



**Find out all about it:
Useful information on ADHD for
parents and relatives**



Dear parents,

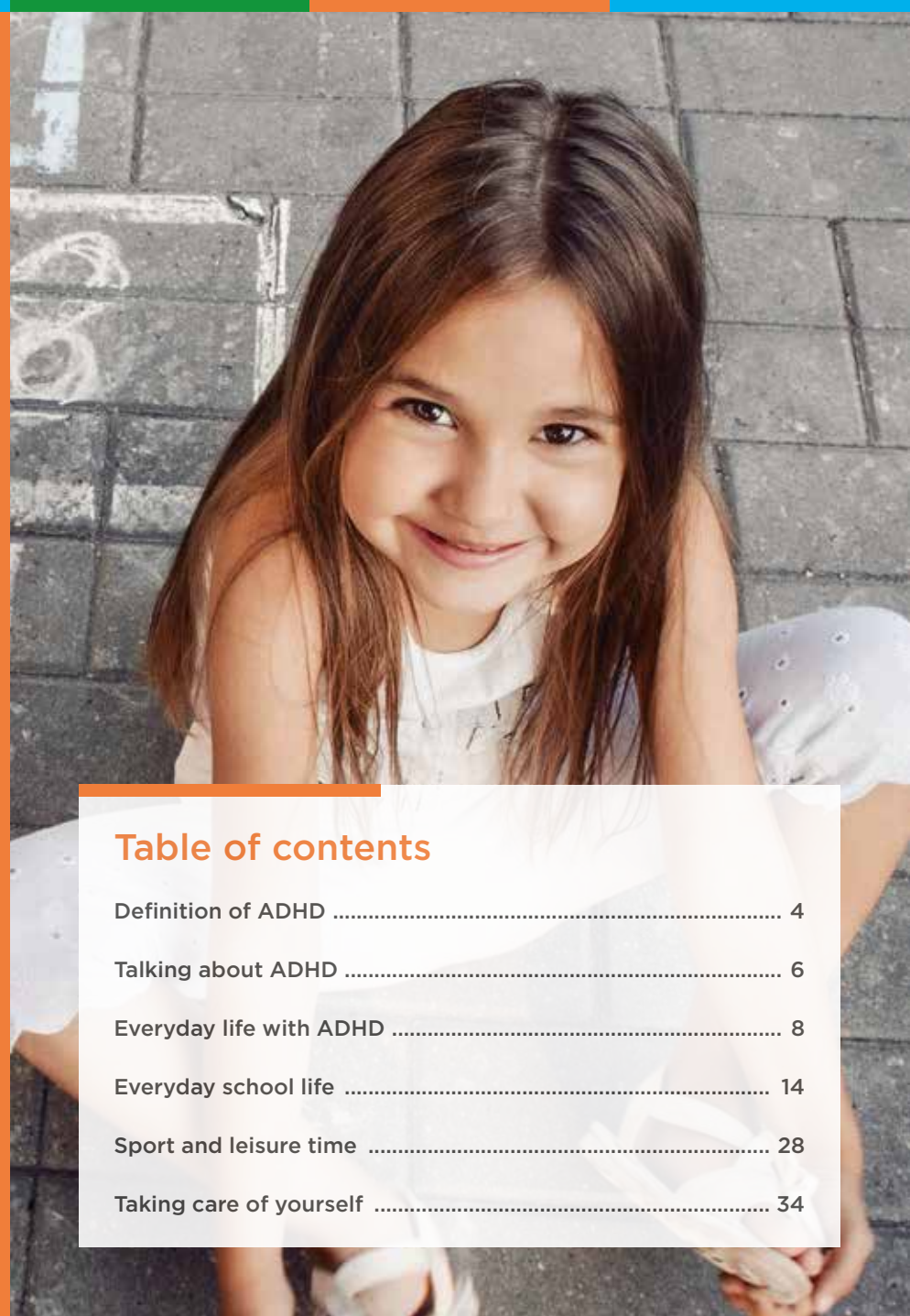
Everyday life with a child who has ADHD can be a great strain on families. Especially you as parents often have to put your child's needs before your own: Whether they have a quarrel with siblings, problems at school or in other areas. It is always the parents who have to try and find a solution.

If one of your children has been diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder), you have probably been struggling to get to grips with it and many questions may keep arising.

