ADHD in Preschool Children

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Signs and Symptoms of ADHD in Preschool Children

Children as young as three years of age can show symptoms of ADHD. Because the condition requires proactive management, you must monitor any signs and symptoms of ADHD and get a diagnosis as early as possible. There are specific cues you should look for in preschool-aged children to determine whether or not the early signs and symptoms of ADHD are present.

However, it is important to note that a definitive diagnosis can be difficult to make in very young children. In most cases, early signs and symptoms will be monitored as the child moves into grade school, at which time it is likely that definitive patterns will emerge that will make a proper diagnosis easier to reach.

Early Signs and Symptoms of ADHD

The following behavioral patterns may indicate that your child could have ADHD:

- An inability to sit still when required to.
- A tendency to run around or climb in situations where such behavior is not appropriate.
- Delayed ability to walk.
- Balance or vision problems during early childhood.
- Difficulty following directions, even simple ones.
- Difficulty controlling impulses.
- A tendency to become angry easily.
- A tendency to lash out at or hit other children.
- Interrupting conversations or other children during gameplay.
- Difficulty waiting to be called on or waiting for his or her turn during a game or activity.
- A high level of energy accompanied by a low threshold for assessing danger.
- Constant movement and an inability to focus on a single activity for more than a few minutes.

These symptoms will typically continue into the child's school-aged years, at which time he or she will likely develop a tendency to blurt out answers in class, talk excessively or be generally disruptive during lessons. Because impulse control is a definitive symptom of ADHD, disciplinary measures will generally fail to curb these types of behaviors. Many times, parents become aware of the possibility that their child has ADHD through reports from the child's teacher.

Diagnostic Criteria for ADHD

The presence of the aforementioned symptoms does not necessarily mean that your child has ADHD or will develop ADHD. Keep in mind that for a child to be diagnosed with ADHD, the following criteria must be met:

- Symptoms must have started before the age of five.

- Symptoms must be present continuously for at least six months.
- Multiple symptoms from either the “predominantly hyperactive” or the “predominantly inattentive” ADHD subtype must be observed.

If your child continues to show signs and symptoms of ADHD, or if the symptoms become increasingly intense as the child gets older, speak to your family doctor. Being proactive about diagnosis and treatment is the best way to keep symptoms under control and help your child enjoy a normal, active and productive childhood.