

ADHD Symptoms, Impairments and Accommodations in the Elementary School Environment

DSM-5 Symptom	Possible Resulting Impairments in Elementary School	Possible Accommodations
Inattention		
Fails to give close attention to details OR makes careless mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties with including details such as name and date <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty picking up details and nuances in questions and assignments, misinterprets questions <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely checks for errors, proof reads or edits <input type="checkbox"/> Poor quality of work – inaccurate, careless mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> Poor time management so doesn't leave time to complete details or check for mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allow to write exams on computer with spellcheck software <input type="checkbox"/> Education staff to review assignments, check details, assist with time management & due dates, do not deduct marks unless reviewed and reminders given <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility in due dates – with opportunity to complete details & correct mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of questions on an exam or test and clarification of an assignment
Difficulty sustaining attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties remaining focused during class, conversations, or reading lengthy material <input type="checkbox"/> Day-dreaming or mind-wandering during teaching, instructions, working or reading <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to refocus after mind wanders <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty focusing on & completing large amounts of written work <input type="checkbox"/> Starts on assignment then loses focus <input type="checkbox"/> Gaps in learning due to inability to stay focused during teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Preferential seating away from distractions and close to other student who models on task behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Use agreed on prompts to refocus on work or listening <input type="checkbox"/> Check that you have their attention before giving instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Review instructions and assignments with student when others working to ensure understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Provide assignments in written or online format so student/ parent/tutor can refer back at any time <input type="checkbox"/> Allow student to receive notes & copies of presentations, allow use of a note-taker <input type="checkbox"/> Use of computer for tests or exams <input type="checkbox"/> Allow testing/exams to be completed over several shorter sessions rather than one long session <input type="checkbox"/> Do not assign several tests and assignments within a day or short period
Difficulties listening when spoken to directly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mind often wanders when discussing something with peers <input type="checkbox"/> Often misses social cues or key words during one-on- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check that you have their attention when speaking to them <input type="checkbox"/> Gently prompt to redirect attention

	<input type="checkbox"/> one or small group interactions	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide notes from class discussions & presentations <input type="checkbox"/> Work with education staff or mentor to learn strategies for keeping mind on conversations, watching for social cues <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of instructions of an assignment
Difficulties following through on instructions AND fails to finish	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructions only partially followed <input type="checkbox"/> Begins but unable to remain focused to complete assignment or task, easily side-tracked <input type="checkbox"/> Moves from one incomplete assignment to another	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm understanding of the instructions and ensure that there has been no misinterpretation or gaps <input type="checkbox"/> Give one or two directions at a time <input type="checkbox"/> Make directions clear brief and specific <input type="checkbox"/> Chunk and repeat longer explanations <input type="checkbox"/> More supervision required to ensure that instructions have been followed and work completed <input type="checkbox"/> Assist the student through the steps <input type="checkbox"/> Provide visual supports for instructions, checklists , examples of the finished project <input type="checkbox"/> Help student chunk larger assignments & review progress on assignments <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of questions on an exam or test and clarification of an assignment
Difficulty organizing tasks & activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles to remember routines <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty organizing thoughts <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to organize things- messy desks, lockers etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty sequencing or organizing steps for more complex tasks or assignments <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty developing a time line for longer assignments <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty getting things together for school, organizing things needed for the day <input type="checkbox"/> Have to go over and over instructions and still cannot organize what needs to be done in their heads <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to chunk assignments into manageable pieces – easily overwhelmed <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty completing independent projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to access prompt sheets with outline of steps, formulas etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of questions on an exam or test and clarification of an assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Provide organizational/planning tools and software plus instruction & support in its use <input type="checkbox"/> Education staff to help set up work plan, lists of essential items to bring to class etc. & review steps <input type="checkbox"/> Colour coding to assist with organization <input type="checkbox"/> Allow student to keep their belongings with them