In this brochure we would like to provide you with ideas how to cope better in everyday life and provide information about ADHD and school. We have also compiled some tips for your child's leisure time. If you are looking for more information on ADHD or material especially written for children, please take a look at our entire range of brochures. You can find more information online at www.takeda-adhs.de.

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DEFINITION OF ADHD

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders. Around 5% of all children have ADHD. In up to two thirds of the children and adolescents affected (49% to 66%) the disorder persists in adulthood.



Symptoms of ADHD

There are three main or core symptoms associated with ADHD:

Inattentiveness

The children and adolescents

- often make careless mistakes or overlook details,
- often seem absent and cannot pay attention for long periods,
- seem not to listen, even when spoken to directly,
- are very forgetful and therefore often unable to organise themselves.

Impulsiveness

Children and adolescents who react impulsively by

- blurting out answers before the question has even finished,
- not being able to wait their turn,
- interrupting others or talking over them.

Further information about ADHD, its diagnosis and treatment can be found on the website www.takeda-adhs.de.

Hyperactivity

Hyperactive children

- often wriggle and squirm while standing or sitting,
- interrupt sedentary activities by jumping up, or running, or climbing around, no matter where they are.

Talking about ADHD



Talk to your child

Most children want to be “ordinary” and just like all the other children. Children with ADHD often feel that there is something different about them in comparison with other children even before they are diagnosed.

The Diagnosis: relief or defiance

If the feeling of “being different” is confirmed by a medical diagnosis, it may be a relief for both parents and child: The diagnosis finally offers an explanation for certain feelings, behaviours and the problems that arise. Sometimes, however, the certainty may be difficult to digest, especially for older children or adolescents. The diagnosis can be seen as confirmation of “being different” or even for being “sick”.

The expert explains

If your doctor agrees, an ADHD diagnosis may come across better if they tell the child about it and explain in detail, as they are a neutral third party and expert.

Parents are an important point of contact

Nevertheless, your child will still need to talk to you about the disorder. Such conversations must be conducted carefully. The following framework conditions are important:

- Choose the time and place so that you can talk without any interruptions or time pressure.
- Choose a good moment: If the child has just had an argument or a particularly stressful day at school, it is not the best time for such a conversation.



Talk to the siblings

“Like cat and mouse”

It’s normal for siblings to quarrel every now and then. In families where ADHD is present, however, the sheer amount of fighting can sometimes be worrying. Sibling rivalry can become an additional strain on the family.

Sibling conflicts

Siblings of children with ADHD can easily get the impression that family life revolves around the affected child: The daily routine, conversations, rules – everything depends on him or her. On the other hand, a child with ADHD also often finds their relationship with a brother or sister difficult. They see their sibling as the golden child that gets into much less trouble.

Talking openly about ADHD

In order to keep the potential for conflict between the siblings as low as possible, it is important for you to inform the siblings about ADHD as well.

- The children will thus learn what ADHD is, which will help them to understand the disorder and to see their sibling’s behaviour from another perspective.
- You are a role model for your children: If you acknowledge and accept the disorder, it will be easier for your children to do so, as well.

Older children, especially teenagers in puberty, no longer want to talk to their parents about certain topics. Trying to force them to talk is often fruitless. It is important for your child to find someone else to talk to in this respect. Perhaps there is a friend or relative whom you and your child can trust.

EVERYDAY LIFE WITH ADHD

Having the day firmly under control

Children with ADHD often need very strict rules and structures to organise their day – even when they are older. Recurring processes and repetitive rituals give them a sense of security and make the day easier to plan.

- Create a daily plan with a fixed schedule. Depending on the age of the child, this can be done in writing or with pictures.
- Lacking a sense of time can be compensated for with an alarm clock. It can be set to ring when a certain period of the day is completed, e.g. after 30 minutes of homework.



The morning routine

For many children with ADHD, getting up and ready in the morning is particularly difficult. It consists of many tasks that have to be completed in a short time and involves a number of transitions.

A schedule can help structure the morning

A schedule can be helpful to introduce more structure into the morning routine. Think about:

- What has to be done?
- How much time does your child need for the individual steps?
- How much time is required altogether?

Building on this, a morning plan can now be drawn up, showing when to get up, what has to be done and when. If it is hung up in a clearly visible place, the child can repeatedly check whether he or she is still “on time”.

Every morning is the same

Fixed schedules only help if they are adhered to. If every morning follows the same routine, you get used to it. It will not be easy to stick to the scheduled time though. Therefore, as a rule: Formulate your requests clearly and establish consequences in the event of non-compliance.



