

Supporting children with ADHD: A family-centred approach

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Acknowledgement of Country



“Flying Ant Dreaming”

by Kara Napangardi Ross
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What today is about

01 Hear from Allied Health Professionals

02 Build Connections with Other Families

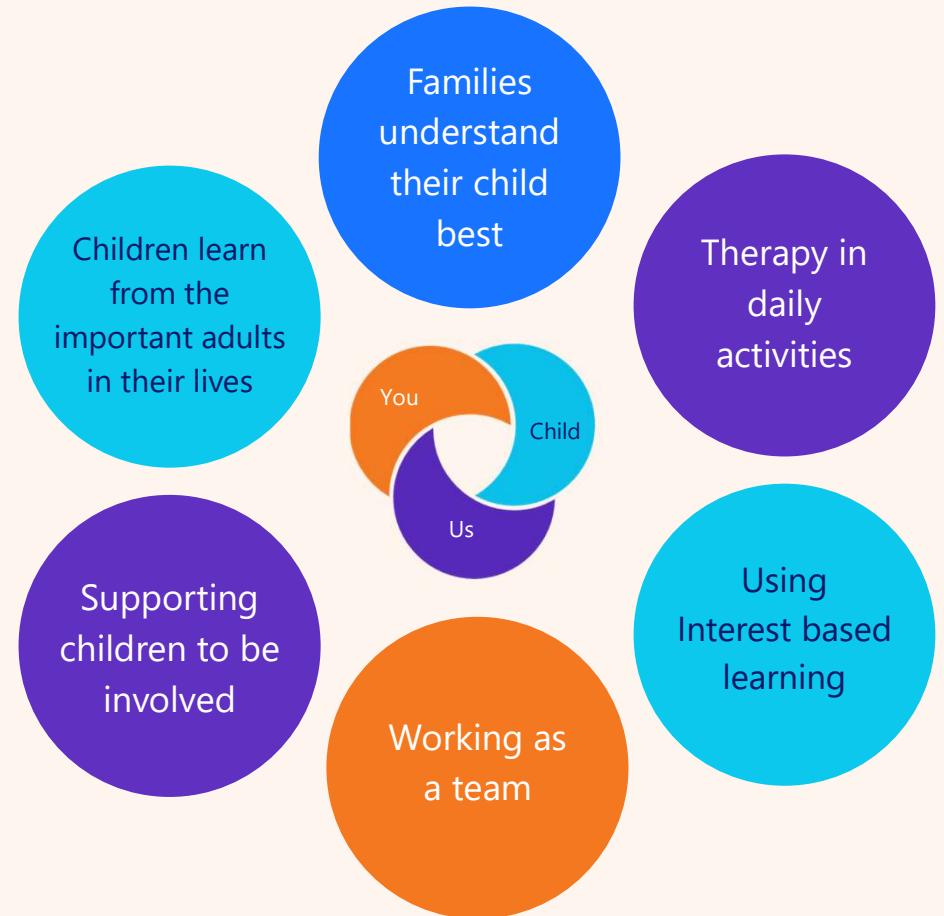
03 Understand Practical Strategies

04 Explore Local Support Options

05 Feel Empowered and Informed



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Understanding ADHD: What it means for my child, for me and my family