<p>Avoids, dislikes OR reluctant to engage in effortful tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Puts off starting assignment –active avoidance and procrastination – does other activities, wanders around <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed and unable to identify how to start an assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Can't articulate ideas in their head or on paper <input type="checkbox"/> Leaves assignments to the last minute then runs out of time to complete & hand in <input type="checkbox"/> Gets anxious about procrastinating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Needs supervision and prompting to get started <input type="checkbox"/> Work with education staff to review assignments and discuss first steps, chunk assignments and review progress <input type="checkbox"/> Additional time for assignments if too many due at same time <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility on due dates when load of assignments are overwhelming <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of questions on tests and clarification of an assignment
<p>Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Loses essential belongings <input type="checkbox"/> Loses things that are vital to completing assignments, duties, life activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of additional copies of course material <input type="checkbox"/> Work with education staff to develop effective habits or strategies for keeping needed items in one place & how to retrace steps to remember where item was last
<p>Easily distracted by extraneous stimuli</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Distracted by noise, visual distractors and movement <input type="checkbox"/> Daydreams or gets distracted by own thoughts when supposed to be listening <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to remain focused during academic or social activities <input type="checkbox"/> Misses educational information and instructions due to distractibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Preferential seating away from distractions <input type="checkbox"/> Allow the use of (noise-cancelling) headphones when working in distracting environments <input type="checkbox"/> Option to use study carrel at their discretion <input type="checkbox"/> Priority seating away from sources of distraction <input type="checkbox"/> Take tests in quiet environment <input type="checkbox"/> Provide description of assignment in written format <input type="checkbox"/> Allow extra time on timed-tests (usually time and a half)
<p>Often forgetful in daily activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Forgets and confuses school schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Often forgets to bring things to specific classes <input type="checkbox"/> Forgets to record and misses key events & due dates <input type="checkbox"/> Over-reliance on adults to remind <input type="checkbox"/> Gets mixed up with days so ends up by forgetting events and to bring in necessities like gym clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Forgets commitments to social and academic activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide plenty of visual reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Provide organizers <input type="checkbox"/> Allow duplication of material <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to access reminder sheets with steps, formulas <input type="checkbox"/> Teach reminder strategies, provide access to online class schedules, liaison with parents on important due dates and appointments

Hyperactivity / Impulsivity

<p>Often fidgets with or taps hands or feet OR squirms in seat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Particularly when having to sit long periods <input type="checkbox"/> Fidgets to the point of distracting others <input type="checkbox"/> Fidgets with objects, leg-jiggling, shifting positions frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Bites nails, twirls hair, chews pencils <input type="checkbox"/> Need for movement may increase when stressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Permit preferred seating so squirming & shifting position will not distract others <input type="checkbox"/> Allow use of stress balls to help control fidgetiness <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for more frequent breaks to stand & move around <input type="checkbox"/> Allow the student to cue the educator when a movement break is required <input type="checkbox"/> Provide prearranged strategies for breaks such as delivery of attendance, walk to library etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Break stressful/difficult tasks into smaller chunks
<p>Often leaves seat in situations when remaining seated is expected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> When there is no provision to move around in class they get up and leave class or walk around 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allow student to stand or move at side or back of class when required <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of standing desk or allow to stand as needed <input type="checkbox"/> Use exercise balls instead of chairs <input type="checkbox"/> Allow the student to cue the educator when a movement break is required <input type="checkbox"/> Standing desks
<p>Often 'on the go', acting as if 'driven like a motor'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> When working at desk or computer feels compelled to get up and move about <input type="checkbox"/> Get bursts of energy and just have to move around <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to function, remain still in quiet environment, such as exams, libraries, confined work spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Gets anxious when cannot move around – compelled to move <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot shut off creative side, streams of ideas, so constantly writing notes or muttering, records voice notes because cannot write as fast as thinks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allow frequent movement breaks <input type="checkbox"/> Develop cues to request movement break <input type="checkbox"/> Send them on errands <input type="checkbox"/> Allow preferred seating so pacing so leaving area will not distract others <input type="checkbox"/> Allow controlled movement such as use of stress balls <input type="checkbox"/> Provide standing/elevated desk <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for independent work so movement will not distract others <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage mindfulness or meditation classes <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for a defined time to brain storm

Often blurts out, unable to await turn, interrupts or intrudes	<input type="checkbox"/> May be disruptive in class & annoy others <input type="checkbox"/> May become ostracized by instructors & peers	<input type="checkbox"/> Educators to ignore or accommodate minor disruptions <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare and cue them for times that they will be allowed to contribute and interact <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle reminder of social rules and reward attempts to comply <input type="checkbox"/> Teach and practice appropriate behaviour and social skills with frequent positive consequences <input type="checkbox"/> Allow to work independently – excuse from group work
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Please Note:

The possible accommodations included in this chart are based on expert consensus opinion,^{i, ii}. While certain accommodations are beneficial for some students with ADHD^{iii iv} the listed accommodations are not uniformly beneficial for all students with ADHD. Therefore, medical experts should use the charts as a tool to assess functional impairments while reviewing possible accommodations that would likely be helpful.

ⁱ Froelich & Brinkman 2017
ⁱⁱ Fabiano & Pylr 2018
ⁱⁱⁱ Jansen et al, 2017
^{iv} Lovett et al 2018