The evening routine

Most children prefer to stay up with the adults rather than go to bed in the evening. In children with ADHD, this common aversion can become a major problem. Many children have difficulties calming down enough to fall asleep.

Give incentives

Perhaps it will help your child if you associate “bedtime” with something positive. Introduce an evening ritual that your child enjoys, such as a good night story, cuddle time or something similar.

Too loud or too quiet

Some children “can hear a pin drop” in the evening, while others can hardly bear absolute peace and quiet. The environment should be designed accordingly: The room should be dark and quiet for children who are sensitive to stimuli. For children who have problems with a lack of stimulation a projection lamp that casts moving shadows or pictures on the ceiling can help.

A schedule for the evening

Even in the evening it can be helpful to also plan the evenings well and always stick to the same routine. Think about the following points:

- By what time should your child have fallen asleep?
- What tasks have to be done beforehand and how long do they take?
- How long should the “incentive part” last?

Tip

Take bedtime and calculate back how much time is needed for all the tasks to get there. Then you can start preparing for bedtime well in advance. Adolescents will ask for more responsibility, especially in the evening. However, the transition to more freedom should be learned gradually, in individual steps that have been agreed beforehand. It is important to keep fixed basic rules as a framework.





Times of crisis

Many parents of children with ADHD are familiar with the problem that their children suddenly have explosive outbursts of anger. Once they are in a rage, these children can sometimes find it very difficult or even impossible to stop. The real reason for their anger is not even important any more: It is no longer about the lost notebook or their mean brother.

Arguing objectively

At this stage, the child is no longer responsive to logical reasoning. So, you should not try to argue with the child or use logic to calm them down. It is better to discuss the situation when they have gained some perspective, for example the next day.

Gaining perspective

Some parents find the idea of time out helpful. At the start of an angry outburst, the child is calmly and firmly sent to a previously agreed “time out” location.

This “time out” is not a punishment, but an opportunity to cool down and to gain some perspective. The place should not offer any distractions, nor should it frighten the child. A suitable place, for example, is the parents’ bedroom. If the child cannot stick to this agreement, you can also leave the room.

Everyday life with a child with ADHD is shaped by requests, repetitions and reminders, which can easily lead to a negative image. Parents may only see the child as a “pain in the neck”, and children see their parents only as a “grouch” or “warden”.



See the positive sides

It is important, both for your own sake and that of your child, that you see each other’s positive aspects from time to time, even if this seems difficult.

- Make a positive list of what your child is good at and what you like about them.
- Try to track progress. Also, watch out for little improvements.
- Let your child know when they have done something well and reward them for doing it.
- Some parents find a “play and fun time” helpful, when tasks and demands take a back seat. During this period, the main goal is to have fun together, for example by playing together.
- Sometimes it helps to look at the child while they are sleeping. Seeing them relaxed and peaceful makes it easier to remember what you especially value about your child.

Tips for dealing with tantrums

- The top priority is: You must remain calm. If you flare up as well, the situation is more likely to escalate.
- Try to react early to outbursts of anger, not just when the child is already in a rage.
- Praise the child when they have calmed down again.
- The outbursts of anger should not be worthwhile: It is important not to let the child have their way afterwards or permit them to avoid the tasks that led to the outbreak.
- Praise the child if they do not fly into a fit of rage in a typical situation.

EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE

Challenges at school

Difficulties in everyday school life are often inevitable due to the symptoms of ADHD. A short attention span, erratic behaviour, physical restlessness or dreaminess: these typical characteristics of ADHD do not fit in well with the requirements of school lessons.



Getting ready for school

To counteract difficulties at school, it is very important for children with ADHD to prepare for the school day ahead while still at home. The following tips can help:

- The child should pack their school bag the day before, at a fixed time as part of their daily routine. This also includes getting the work material ready, e.g. by sharpening pencils. Once at school, everything should be “ready to go”.
- Distinguish notebooks for each subject from each other by using differently coloured covers.
- “Bundle” related notebooks and books, e.g. by using a folder or individual compartments in the satchel.
- Keep a homework notebook, possibly prepared in advance, so that only the important variable information has to be entered.
- Toys, souvenirs or other things that have nothing to do with the class should not be put in the satchel.



Homework

Homework time is the worst time of the day for many children with ADHD. It seems full of endless rows of numbers in maths, slowly merging words in language studies, and seemingly irrelevant dates in history.

