

## Information for Children

### What is ADHD?

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. It means that your brain may work a little differently from other kids' brains. The flow of signals in your brain may not work as smoothly or as fast, but it does not mean that you are not as smart as everyone else. It just means that you may need a little help paying attention, just like someone who has to wear glasses to help them see better. Usually kids with ADHD have problems paying attention in class and getting their work done. They may also have problems changing what they are thinking about. Especially if they are doing something they find very interesting like playing a computer game. Some kids complain that they are not able to stop and think things through before they do them. This is called impulsivity. Sometimes this can get them into trouble. Some kids with ADHD also find it hard to sit or stand still for a period of time. This is called hyperactivity.

### How did I get ADHD?

You don't catch ADHD like a cold or the flu. Most of the time ADHD is something that you are born with. It is passed down to you through your genes from your parents. Not always, but very often one or both of your parents may have ADHD too. Your brothers, and sisters, or cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents may have ADHD as well. About 6 to 12 people in every 100 people throughout the whole world have ADHD.

### How Does ADHD Affect kids?

Some kids with ADHD say that it feels like their brain is always moving very fast from one thing to another, sort of like a remote switching channels on a TV very quickly. Other kids daydream all the time and find it hard to stay focused on their schoolwork. This does not mean that you don't know as much as the other kids, it just means that it may be harder for you to stick to things and get them done. It may even be hard for you to start to work on things without the help of your teacher or parents.

You might also have trouble remembering where you put things or when you have to get things done. Sometimes you might get distracted. This means that you may start to do something and then your mind thinks or sees something else that catches its attention and you forget what you were doing. You might also have a hard time falling asleep at night. People with ADHD often find it hard to turn off the motor in their mind so that they can relax enough to fall asleep.

When these things happen you may get frustrated, especially if you don't know why it is happening. When kids with ADHD get frustrated, sometimes they get very angry and don't know how to deal with it. They may yell and do things that they don't mean to do. ADHD may make it harder for you to control your feelings, but remember ADHD is never an excuse for hurting other people. There are many things that you can learn to do that will help you deal with your frustration.

### Do I have to take pills?

Many kids with ADHD take medication to help them pay attention in school and to help with their hyperactivity. Medication can help your brain to stay focused on what you want it to work on. You may find it easier not to get distracted. It can also help you to slow down when you need to think



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before making decisions on what you want to do. You may not need to take medication all the time, but it can also help you with other activities not just school. You also need to pay attention when you take part in a sports teams, karate, cubs, brownies, pathfinders, music lessons, camp and even when you are just playing with your friends.

No one likes to take medication if they don't have to, just like kids don't chose to wear glasses if they don't have to. But, if you need to wear glasses and you don't wear them you end up not seeing a lot of things. Kids who need medication for their ADHD can also miss out on many things if they cannot pay attention.

When you do take medication for your ADHD it does not mean it will cure your ADHD, but it will help you. Like wearing glasses helps you to see better, medication will help you to think better, or at least think about what you need to think about to get things done.

### **What about school?**

The school needs to know about your ADHD so that they can help you. Having ADHD does not mean that you are stupid or lazy. It just means that your brain works a little differently. ADHD does not have anything to do with your intelligence level. ADHD kids are just as smart as other kids. If your teachers know this they can do things to help you like: give you a quiet place to work, make sure that you know what you need to be doing, give you extra time to get your work done, and help you to get started on your work and finish it. They can help you to remember things by giving you tools like a homework book or a homework buddy.

By sending notes home to your parents they can let them know how you are doing and what you need to get done. Your parents can also send them notes or talk to them so that everyone can work together to help you. Teachers and parents can also help you to understand the rules and find ways not to get into trouble. They can also teach you how to get along better with the other kids and teachers. It may be much easier for you to type on a computer keyboard than it is to write by hand. Learning to keyboard is a good thing for kids with ADHD to learn. Sometimes listening to music with headphones when you are trying to work on schoolwork can help you to concentrate. Having a quiet place to calm down or someone to talk to when you get frustrated can help you to stop yourself from blowing up. There are many other things that you can learn to do to help with your ADHD and lots of things that your teachers and parents can help you with.

