

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Notes from a Kid

Being ADHD means that I have different strengths and weaknesses from other kids. It means that while I may be able to run faster or jump higher than my friends, I may have a more difficult time getting my schoolwork done or doing chores at home without constant reminders.

Sometimes it's lonely to feel different from everybody else. Mom and Dad help me see that many of my differences are neat. For instance, I have lots more energy than most of the kids in my class, and I am able to run faster, last longer in games and climb higher than most ordinary kids. My mom thinks it's because I'm extraordinary!



My teacher says she likes my enthusiasm and the fact that I am not afraid to ask questions. (My friends seem surprised that I can be such a daredevil.) And the girls, well, they are real grossed out that I will pick up bugs, frogs and snakes (which is not so different from the other boys). My sister seems jealous because she says I definitely have more fun playing than she does. All in all, I'd say I'm a pretty neat person who has some unusual strengths.

I used to worry that my friends or family would catch ADHD from me. But now I know that it's not a disease. In fact, it was a relief to know that I didn't get ADHD because of something bad I had done. The doctor told me that I was born this way and that chances are somebody in my family (like a grandfather or uncle) had ADHD, too. The doctor said that I would have to work hard in school, but that I was just as smart as all the rest of the kids.

In school, it's often hard for me to pay attention to the teacher, and then I don't know what I'm supposed to do. I guess I spend a lot of time daydreaming. Getting my schoolwork done is hard for me, because it takes me so long to finish. Sometimes I just forget to finish. When I have to write a story, I usually make it a very short story because writing takes me so much longer, too.

I sometimes read the instructions to a test or assignment incorrectly and then my answers are all wrong. My friend says that all these things have happened to him before too, but they don't seem to happen over and over like they do to me.

I often get into trouble at school. I seem to go from falling asleep to having too much energy for my body control. Sometimes I ask the teacher if I can go to the bathroom, because I just have to be able to move or I'll explode.

I think I'm a friendly kid, but sometimes I have trouble making friends, and I don't get many invitations to play after school. It seems like I am always asking other kids over to my house to play or to go to the movies. Someday I hope I'll get asked back. My parents and I think sometimes I just act too silly and my friends get bored or uncomfortable.

There are things that I am learning to do for myself with the help of my Mom and Dad. I'm writing these down, so maybe they will be helpful to you, too:

Homework

My parents make sure that I come right home from school and start my homework. My teacher and my parents have also helped me to keep a list of what I have to do so I won't forget, and I continue to "talk to myself" out loud to keep my mind on my homework and off the kids playing outside.

Getting Ready in the Morning

I have my own chart of all the things I have to do each morning, and as I do them I give myself a point or star. Later in the day, I trade those points in for privileges like watching TV or having a special treat.

Getting Along with Other Kids

My parents and I have "secret signals" that no one else knows about to help me get along better with other kids. For instance, if I'm playing with a friend and I start to get too silly, my Mom might breeze by the door where we are playing and gently scratch her ear. That is the secret signal for me to change my behavior. We use it in lots of other situations too, especially when we visit other people and I start to touch things.

Handling Feelings

Generally, I'm a pretty happy kid, but here's how I handle my feelings in different situations:

- When I'm feeling sad or lonely, I get lots of hugs and love from my parents, and that seems to help. Sometimes when I feel this way, I let myself cry and get it all out and then I talk with my parents and I feel better.
- If I've done something wrong and hurt someone else's feelings, I sometimes get angry at my family because I don't want to feel bad...but my parents say that everyone makes mistakes and that mistakes are chances for learning. The problem is that I seem to make the same mistakes over and over again, and so I'm in trouble a lot. I want to keep trying though, because Mom says it just takes some people a little bit longer to catch on.
- When I get frustrated or angry, I have even more energy than usual, and I need to do something that helps me get the anger out without hitting or shouting. Sometimes I climb up in the pine tree and just sit for awhile until I control my extra energy, and other times I need to ride my bike real fast or run until I'm calmed down. Then I try to figure out what I can do solve the problem that made me so angry in the first place. Mom and Dad say that I am a smart person to pick running, biking or climbing instead of hitting...but it isn't easy. Anyway, I hope this was helpful.