A vicious circle is set in motion

If homework is perceived as a constant failure, the child will not do it. They don't learn the subject matter and homework becomes even more of a "dreaded monster".

Nerves become frayed

Homework time also tries the patience of parents: You must constantly issue warnings, remain vigilant and keep monitoring your child. Often the desired sense of achievement, such as good marks in the next class test, is also very elusive. All too often, doing homework "together" leads to a major argument or a dreaded outburst of anger.



Tips

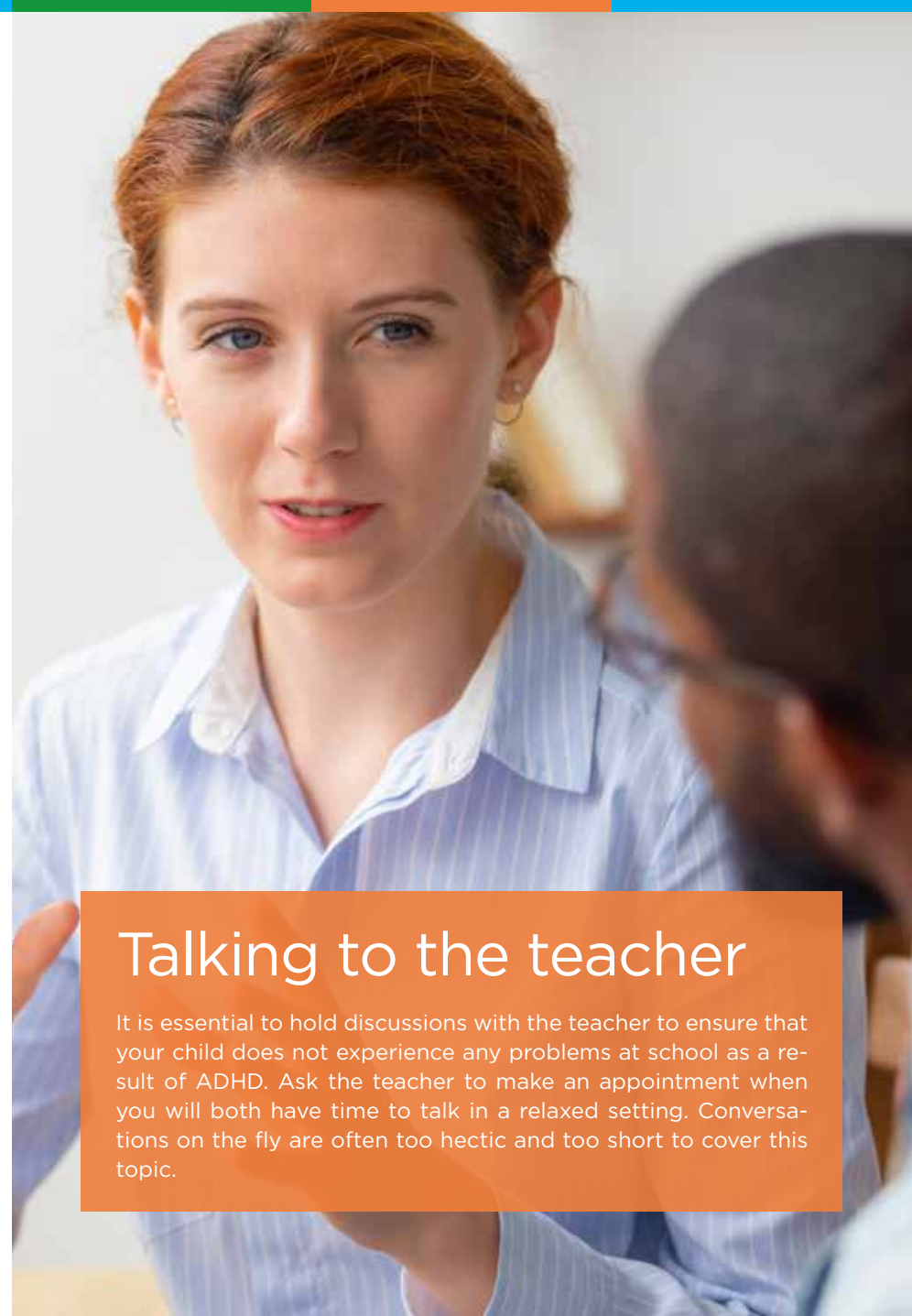
- Be present or at least close by when your child is doing homework.
- Prepare a homework notebook, preferably in collaboration with the teacher. This makes it easier for your child and yourself to gain an overview.
- The child should always sit in the same workplace, ideally at a desk. The place should be tidied and cleared beforehand, e.g. the evening before.
- A regular homework time, e.g. after a meal, helps to make it a fixed point in the day and to become routine. Concentration decreases in the evening, so don't set the time frame too late.
- Avoid any distractions, be it visual ones (e.g. television) or aural ones (e.g. loud music).
- Establish clear rules: no playing, eating, phone calls or other "distractions" while doing homework.
- Allow your child to take regular mini breaks, e.g. five minute breaks every half hour. If the homework takes longer than an hour, a longer break of 15 minutes should be scheduled.
- Discuss with the teacher whether options for individual support are available.
- Support your child with their homework, repeat the material from school and act as their partner as best as you can.
- Praise the child's efforts and attempts, even when the results leave room for improvement.