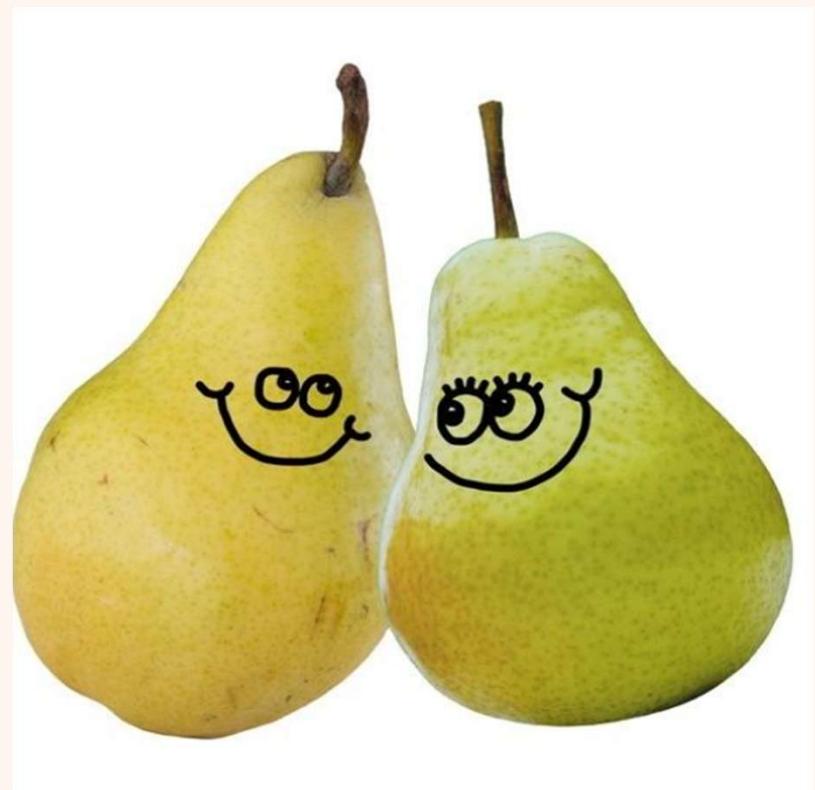


How to (explain) ADHD



Pair share

- What struck you most about that clip?
- What was new information to you?
- What felt like it reminded you strongly of your young person?