### **How do I Tell my Friends about ADHD?**

Your friends probably already know that you may be a little different than other kids. This might be why they like you. Being different is not always a bad thing it can also mean that you have more energy and can think in different creative ways than other kids do. You can show your friends this information if you like and there are also many good books for kids to read that explains ADHD. Maybe your parents can help to explain ADHD to your friends and family and maybe your teacher can help to explain it to the class. Everyone has things they are good at and other things they are not so good at. ADHD just means that paying attention and staying quiet and still may be something that you need help with. You may be a whiz at math or sports and some of the other kids may not be good those things at all.

### **What do I Need to do?**

The pills that you might be taking are not magic. They do not make your ADHD go away. They just make it easier for you to work on it. There are many things you can do to help with your ADHD and there are many things that your Mom and Dad and your teacher can help you with. The first thing everyone needs to do is exactly what you are doing right now. That is learning about ADHD and yourself. When your parents and family as well as your teachers know about ADHD it will be easier for them to understand you and how they can help you.

Talking to your parents, teachers and your doctors about how you feel is a good thing. They need to know when you get frustrated and what helps you to calm down. It also helps if they know what kinds of things distract you. Is it easier for you to work when you are in a quiet room or do you work better if you have music on at the same time?

We know that having a routine, or doing the same thing at the same time every day can be very helpful for ADHD kids. You may not think this will be much fun, but working with and listening to your parents and teachers may be the best thing that you can do. They really do want to help and the more that you can teach them about yourself and ADHD the better they will be able to do this. Everyone needs to work as a team to figure out solutions. The good thing is that you get to be part of the team too!

*Reference: CADDRA Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance (2013). Retrieved on October 28, 2016 from <http://www.caddra.ca/public-information/children>*

## Inspirational Quotes – Issue # 62

Edited by: Vicary Parkin

Throughout history, society has been influenced and shaped by the many great contributions made by individuals with learning disabilities. These people demonstrate the strength and perseverance to be true to themselves and strive for their full potential. We hope their words inspire and motivate you to reach for your true potential.

*"I was diagnosed with ADHD twice," she told BlackDoctor.org. "I didn't believe the first doctor who told me and I had a whole theory that ADHD was just something they invented to make you pay for medicine, but then the second doctor told me I had it."*

-Solange Knowles, (ADHD) singer/songwriter

Solange Knowles may have grown up in her older sister Beyonce's shadow, but through the years has proven herself to be a chart-topping singer. She had always described herself as "high energy" but it wasn't until she started to have difficulty coping in her everyday life that she decided to see what the cause of her outburst and personal issues were. After the first doctor she saw diagnosed her with ADHD, she decided to seek a second opinion. The second diagnosis of ADHD made her realize that her preconceived notions of ADHD were untrue.

Reference: Solange: "I was diagnosed twice". (2016). Retrieved on November 16,, 2016 from <http://blackdoctor.org/2014/solange-knowles-adhd-2/>

## Learning Challenges Symposium

By: Rachel Smith

The Learning Challenges Symposium hosted by ATN Access for Persons with Disabilities Inc. and its Learning Disability Service partners was a success with a full house of eager participants on October 19, 2016.

The symposium was organized to help raise awareness of learning disabilities and other disorders that can contribute to learning challenges.

Topics covered included:

- Learning Disabilities
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Mental Illness (Anxiety, Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, etc.)

On behalf of ATN Access and Learning Disability Service partners, we would like to send a thank you to all the participants and panel speakers. If you are interested in participating in further events, we would love to have you join us!

## Fall Word Scramble!

### Questions

1. EASELV
2. AELGOFI
3. SREET
4. ISLURQRE
5. ORBWN
6. OCNAR
7. KEAR

### Answers

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

## Volunteer Opportunities

MATH %

COMPUTERS

ENGLISH!

EMPLOYMENT

FUNDRAISING \$

Are you interested in helping to make a difference in someone's life? Do you have talents and skills that you would be willing to share? If so, being an ATN volunteer may be just for you!

ATN is looking for individuals that are willing to volunteer a few hours a week to help make a difference in someone's life.

Opportunities exist in our academic upgrading lab, assistive technology lab, employment services, class room assistance and drop-in computer lab.

For more information and to get involved, please call us at

519 - 433-7950 ext. 372.  
or visit our website at [www.atn.on.ca](http://www.atn.on.ca)



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We hope you have enjoyed this month's issue of the LD Edge Newsletter and that you are looking forward to the next issue.



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If we give them an edge...  
They may give us one!