Help at school

There are also aids in everyday school life which can help the child to successfully participate in lessons. These tips should be discussed with the teacher as well as your child.

- Being seated alone, and if possible near the teacher, can help the child: they will be less distracted and the teacher can help or intervene more quickly.
- Fixed class rules help the child orient themselves. It is best to pin the rules up in the classroom as a reminder.
- Just like at home, only the work materials that are currently needed should be on the child's desk at school, and it should be tidy.
- The child should not be humiliated or made to look like a fool.
- Making eye contact at times or agreeing on "secret" signals with the teacher (e.g. for "pay attention!") can help maintain the child's attention without interrupting the lesson.
- The child's urge to move around can be satisfied by letting them do little tasks, e.g. by being the "board monitor" and thus being allowed to get up and wipe down the full board. Most children, however, consider their relationship with him or her to be the most important factor.
- The child's strengths should also be recognised and praised.
- The teacher is supposed to protect the child from discrimination, so it is important to arrange a talk with him or her. You can find out more about this in the next section of this brochure.



Talking to the teacher

It is essential to hold discussions with the teacher to ensure that your child does not experience any problems at school as a result of ADHD. Ask the teacher to make an appointment when you will both have time to talk in a relaxed setting. Conversations on the fly are often too hectic and too short to cover this topic.



Potential Problems and Solutions

The problems should be described as precisely as possible during the conversation so that they can then be tackled together. The sooner problems are identified, the better countermeasures can be taken before a situation escalates. The following points can help clarify the situation:

- How does the child behave at school?
- Does he or she have any friends? What sort of relationship do they have with their classmates?
- Are there any performance issues? If so, where exactly?
- What strengths and weaknesses does the teacher see in the child?
- How and in what situation does the child react to the teacher?
- What strategies are helpful at home?
- What strategies does the teacher find helpful?



Cultivating relationships

Unfortunately, the relationship between parents and teachers is not always harmonious and cooperative. It can sometimes be marred by mutual recriminations and lack of understanding. It is important to put yourself in the other person's shoes. When talking to the teacher, bear in mind:

- The teacher may not have dealt yet with the subject of ADHD in as much depth as you have. May they be interested in receiving some informative material before the interview?

- As a parent you want to protect your child, especially from harsh criticism. Do not necessarily consider negative reports as an attack, but as an aid that helps highlight problems.

Your child may behave very differently at school than at home, so the problems described by the teacher, and their perspectives, may be new to you.

- Try to work on solutions together, or make some suggestions directly.
- Remind yourself time and again: Both parties will benefit if the situation improves.
- Maybe not all teachers will be open to suggestions at first. However, if one of the teachers is open to new rules and methods, and if these succeed, the other teachers might also adopt them.



When nothing is working

If you find it impossible to work with the teacher even if you make a great effort to do so, you can contact a tutor, the school director, or the school psychologist, to name a few examples. The education authority or the supervisory school authority can get involved, as well. However, you should bear in mind that a conflict-ridden relationship with the teacher or school will not

have a positive effect on the overall atmosphere. If the situation cannot be mediated by third parties, a change of school may make sense. Under no circumstances should you accept a lack of support for your child: This can lead to deficits that are difficult to reverse later.



Rights and obligations

What do I have to tell the teacher? Parents are not legally obliged to inform the teacher about the disorder. However, it is worth remembering that the teacher can only deal with the child and their problems properly if they are aware of the specific situation. Furthermore, if the problems remain unspoken, this can have a negative effect on the teacher-pupil relationship and on school marks.