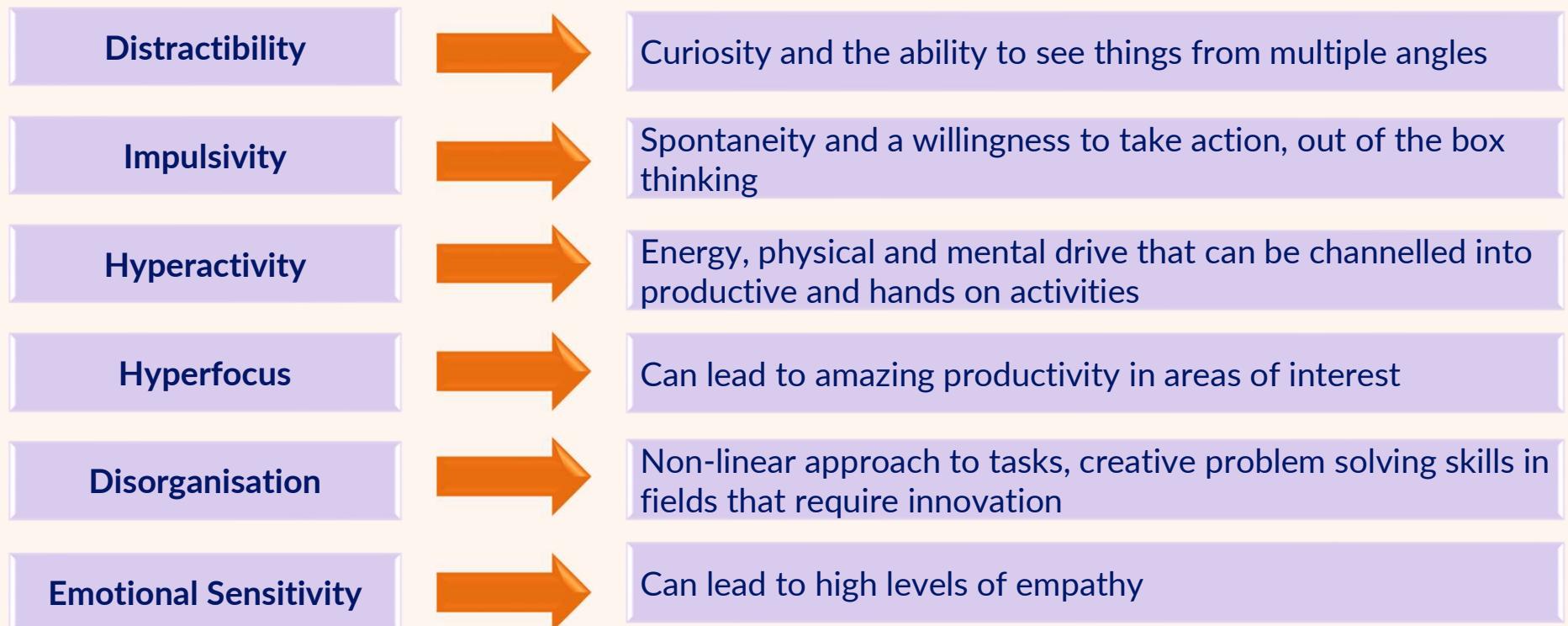


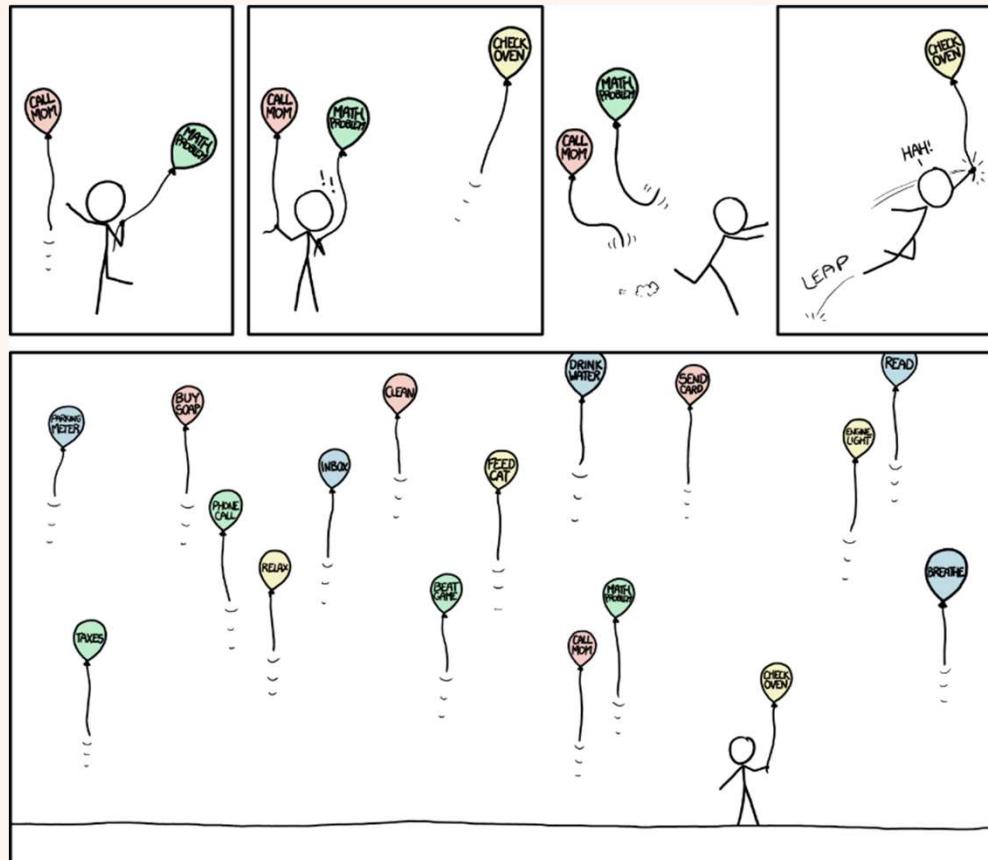
Quick dive into the evidence

- ADHD as a neurodevelopmental condition
- Brain based differences in attention, regulation and executive function
- Prevalence
- Gender differences



Challenges and their "flipside"







Impact on the child

- Self-care behaviours
- Friendships
- Learning
- Emotional wellbeing
- What might it feel like to live with ADHD?
- Walk in their shoes activity



Impact on parents/caregivers and family

- Emotional load on parents
- Relationship impacts
- Finding supportive connections
- Family ripple map – What ADHD touches in our family life?



