_____ = TOTAL

The Three Types of ADHD

There are actually three types—or kinds—of ADHD. The labels kids with ADHD get depend on what traits they show at home and school. Here are the different kinds:

ADHD, Hyperactive-Impulsive type: Kids with this label are *hyperactive* and *impulsive*. Girls can have this kind of ADHD, but boys are most often given this label.

JUAN

"I know you're excited to answer, but please remember to raise your hand," said Juan's teacher. "I'm sorry, Ms. Olsen," Juan replied. That was the third time in one day she had to remind him.

Juan understands most things at school, but he thinks things don't go fast enough there. He often blurts out in class or gets out of his chair when he's excited. Juan tries to follow the rules, but it doesn't seem to work. It's like he can't control his body or his mouth. Adults often tell him that he's too hyper and that he needs to slow down. ■

ADHD, Inattentive type: Kids who have this kind are *inattentive* and *indecisive*. People sometimes call this *ADD*. They leave out the "H" because hyperactivity is not a problem for kids with this kind of ADHD. Of girls who have ADHD, most have this label.

HEIDI

"Heidi?" The voice of Mr. Donald came to her through a fog. "Yes?" Heidi finally answered. She had been daydreaming about playing with her dog Lucky. "Please pay attention to the lesson," said Mr. Donald. "This kind of math can be hard." "I'm sorry. I'll try," Heidi said.

Heidi has trouble concentrating. No matter how hard she tries to listen, Mr. Donald's lessons sound like "blah, blah, blah." When she is working, even small noises distract her. ■



ADHD, Combined type: Kids with this label are *hyperactive* and *inattentive*—or they have some other mix of traits different from the other two kinds of ADHD.

WILL

"Please stay in your seat and listen, Will," said Mr. Tanaka. "Sure," Will answered. But a minute later, Will was back over at Rob's desk talking about a great skateboarding trick he'd just learned. "Back to your desk, Will. Right now!" Mr. Tanaka exclaimed.

Almost every day at school is like this for Will. He thinks it's boring. Instead of listening in class, he moves around and talks a lot. Will is easily distracted and gives up on most assignments and tests because he thinks they're too boring or hard. He spends a lot of the school day in the resource room, where Mrs. Adams helps him with his work. ■

If you have been labeled ADHD, you might know about these three different kinds and which one you

have. If not, you can look at your answers to the activity on pages 11–12 to figure it out. If your strongest ADHD traits (the ones you circled) are:

hyperactive and impulsive

Your label is: ADHD, Hyperactive-Impulsive type (like Juan)

inattentive and indecisive

Your label is: ADHD, Inattentive type (like Heidi)

hyperactive and inattentive

(or another mix of ADHD traits)

Your label is: ADHD, Combined type (like Will)

It is helpful to know what type of ADHD you have. When you do, you can work on the things that you have the most trouble with.

You and your dad or mom might want to do the activity on pages 11–12 with a doctor or another one of the professionals talked about in Chapter 3.

Why Do Some Kids Have ADHD?

That's a good question. Experts believe that kids with ADHD process information differently than most people. These differences in how the brain works can cause kids to show ADHD traits. It's like a bad telephone connection: Different parts of your brain are trying to "talk" to one another, but the line is full of static and the messages can't get through. You might

be telling yourself to stay still and pay attention, but part of your brain is missing the message.

People who study ADHD don't know exactly why some people have it. Many think that ADHD is passed on to kids by their parents. Others believe that kids with ADHD have been exposed to certain chemicals.

What ADHD Does NOT Mean

When you have ADHD, your brain and body are not sick. You don't have bad germs in you. Having ADHD doesn't mean you are stupid, lazy, crazy, bad, or ill. It means that there are some differences in the way your brain works that make you show some ADHD traits.

Having ADHD also means that you have some special skills and talents. Kids with ADHD often have a lot of energy and join in many activities. They're active and often excited to try new things. Many are very creative and have special "smarts."

Music smarts. If you're music smart, you might be able to figure out how to play songs really well on a musical instrument. You may also make up your own songs to play and sing.

Art and color smarts. Kids who are art and color smart can usually draw, color, and paint very well. They may also have a good eye for color and design.

Muscle smarts. Being muscle smart doesn't usually mean being able to lift a lot of weight. It means being good at dancing, running, swimming, sports, and other physical activities.



Mechanics smarts. If you're mechanics smart, you might know a lot about how gadgets work. You might enjoy working with wires, wood, bolts, screws, and metal.

Drama smarts. Kids who are drama smart are great at acting and remembering lines for plays. They enjoy being on a stage in front of an audience. Some drama smart kids are good at coming up with creative stories or telling funny jokes.

Computer smarts. Being computer smart means—duh!—being good at working on computers. Kids who are computer smart often know a lot about the Internet and electronic games.

CHAPTER 1 QUIZ

No need to worry about grades for this quiz. It's just a fun way for you to show off all you've learned about ADHD in this chapter. You'll find the right answers upside down at the bottom of the page. Good luck!

1. Jake has been labeled ADHD. What does ADHD stand for?
 - A. **a**wesome, **d**aring, **h**andsome **d**ude
 - B. **a**ttention **d**eficit **h**yperactivity **d**isorder
 - C. **a**dventurous, **d**reaming, **h**igh-flying, **d**ragon
2. Carla has ADHD. Which of these is true about her?
 - A. Her body is sick and won't ever get better.
 - B. Her brain has germs in it and she can't learn.
 - C. Some brain differences make her show ADHD traits.
3. Rasheed thinks he might have ADHD. What can he do?
 - A. Show this book to a parent and talk about why he thinks he has ADHD.
 - B. Hide this book and hope that he starts to calm down without anyone's help.
 - C. Give this book away and pretend that ADHD isn't real.
4. Sam has ADHD and thinks that reading books is boring. What can Sam learn if he reads *this* book?
 - A. How to speak with aliens from a planet named Zatar.
 - B. Where to find a stash of buried treasure.
 - C. Ways to deal with ADHD at school, at home, and with friends.



Answers: 1. B. (Although Jake also would say that he is an awesome, daring, handsome dude!) 2. C. 3. A. 4. C.