Confidentiality

If you inform the teacher of the diagnosis, they have a confidentiality obligation: The information may not be passed on to other students or other teachers without parental permission.

Help with a diagnosis

Teachers are not obliged to fill in questionnaires about their pupil's behaviour, even if requested to do so for a medical diagnosis. They can do so, however, on a voluntary basis.

If you explain to the teacher how important this is for you or your child and how the teacher could benefit from a correct diagnosis, it may encourage teacher to provide support.



Medication

Only an expert, i.e. a doctor, can decide whether a child needs to take medication or not. Teachers or school principals may not generally prohibit the use of medically prescribed medication in their class or at "their school".

Medication administration

If a child has ADHD, medication may have to be taken during school hours or possibly on a school trip. Many parents are worried about giving the medication into the hands of the child and would like to call on the teacher's help. However, teachers themselves are often unsure about the legal situation. Due to different regulations in the different German federal states, a general answer to this question is not possible.

A general consensus is that teachers are not medically trained staff and fundamentally should not administer any medication. In individual cases, you should therefore enquire at your Ministry of Culture about the current legal situation. You can also ask the teacher to remind the child to take the medication themselves, or to allow alarm functions for wristwatches, or special pill boxes with alarm function.



School choice

Due to the foreseeable difficulties, starting school or moving on to a secondary school is a decisive and sometimes challenging point in the life of a child with ADHD. Therefore, many parents carefully consider when their child should start school and what type of school would best suit them.



Starting school

If the disorder is identified before starting school, the question of whether the child should be put back a year may arise, even if their development is otherwise normal. It would be positive for the child to have more time for their individual development. On the other hand, there may be less room for repeating a class during elementary school, since the child would then be much older than their classmates. A transitional solution may be nursery schools that specifically address the deficits of the children and slowly introduce them to school.



Type of school

Every school is different

Before starting school, the question arises as to which school the child should attend. Even the same “type” of schools varies widely. It is therefore best to go for a personal interview with a teacher or the head to enquire about specific points.

Alternative types of school

Many parents are considering whether alternative schools such as Montessori or Waldorf schools would be more suitable for their children with ADHD. The following considerations should be taken into account.

Positive features that often occur in “alternative” schools include:

- There is less pressure to perform and get good marks.
- The child’s individuality may be better taken into account.
- There is greater promotion of social skills.

Critical points that can apply to “alternative” schools include:

- A greater sense of initiative and independent learning are often encouraged and there are less structures or rules.
- Depending on the type of school, there may be more pupils per class.
- Poor performance at school could go undetected because grades are not awarded.



Secondary schools

After elementary school, the question arises as to what type of school is best for the child. The decision about a secondary school should be carefully considered and the advantages and disadvantages should be discussed with trusted third parties.

What can the child achieve?

When choosing the type of school, above all you should take the following points into consideration: If you choose a type of school that corresponds to the child’s maximum performance, the child will receive the highest possible qualification, if successful. On the other hand, having to constantly make a huge effort for what may turn out to be minimal success could lead to greater frustration and an aversion to school in general.

Later possibilities remain open

Perhaps you and your child would be more contented and relaxed if the child “only” took their GCSEs or

equivalent and then began vocational training. There is always the chance to catch up on a higher academic qualification later, for example at evening school.

Schools specifically for ADHD

In recent years, some special educational needs schools or boarding schools that specialise in children with ADHD have been opened. They are designed to be fully adapted to the typical behaviour of these children. Many of these schools are state-run but others are private, so additional costs may arise. Get in touch with the local authority or directly with the school to find out more. Regional self-help groups for people with ADHD and their relatives will often provide you with information about offers in your area and how to apply for funds from the authorities. The following website offers further information and help on the subject of ADHD and school: www.takeda-adhs.de

SPORT AND LEISURE TIME

Sport

The way each child organises their leisure time naturally depends on their individual preferences and interests. If the child enjoys an activity, they will be motivated and more likely to adhere to necessary rules and requirements. However, some activities are also more suitable for children with ADHD than others.



Individual sports

Many children with ADHD particularly enjoy sports that have strict and clear rules, such as judo. If the child is a great animal lover, which is often the case in children with ADHD, sports involving contact with animals are particularly suitable. Some children also prefer fast pace sports that require quick thinking and reactions and thus maintain their interest. Still others like very well-structured, quiet activities, such as fishing.

