

ADHD and MILITARY- CONNECTED CHILDREN

A Military Parents' Guide through Transition

**A Coordinated Approach to
Diagnosis and Support**



One in the
"Leaving Your Footprints" Series of
Military Family Guides through Transition



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ADHD and MILITARY-CONNECTED CHILDREN

A Parents' Guide through Transitions

This document is a parents' guide to understanding ADHD and learning how to communicate with professionals and other parents about issues related to transitions for highly mobile children with ADHD. Although written with parents in mind, it also is instructive and useful for educators and other professionals.

You will find in this document:

1. An Infographic entitled ***ADHD Things to Remember*** that provides a broad overview of ADHD.
2. An Infographic entitled ***ADHD Challenges*** that expands understanding a bit further and provides background for issues that will confront families as they move from one military assignment to another.
3. A three-page ADHD Dialogue Guide that provides instruction and advice for parents and professionals who would like to host a facilitator-guided conversation about transitions.
4. ADHD Resources from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

You are encouraged to print and reproduce all documents.

We encourage you to share the material in any medium or format with appropriate acknowledgment of the Military Child Education Coalition®. You may adapt the material as long as the intent remains unchanged and the modifications are explicitly noted.

These Infographics and the Guide were developed as a collaborative project by personnel from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). The work was supported by the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI), 2017.



ADHD and Military Connected Students

Things to remember for families who make many new starts.



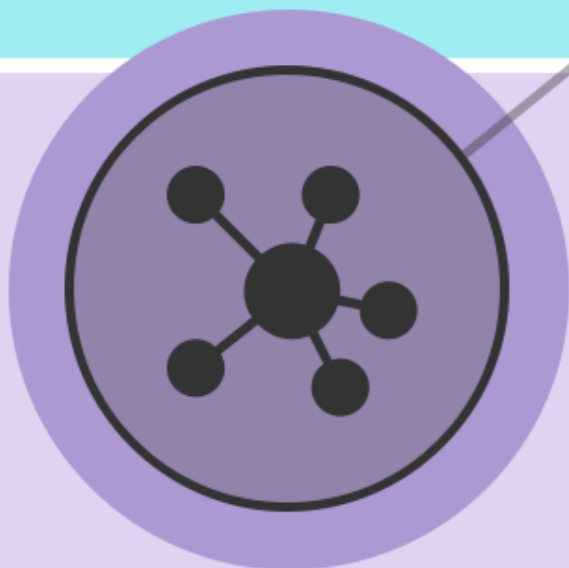
ADHD is biological and treatable.

- No lab work is needed to identify ADHD.
- Identification requires observation in a variety of settings; with multiple techniques by multiple people.
- ADHD is very responsive to medication, and environmental approaches.
- Effective treatment is a collaborative process between families, physicians, school staff and community providers.

Families are the service coordinators for their children.

Five C's for Parents of military connected children with ADHD:

- Communication
- Connections
- Collaboration
- Consistency
- Comprehensive services



Professional support is available.

- Parents and professionals together can develop a strengths based approach and positive reinforcement.
- Parents and professionals together can build comprehensive strategies and advocate for comprehensive services.
- Families must be sure that therapists and other providers know military resources available.



ADHD and Military Connected Students

ADHD is a challenge for every child and family impacted by the condition. Because military connected students often move 6-8 times during their school years, these students face a special challenge.

1



Identification

Facts about ADHD

- ADHD is a neuro-behavioral condition. It has both neurological and behavioral aspects.
- ADHD is treatable.
- ADHD usually appears before the age of 12.
- There are three types of ADHD:
Hyperactive
Inattentive
Combined
- 11.3% of the population meet the criteria for ADHD.
- Boys are twice as likely to be identified with ADHD as girls.
- 54% of children and youth with ADHD are also identified as having Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD).

2



After Identification

Home-School Communication is critical.

- Train parents and teachers together to build common knowledge.
- Consider educational needs together:
Learn about supports available through a 504 Plan.
Learn when special education may be appropriate.
- Consider medication issues together.
When deciding to use medication, start at the lowest dose and increase until symptoms decrease or side effects occur.
Work as a team to manage medication and determine the optimal dose.

3



Living Well with ADHD

Treatment demands a team approach.

- Work together as a team to assess responsiveness to medication and behavior change over time.
- Communicate important information to all caregivers in the school and community.
- Build school connections.
- Monitor:
Health
Grades
Interaction with friends
- Include what the child likes and is good at in the treatment plan.

ADHD DIALOGUE GUIDE

For Military Families

Introduction

Military connected students generally move six to eight times during their twelve years of schooling. They transfer between DODEA and public schools in communities where they are assigned. As they move among school settings, they learn that not all schools are equally prepared to provide needed services. One group that are particularly affected by these realities are students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

During the 2017 MCEC National Training Seminar (NTS), MCEC brought together experts, practitioners and families to consider how families may be more empowered to act on behalf of students with ADHD. The work was supported and facilitated by the National Center for Systemic improvement (NCSI). These stakeholders co-created two *Infographics* to communicate basic information about ADHD in a simple way. Using these infographics, they developed this *Dialogue Guide* to help families and local providers hold conversations that build sensitivity, understanding and support for children who cope with ADHD as they encounter new situations. In this issue, we present the work completed by these stakeholders.

Exploring the infographics

Two infographics were developed. The first is a very broad overview that captured the themes of the expert panel of professionals at the 2017 NTS. The second is the product of virtual interaction among a range of stakeholders as a follow-up to that session.

Examine the first infographic, ADHD Things to Remember.

- Is there anything that is new or surprising to you?
- Formulate your thoughts and questions.

Now, examine the second infographic, ADHD Challenges.