Finding some balance with ADHD

What do I want my child to feel about themselves as they grow up?





Regulation



Learning and Participation

Language and ADHD



ADHD and Language Challenges Often Go Together

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Communication Struggles Can Affect Social and Emotional Wellbeing



Academic Difficulties May Be a Sign of Language Needs

.



Behavioural Concerns Might Be Linked to Language Skills

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Multilingual Children with ADHD: What Caregivers Should Know

- Multilingual children with ADHD and language disorders may be misunderstood, as their language differences from learning a second language can resemble symptoms of ADHD or DLD, leading to over- or underdiagnosis (Watson & Westby, 2025).
- Code-switching



Code-switching

Code-switching refers to when a multilingual person switches between languages during conversation. In children with ADHD, code-switching can be influenced by their unique cognitive and behavioural traits.

1. Impulsivity and Attention Shifts

- Children with ADHD often switch topics or ideas quickly due to impulsivity or distractibility. This can lead to more frequent or less contextually appropriate code-switching, especially if they are trying to express themselves more efficiently or are struggling to retrieve a word in one language.

2. Executive Function Challenges

- ADHD is associated with executive function (EF) difficulties—skills like planning, inhibition, and working memory. These EF challenges can make it harder for children to manage when and how to switch languages appropriately, especially in structured or academic settings.

3. Language Retrieval and Processing

- Children with ADHD may have slower or less efficient word retrieval. If they know a word in one language but not the other, they might switch languages mid-sentence to keep the conversation flowing, even if it's not socially expected.



Let's Talk about Participation

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Goodness of fit



Taken from McWilliam 'Assessing functional needs to develop meaningful IEP goals'



Why High Expectations Matter for Your Child

- **Believing in your child's potential makes a difference:** When caregivers and educators expect children to grow, learn, and succeed, it builds their confidence and motivation, even when challenges like ADHD are present.
- **Supportive expectations lead to better outcomes:** High expectations encourage meaningful goals, respectful relationships, and tailored support, helping children feel valued and capable in their learning journey.



Self-advocacy

- Self-advocacy as a life skill
- Role as a skilled adult guide
- Importance of language: I focus best when... I do my best learning when...
- What's one area where I could support my child to have a little more voice?



Autonomy

- Why autonomy matters
- Autonomy audit: where might we be over functioning for them?
- Choice within boundaries
- Shared problem solving



Strengths-based practice for your child

- **Start with what your child loves and does well**
 - We focus on your child's interests and abilities, not just challenges. This helps them feel confident and enjoy learning.
- **Learning happens in everyday moments**
 - Activities like play, mealtime, or park visits can become powerful opportunities for growth when they connect to your child's strengths.
- **You know your child best**
 - Your insights guide us. Together, we build strategies that fit your family's routines and values.
- **Celebrate uniqueness**
 - Traits like curiosity or intense focus can be turned into strengths that help your child succeed in their own way.
- **Building resilience and independence**
 - When we use strengths, children learn new skills, feel capable, and develop a positive sense of self.



Motivation

- ADHD brains are often interest based rather than importance based
- Dopamine link: short term motivation vs internal motivation of mastery and belonging
- What lights them up?
- Strategy brainstorm – gamify chores, challenge by timer, offering choice, celebrate effort not results...



Wrap-up



Wrap-up

Additional resources

- ADHD National Guideline

<https://adhdguideline.aadpa.com.au/>

- Raising Children's

Network: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/adhd/about/adhd-children-teenagers/adhd>

- ADHD Australia <https://www.adhdaustralia.org.au/>

References

Hannig Russell, K. M., & Redmond, S. M. (2025). The Impacts of Co-Occurring Developmental Language Disorder on the Academic, Interpersonal, and Behavioral Profiles of Children With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups*, 10(1), 29-43.

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Watson, S. M., & Westby, C. (2025). Multilingual Learners With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Developmental Language Disorder: Assessing an Underserved Population of Learners. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups*, 10(1), 44-60.



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