How to Recognize ADHD in Toddlers

by ROBERT REYNOLDS

ADHD in Toddlers

ADHD in toddlers and babies is not “technically” diagnosable. However, there are early signs and symptoms that many parents and clinicians believe may lead to ADHD in childhood. Let’s take a look at some of these signs and symptoms and determine the best telltale signs that your baby or toddler may someday develop ADHD.

We all know toddlers are fidgety, squirmy and especially wiggly. However, just because they show some of the signs that are usually associated with the regular symptoms of ADHD, doesn’t mean that they will later develop it. Toddlers and babies regularly show these symptoms until about age 3. If the symptoms are extreme; however, they could be linked to ADHD as the child grows.

Check out the list of symptoms that may show early and be troubling to babies and toddlers, so you can recognize this disorder early on.

Symptoms in Babies

Did you know that many studies have linked ADHD to genetics? If this is truly the case, many people who develop ADHD, are born with characteristics that predispose a person for this disorder.

Babies don’t show the same signs and symptoms as children, or even toddlers, but they do still have telling signs that can help you determine if your child may have ADHD, very early on.

- Extra squirmy
- Doesn’t like cuddling
- More impatient
- Easily frustrated
- Requires extra attention

- Demonstrates a difficult temperament
- More colicy
- Excessive crying
- Trouble sleeping

Keep in mind, all babies will cry, and be wiggly and fussy at times. Excessive amounts of this behavior, along with a number of other symptoms, could be signs of early development ADHD. However, many toddlers, children, and even teens who later develop ADHD, don’t show any signs until later in life. Additionally, because babies cannot technically be diagnosed with ADHD, remember that all of these signs and symptoms could also be linked to other early developmental issues. Talk to your child’s primary care physician if you have concerns.

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Symptoms in Toddlers

- Toddlers that are constantly jumping, running and climbing on anything and everything
- Toddlers that can't sit still
- Constant talking
- Inattention
- Often leaves his or her seat in situations where sitting quietly is expected
- Has difficulty playing quietly or relaxing
- May have a quick temper or a "short fuse"
- Accident prone

Additionally they struggle with:

- Making decisions
- Sharing
- Taking turns
- Letting others talk
- Finishing tasks
- Losing things
- Controlling emotions

Toddlers with these symptoms are often described as "running with a motor" or "always on the go."

Many times people overlook the positives that come with ADHD. Let's take a look at some of the positives that can come from ADHD.

- **Creativity** - Children with ADHD are often extremely creative, artistic or musical.
- **Easily adaptable** - Because their thoughts are often all over the place, they are generally have an easier time adapting to new situations.
- **Enthusiasm and Spontaneity** - Children with ADHD often are driven and passionate in whatever field they choose to pursue.

Diagnosis

It is hard to diagnose a child with ADHD much earlier than age 4 or 5, but when he or she reaches that age, it is good to take them to a doctor who can diagnose ADHD if you believe it is something your child may be affected by.

Also, be sure to check for learning disabilities and other mental incapacities, so as not to rule out any possibilities. Your child will be easier to handle when properly diagnosed.

Get Help

The first step is to have a consultation done with your doctor. Most school tests are not in depth and may miss some early signs. Once diagnosed, you have the option to treat your child with or without medication. Be sure to research all treatment options and find one that you are comfortable with.