- Jogging/athletics
- Cycling
- Swimming
- Climbing
- Trampolining
- Riding/vaulting
- Archery
- Sailing
- Fishing
- Fencing

When looking for the “right” sport for your child, you may have to try out which one suits best. Taster courses can be very helpful in this process and you can usually borrow the equipment you need at first. Examples of sports that may be suitable are:



Group activities

Children with ADHD often suffer from not really belonging to a group. Participation in non-profit institutions or associations often fulfils their profound desire to help. The available groups vary from one region to another. It is best to ask the group directly whether there are branches available in your child's age group. Most institutions have a list or a search function on their website with the contact details of the regional representative.



Toys

Lengthy games with a lot of rules are often difficult for children with ADHD because they have to follow a whole set of different instructions at once. This can, of course, be good training for the child, but it can also be overwhelming. So, decide how complicated and rule-based a game should be in view of how developed your child is.

Some kids with ADHD like construction games like building blocks. One advantage of this is that the game follows "natural" rules: A shoddily built tower will simply collapse.

Role games are also often popular with children. Dolls, Barbies or Playmobil figures, for example, can support the role play.



Digital world

Many children with ADHD love television or computer games. The rapidly changing stimuli meet their need for a lot of "input" and their impulsiveness. The downside is that television and computers may also give the child sensory overload, get them "riled up" and can also be real "time wasters". Media consumption is becoming a further bone of contention in many families. It all comes down to moderation. If there are fixed rules and limited times for media use, the child's interest in this area can be used positively. On the one hand, the child can be motivated through programmes with "added benefits" that combine playfulness with learning. On the other hand, the child is acquiring important skills like computer skills, which are often required in modern-day school and work life.



Creative pastimes

Children with ADHD are often described by their parents as extraordinary, highly imaginative and creative. These strengths can also be used in leisure activities, such as painting classes or attending an art school.

The lessons will grab the child's attention and give them the chance to experience success in this area. Possible creative pursuits include:

- music schools/music lessons
- craft lessons
- art schools/art courses
- choir/singing lessons



Excursions

Going on a day trip with a child with ADHD requires very careful planning: If the child is bored or, on the contrary, overwhelmed by too many stimuli, a pleasant excursion can end in disaster.

So think carefully beforehand:

- What are the plans for the day?
- Is the child interested in everything on the schedule?
- How long does the child usually manage to “stick with it”?
- What can help to bridge waiting times, e.g. a book or travel toy?
- Does the child need breaks without any new stimuli? When are these necessary?
- Is there an alternative plan if things don't go as foreseen? Before starting an excursion, you should establish precise rules and consequences for the child and also run through them with the child. The choice of activity is also very important. Select goals that inspire your child but do not overwhelm them.

The following suggestions may be useful:

- Hands-on museums:
You can find a list of children's and youth museums at “Bundesverband für Kinder- und Jugendmuseen”
www.bv-kindermuseum.de
- Zoos
- Planetariums and observatories
- Cave/mine tours

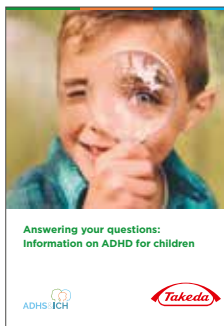
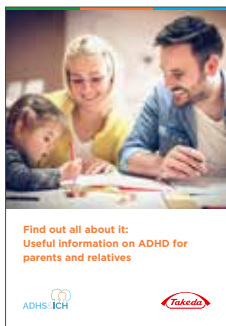
Taking care of yourself

Having time to yourself or indulging in something is easier said than done when caring for a child with ADHD. Nevertheless, it is important to try and get a few minutes to yourself. After all, you need to replenish your energy reserves so that you can cope with everyday life with your child effectively and in a relaxed manner. You don't have to take whole days off: Often even half an hour helps a little to recharge your batteries.

- Maybe you can prioritise upcoming tasks: Is it really essential to do the laundry tonight or will it be alright to leave it until tomorrow?
- Include your partner or friends and family to establish fixed childcare schedules and plan in some time to yourself.
- Perhaps you can also find someone in a self-help group who is interested in swapping help.



Our information brochures on ADHD



Further information can be found at:

www.takeda-adhs.de



or on Facebook/Instagram at

ADHS und Ich

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