

Dyslexia

ADHD

Slidebooks
Check out the digital information in these slidebooks about executive and attentional functioning.

Executive Functioning

Attention Deficit Disorder

Hyperactivity Disorder

Treatment for ADHD

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Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders
– 5th edition (DMS-5)
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Diagnostic Criteria

A. A persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development, as characterized by (1) and/or (2):

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INATTENTIVE SYMPTOMS

1) Six (or more) of the following have persisted for at least 6 months to a degree that is inconsistent with developmental level and negatively impacts directly on social and academic/occupational activities:

- Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes.
- Has difficulty sustaining attention.
- Does not appear to listen.
- Struggles to follow through on instructions.
- Has difficulty with organization.
- Avoids or dislikes tasks requiring a lot of thinking.
- Loses things.
- Is easily distracted.
- Is forgetful in daily activities.

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HYPERTACTIVE/IMPULSIVE SYMPTOMS

2) Six (or more) of the following have persisted for at least 6 months to a degree that is inconsistent with developmental level and negatively impacts directly on social and academic/occupational activities:

- Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in chair.
- Has difficulty remaining seated.
- Runs about or climbs excessively in children; extreme restlessness in adults.
- Difficulty engaging in activities quietly.
- Acts as if driven by a motor; adults will often feel inside like they were driven by a motor.
- Talks excessively.
- Blurts out answers before questions have been completed.
- Difficulty waiting or taking turns.
- Interrupts or intrudes upon others.

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(For individuals 17 and above only 5 or more symptoms are needed)

- Several symptoms present before age 12 years
- Several symptoms present in two or more settings
- Clear evidence that symptoms interfere with, or reduce the quality of, social, academic, or occupational functioning. (mild, moderate, severe)
- Not better explained by another condition (e.g., anxiety disorder, mood disorder, etc.)

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 Presentations (not subtypes):

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, **Predominantly inattentive** presentation

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, **Predominantly hyperactive/impulsive** presentation

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, **Combined** presentation

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 ADHD in the United States: Key Stats

Sources: CDC National Survey of Children's Health (2022-2024), American Academy of Pediatrics, NIH

 **PREVALENCE IN CHILDREN**
Approximately 7 million children aged 3-17 have been diagnosed with ADHD, representing 11.4% of that age group.

 **GENDER DIFFERENCES**
ADHD is diagnosed in 15% of boys and 8% of girls.

 **AGE GROUP MOST AFFECTED**
Adolescents aged 12-17 years show the highest prevalence, with 14.3% diagnosed.

 **CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS**
Among children with ADHD, 78% have at least one other mental, emotional, or behavioral condition





- ...just bad parenting.
- ...caused by too much tv.
- ... needs to work off his energy.
- ...just too much sugar.
- ...“attention seeking” behavior.
- You can't have ADHD if you do well in school.
- ADHD only affects boys.
- There is a test for ADHD.
- All children with ADHD are hyperactive.
- ...just lazy or undisciplined.
- Everyone is “a little” ADHD.

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- ADHD is so much more than just difficulty sitting still and paying attention.
- There is a fundamental weakness in a set of cognitive skills known as the executive functions.
- If we ignore those, we don't get it. We miss a huge opportunity to support them.
- We need caregivers and teachers to understand the executive functions.

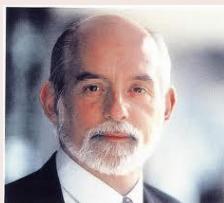
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Barkley's Unifying Theory

Russ Barkley, PhD



Model I will primarily follow is Russ Barkley's – describes them as :

"activities that one engages in which are self-directed, and help the person engage in self-regulation."

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Behavioral Inhibition

The mind's breaks



The capacity to stop and think before you act, resist the urge to say or do something, and take time to evaluate a situation and how your behavior might impact it.

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Verbal working memory

➤ The mind's voice



➤ Using language and words to engage in reflective thought.

➤ Strongly impacts reading comprehension, morally-guided behavior, grammar, math, etc.

