Finding an Accurate Diagnosis for Your Child

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Testing Your Child For ADHD

According to experts, testing for ADHD prior to the age of 6 or 7 can be difficult. Many children under this age display behaviors that are typical to ADHD, such as short attention spans, impulsive acts, and similar behaviors. When you test your child before the appropriate age, it can be difficult to determine if they do, in fact, have ADHD, or if they are displaying normal behaviors.

If you think your child is showing signs of ADHD prior to age 7, it doesn't hurt to test. This is especially true if the child's behavior is making it difficult for them to pay attention in class, or having a negative impact on their grades. Your child's pediatrician can determine if testing is appropriate, and then guide you down the right path towards proper testing.

How do I find a qualified practitioner to test my child?

As mentioned, your child's doctor can steer you towards a professional who can provide the right testing for your child. Unlike other mental health disorders, ADHD must be tested by a doctor who specializes in this type of disorder. Prior to referring your child to a specialist, your child's doctor may perform some testing to rule out other problems, such as vision and hearing problems. If there aren't any other factors contributing to your child's behaviors, they can then refer him or her to a psychiatrist, who will perform a series of tests to determine if your child does have ADHD.

It's important to remember that while testing can be done prior to age 7, rarely is medication used to treat the disorder. Instead, lifestyle changes, changes to routine, and other alterations are used to help your child cope with the symptoms of their disorder and lead a normal life.

How does the evaluation work?

The evaluation used for ADHD is not an exact science because a lot of children have trouble paying attention, but not all of them have the disorder. In addition, other disorders such as anxiety, depression, or learning disabilities can show symptoms similar to those seen with ADHD.

The assessment used takes a total of three hours, but sometimes longer. The assessment includes;

- A thorough personal, family, and medical history evaluation
- Interview with your child
- Interview with one or both parents
- Interview with the child's teacher
- A series of tests to see where your child's attention span is lacking
- A physical evaluation
- A follow-up after the initial diagnosis is made

After care

If your child is diagnosed with ADHD, your child may be prescribed medication if they are around the age of 7. The medication used for ADHD in children allows them to feel a sense of calm, which enables them to focus better throughout the day.

Behavioral modification techniques are also used to help your child get a handle on their symptoms. Your child's doctor will develop a plan of action, which can be set into place right away. A few months after making the changes, your child will be reevaluated to see if they have made progress, or if the treatment plan must be modified

Conclusion

Life can be difficult for both parents and children when ADHD is left undiagnosed. However, with the right treatment methods, your child can relieve themselves of the symptoms associated with ADHD, excel at school, and find life much easier to manage.