- Look at the three sections.
- Read the content and imagine how these issues impact the life of a child and a family.
- Now, think about the number of times that these issues must be explored with a new set of providers.

And, now you're ready to enter into a dialogue!

Participating in a Dialogue

Dialogue is a special kind of conversation. It is not a debate or a discussion. In dialogue, we endeavor to learn what others know and believe. More importantly, we want to create understanding that helps people act together on an issue. There are two types of questions that focus the dialogue.

Reaction questions surface perspectives of the individuals involved in the conversation. They seek to uncover what people know and believe. In conversing through reaction questions, it is helpful to hold interaction until everyone in the group has had a chance to respond to a question. Then, the facilitator

can begin to take comments or questions from among the participants and permit them to address questions to each other.

In dialogue, we are not trying to convince anyone of our position. Rather, we are seeking to understand the perspective of another that may contribute to a greater understanding of the issue in general, or the issue in a particular situation.

Sample Reaction Question Starter Stems:

About the issue:

1. Why is the impact of ADHD on military connected students important to you:
 - in terms of program and services?
 - in terms of relationships between families and schools?
2. In your experience, how does ADHD contribute to the stress that families experience in changing assignments?
3. What do your colleagues say about the need to build understanding between families and schools around ADHD?

About the ADHD Diagnosis:

1. In what ways does the ADHD diagnosis differ from other conditions? What are the implications?
2. In your experience, how do families react to an ADHD diagnosis?
3. In your experience, what do parents, say about the use of medication for ADHD?
4. In your experience, how do school staff talk about the use of medication to manage ADHD symptoms?
5. Why is a common understanding of ADHD important to you:
 - in terms of programs and services?
 - In terms of relationships among the parents, pediatrician/ family doctor and school?

About ADHD Interventions:

1. The research suggests that the combination of medication and behavior therapy (e.g., parent training, behavior management, etc.) is most effective. In your view, what would this teaming look like?
2. Research suggests that establishing the correct dosage is important in managing ADHD. In what ways does teaming together (practitioners, families, school, etc.) aid in the correct dosing and maintenance, and the effectiveness of a behavioral intervention?

Application Questions help participants use the information they have gained in addressing a problem they face. They help the group to think and act together. Application questions help the group to identify leverage points, propose actionable strategies and find key allies.

Sample Application Question Starter Stems

1. Recall a time when you needed support in managing ADHD symptoms. How might the approaches described in the infographic have changed that story?
2. Given the information on the infographic, how might parents be expected to respond to the information? Administrators and teachers? Doctors?
3. Where could this information impact current practice?
4. How might (parents, teachers, administrators, medical staff, related services providers students, coaches, chaperones. etc.) be better prepared to understand the need to put these ideas into practice?
5. Recall a time when a student with ADHD had to make a transition from one location and school to another. How might the information in this infographic have helped the family plan for that transition?
6. Students have an active role to play in managing their ADHD symptoms. How can we involve students the teaming process in age appropriate ways?
7. How might we prepare students for a greater self-advocacy around ADHD?

Hosting a Dialogue

The purpose of a dialogue is to help people discover that they have a common need to work together on the issue. When we consider the impact of ADHD, we must build a common understanding of what to look for, what we're looking at, who has the need for support and what support do they need?

Choose a dialogue facilitator that will be welcoming and neutral in interacting with the group. A facilitator manages the conversation by setting and maintaining ground rules that guide interaction. Working together, members of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education's IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Partnership created a [Facilitator's Guide](#) to create dialogue. This guide will help you to think about organizing and hosting a dialogue.

The Georgia Department of Education also has a very useful guide based on the dialogue strategy. You may find useful guidance in their manual for the [C.A.F.É. Process](#) (Circle of Adults Focusing on Education). The Georgia manual suggests a particular practice that they have found to be quite effective. In the CAFÉ Dialogues, there is no crosstalk until all have spoken. Participants do not react or ask question of each other until everyone has contributed. In their view, this helps participants think about their perspective in relation to the array of other perspectives before they speak.

Taking the First Step

This material is meant to help you begin important conversations about ADHD. It can also support conversations about other important issues.

Creation of this work has been supported by the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI).

ADHD RESOURCES

From the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry –

Facts for Families: ADHD & the Brain (New publication)

http://www.aacap.org/aacap/fffprint/article_print.aspx?dn=ADHD_and_the_Brain

ADHD: A Guide for Families

http://www.aacap.org/aacap/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/Home.aspx (This resource has an excellent video (~20 mins) that highlights the topics below.)

What is ADHD?

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/What_is_ADHD.aspx

Common Signs & Symptoms

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/Common_Signs_and_Symptoms.aspx

How Common is ADHD?

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/How_Common_is_ADHD.aspx

Getting Treatment:

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/Getting_Treatment.aspx

Supporting School Success

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/Supporting_School_Success.aspx

The Teen Years

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/The_Teenage_Years.aspx

Working Together

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/The_Teenage_Years.aspx

Resources

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/Resources.aspx

[ADHD Resource Center](http://www.aacap.org/aacap/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/Home.aspx)

http://www.aacap.org/aacap/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/Home.aspx

ADHD RESOURCES

From the American Academy of Pediatrics –

Understanding ADHD: Information for Parents

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/Pages/Understanding-ADHD.aspx>

Causes of ADHD: What We Know Today

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/pages/Causes-of-ADHD.aspx>

Treatment & Target Outcomes for Children with ADHD

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/Pages/Treatment-of-ADHD-and-Related-Disorders.aspx>

Common ADHD Medications & Treatments for Children

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/pages/Determining-ADHD-Medication-Treatments.aspx>

How Schools Can Help Children with ADHD

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/pages/Your-Child-At-School.aspx>