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Nonverbal working memory

The mind's eye

The ability to hold nonverbal information in mind while performing complex tasks; incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the current situation, or project problem solving strategies into the future.

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Key intervention principles

1. Externalize important information, time, and motivation 
2. Break down tasks into small steps and provide rewards along the way. 
3. Do ONE THING at a time 
4. Intervene in the natural setting (cueing and prompting at the point of performance) 
5. Practice when stakes are low, accommodate when stakes are high. 

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By Cheryl Chalk

EXTERNALIZE EVERYTHING!

- Bedtime routine
- Pack for soccer
- Use washing machine
- Information
- Frequently misspelled words

Remember the math problem?? Stimuli decay

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A collage of four images. Top left: A digital timer with a red circle and a red hand, showing 40 seconds. Top right: A monthly project calendar titled 'Monthly Project Calendar 2019' with a grid of days and tasks. Bottom left: A black and white illustration of a sand timer. Bottom right: The colorful 'SpongeBob SquarePants' logo.

Every Child
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Externalize motivation

ATTA BOY!

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RE: externalize motivation

**WE USE THESE TOOLS TO
SUSTAIN MOTIVATION
NOT TEACH A SKILL**

**DO NOT STOP USING THEM
WHEN THE STUDENT SHOWS MASTERY
OF THE SKILL.
THAT'S NOT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT**

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2. Break down future tasks into small steps and reward

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- Event – Response – Outcome - keep them close in time.
- Break into small steps and “move the window” 



3. One Thing at a Time



Reduce mental load. Respect working memory.
Expect less multitasking.

- **Don't assume they're ignoring you.**
Their mental "counter space" may be full. Give grace and space.
- **Don't layer instructions.**
Wait until coat and shoes are off before giving multi-step directions.
- **Avoid "double-tasking" moments.**
Don't talk about after-school plans while they're packing up in the morning.



“One Thing at a Time” strategies (cont)

- **Use a fun, low-judgment cue to check attention.**
Try: "Ring ring?" or "Is now good?" to gently ask, "Are you with me?"
- **Give one task at a time—literally.**
Use a chore list with individual cards or strips handed out one by one.
- **Pause before speaking if they're distracted.**
If you suspect they're not listening, wait—or ask first.
- **Keep transitions clean and simple.**
Expect tension - transitions are hard. Don't add extra demands during them.



- **Watch what you say during “in-between” times.**
Car rides, bedtime, and busy mornings are not ideal for complex conversations.
- **Repeat with patience.**
Executive function skills build slowly. Repetition is not failure—it's practice.

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4. Intervene at the natural time and place. Cueing and prompting at the point of performance



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- Cueing and prompting must happen *in vivo* – at the place and at the time the skill is to be demonstrated
- All those things you made for #1 – put them somewhere highly visible and at the time and place they are needed BUT you will **STILL** have to CUE AND PROMPT their use.

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5. Practice when stakes are low, accommodate when stakes are high.



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Executive Function Resources

Meltzer, L. (2010). *Promoting Executive Function in the Classroom.*
Meltzer, L., & Dunstan, J. (2026). *Executive Function and Emotional Regulation in the Classroom.*

Kaufman, C. (2010). *Executive Function in the Classroom: Practical Strategies for Improving Performance and Enhancing Skills for All Students.*

Dawson, P., & Guare, R. (2018). *Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents* (3rd ed.).

Dawson, P., & Guare, R. (2024). *Smart but Scattered* (2nd ed.).

Dawson, P., & Guare, R. (2012). *Smart but Scattered Teens.*

Dawson, P., & Guare, R. (2023). *Coaching Students with Executive Skills Challenges* (2nd ed.).

Moraine, P. (2012). *Helping Students Take Control of Everyday Executive Functions: The Attention Fix.*

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Springer School and Center empowers students with dyslexia, ADHD, and executive function challenges through four pillars: Springer Diagnostic Center, Springer Lower School & Middle School, Springer High School and Springer Learning Center.

Learn more at Springer-LD.org.
