

# ADHD/ADD & Executive Functioning



- Statistics & Causes
- Executive Functions
- Core Symptoms of ADHD/ADD
- Types of ADHD/ADD
- Positive Aspects of ADHD/ADD!
- What to do for your ADD/ADHD child

## Statistics & Causes

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) have become prevalent issues in the U.S. with ~ 6.1 million children aged 2-17 diagnosed, according to CDC's report (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/data.html>). This is about 10% of the child population in the US. Some studies cite higher rates.

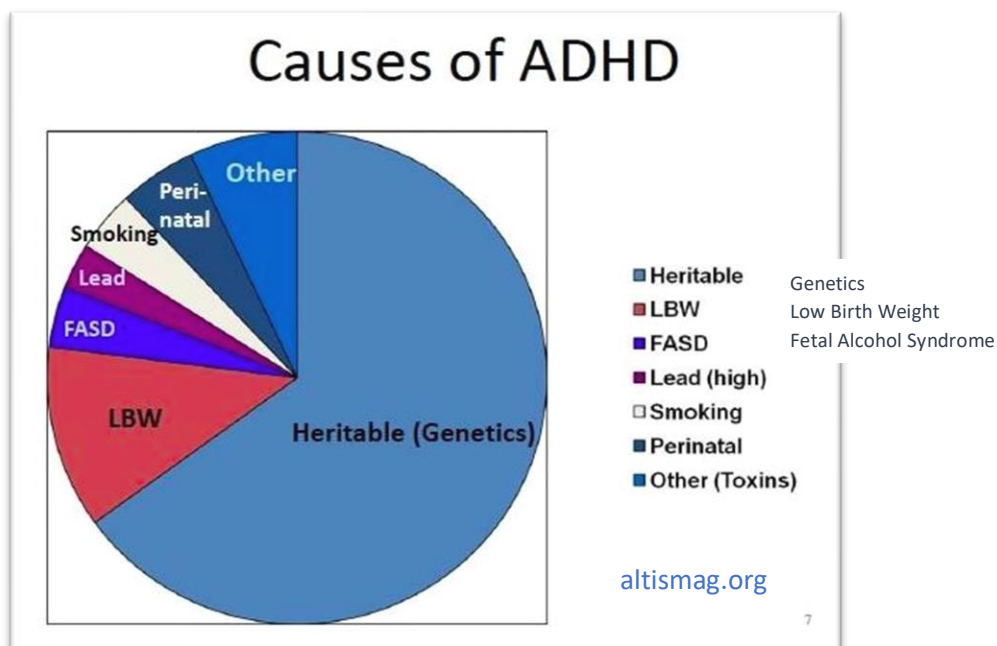
### The breakdown:

- ⊗ 2–5 years 6%
- ⊗ Ages 6–11 years 54%
- ⊗ Ages 12–17 years 40%

### Other facts:

- Boys are twice as likely as girls to have either.
- Figures don't count undiagnosed children.
- Since 2003, the numbers have increased significantly.

Experts believe that these disorders are hereditary, as most children with the disorders also have at least one parent with it as well. ADHD/ADD can also be caused by exposure to brain toxins or other damage.



## Executive Functions

The prefrontal cortex (PFC) occupies the front third of the brain, behind the forehead. Impairment in this area of the brain is the cause of ADD/ADHD symptoms. The PFC is known as the “Executive Center” of the brain which controls many functions. The executive functions work together in various combinations.

- ⊗ Activation – Organizing, prioritizing, activating to work
- ⊗ Focus – Focusing, sustaining, shifting attention to tasks
- ⊗ Effort – Regulating, sustaining effort, and processing speed
- ⊗ Emotion – Managing frustration, modulating emotions
- ⊗ Memory – Utilizing working memory, accessing recall
- ⊗ Action – Monitoring, self-regulating action

(TE Brown 2005)

## Core Symptoms of ADHD/ADD:

- ⊗ A short attention span for regular, routine, everyday tasks (homework, chores, etc.)
- ⊗ Easily distractible especially if task is distasteful
- ⊗ Organization problems with tasks, time, belongings
- ⊗ Procrastination
- ⊗ Greater concentration produces less results
- ⊗ Problems with follow-through (not finishing what is started)
- ⊗ Poor impulse control (saying or doing something before thinking it through)

## Types of ADHD/ADD:

- ⊗ Classic ADHD – hyperactivity with impulsiveness and inattentiveness
- ⊗ Inattentive ADD – disorganized, distracted, procrastinator, poor impulse control
- ⊗ Over focused ADD – classic or inattentive plus OCD, stuck on things, anxiety
- ⊗ Temporal Lobe ADD – classic or inattentive plus anger, conflict seeking
- ⊗ Limbic ADD – classic or inattentive plus depression
- ⊗ Ring of Fire ADD – many parts of the brain are overactive/underactive

(amenclinics.com)

## Positive Aspects of ADD!

- ⊗ In tune with own and others feelings
- ⊗ Loves to have fun, sense of humor
- ⊗ Is naturally creative and talented at favorite things
- ⊗ Hands on, right brain, inventive
- ⊗ Perceptually accurate, looks past surface appearance of people, situations, issues
- ⊗ Responsive to positive reinforcement and willing to work for acceptance
- ⊗ Spontaneous, flexible
- ⊗ Intense when interested in something, full of energy

(New Hope Counseling,2000)

## **What to do for your ADD/ADHD child?**

- ⊗ If ADD/ADHD symptoms are interfering with personal, social or school success, get an evaluation from your pediatrician. Involve your child's teacher and others close to your family, in the evaluation.
- ⊗ Explore treatments available for the various TYPES of ADD to get the correct medication, natural treatment, behavioral approach and/or environmental adjustments for your child's particular needs.
- ⊗ Educate yourself on the ADD issue. There are lots of great books. My favorites are authored by Dr. Daniel Amen and Dr. Russell Barkley. Both doctors encourage trying everything possible before using medication (only if necessary) as a last resort.
- ⊗ If other children or adults in the family have symptoms, get them evaluated as well. ADD is frequently a family affair and results are best when everyone participates.
- ⊗ **ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE + CONTROL THE NEGATIVE = SUCCESS!**

**Happy New Year!**

**Diana Karpavage LPCC, School Counselor**

**"Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers." 3 John 1:2**

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