

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## What Is the Difference Between CAPD and ADHD? Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

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Among parents and educators, there are a lot of questions regarding the difference between two commonly diagnosed childhood disorders, CAPD (Central Auditory Processing Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). When should the child receive speech therapy? How can I help this child? What exactly are the symptoms of each? Am I doing the right thing? Who do I turn to?

The previous handout focused on children diagnosed with Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD), and as in the previous handout, the purpose of this handout is to provide parents, educators, and therapists with a general overview of the causes, symptoms, diagnosis methods, and treatments for ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Hopefully, a comparison of the two using these handouts will provide a much clearer understanding of these similar childhood disorders.



### Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

*I UNDERSTAND what you say, I just CAN'T do it!*

#### Overview:

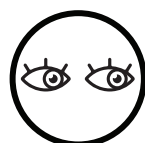
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder affects many children. Generally, a child afflicted with this disorder can understand oral and written commands/directions, but is unable to effectively complete the tasks due to the inability to focus on the tasks for extended periods of time.

#### Causes:

Although this is a common childhood disorder, scientists still have not isolated one cause of ADHD. Some feel that there may be a genetic component, with studies indicating an increase of occurrence if a child has one or more parents demonstrating characteristics of ADHD. Also, studies show that children diagnosed with ADHD have brain areas smaller in ratio than children without the disorder. Also, some studies link maternal smoking during pregnancy to a higher incidence of ADHD. Others feel that ADHD is often a misdiagnosis due to children exhibiting signs and symptoms of daily stressors including divorce, a recent move, etc. Others feel that ADHD is a misdiagnosis.

#### Symptoms:

Children diagnosed with ADHD may exhibit all or some of the following symptoms. (Again, this list is to serve as a general guideline and some children may present with other symptoms.)



- 1) Easily distracted (unable to complete tasks due to inability to attend).
- 2) Impulsive (acting without planning for consequences).

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(cont.)



3) Inability to attend, even when re-directed.



4) Difficulty following directions, poor organizational skills, tendency to lose things, and forgetting things frequently.

5) Some children may also exhibit signs of stubbornness, temper, defiance, or may have a diagnosis of a specific language disorder.

## Diagnosis:

The proper diagnosis of ADHD must come from a licensed health professional, such as a medical doctor. The health professional has a list of behavioral characteristics a child with ADHD may exhibit.

## Treatment:

This handout intends to be a generalized list of treatments. Your child's health care provider will determine and implement the proper treatment for your child.



- Medication (psychostimulants)



- Behavioral Therapy – “teaching” parents/teachers how to work with the child to make the best environment, focusing of reinforcement ratios for negative and positive behaviors, and modifying the child's school, social, and home environment.

- A combination of each of these.



CAPD and ADHD are similar and sometimes difficult to identify in children. The best way to treat children with either disorder is to educate yourself, familiarize yourself with the child's strengths and weaknesses, and provide individualized instruction. ***Please see Handy Handout #42 for more information about CAPD.***

## Resources:

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)  
[www.discoveryhealth.com](http://www.discoveryhealth.com)

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