WHAT IF I SUSPECT MY CHILD HAS ADHD?

1. **Contact your child's doctor and talk honestly about your concerns.** While some pediatricians may do the initial ADHD assessment themselves, parents should always ask for a referral to an appropriate mental health specialist for treatment. Have clear examples of the concerning behaviors ready to share.

2. **If your child is diagnosed with ADHD, tell him/her in an understandable way.** Here's how: http://tinyurl.com/tellingkidsaboutADHD

3. **Start with the least amount of intervention and build from there.**
   - Therapy —> In-home/School supports —> Medication

4. **Seek parent/family education opportunities that give tips and tools to help all of you deal with an ADHD diagnosis** … this helps your child, too!

5. **Work with your child’s school to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that will keep everyone on the same page when it comes to supporting your child.**

*This information is for educational purposes and is not intended to diagnose your child.*

For more information, scan the code below!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JFdIjERQcM

**References:**

- [http://tinyurl.com/moreADHDinfo](http://tinyurl.com/moreADHDinfo)
- [http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd)

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WHAT IS ADHD?
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a behavioral disorder characterized by hyperactivity and trouble focusing.

Eight to 10 percent of school-age children are diagnosed with ADHD.

Boys are three times more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD.

THREE TYPES OF ADHD
1. Inattentive
   - Inability to pay attention
   - Difficulty following instructions
   - Problems with organization
   - Tendency to lose things
2. Hyperactive-Impulsive
   - Fidgeting
   - Difficulty playing quietly
   - Problems interrupting or intruding
   - Difficulty waiting in line
3. Combined
   - Combination of inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive types

INFLUENCERS OF ADHD
- NOT caused by:
  - Poor parenting
  - Too much sugar
  - Vaccinations
- Biological, but specifics still being researched.
- Many children with ADHD have a close relative with it as well.
- Smoking and drinking alcohol during pregnancy have been linked to ADHD.
- Excessive early screen time (TV watching, iPad use, etc.) is linked to attention problems.
  - 2 year olds or younger should have no screen time.
  - 2 year olds and older should have only one to two hours or less per day.

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PARENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION
Parent education and support groups are recommended, so parents can help create and foster environments for their children that will promote success. Contact your local Extension agent for information (fcs.tennessee.edu).

COMMONLY RELATED DIAGNOSES

Depression
- Affects about 18 percent of children with ADHD.
- Most common with inattentive type.
- May feel inadequate, isolated, frustrated by school failures and social problems, low self-esteem.

Anxiety Disorders
- Affects about 33 percent of children with ADHD.
- Excessive worry, fear or panic.
- Physical symptoms: Racing heart, sweating, stomach pains and diarrhea.
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder* and Tourette Syndrome*, as well as motor and vocal tics, are common.

Learning Disabilities
- Twenty to 30 percent of children with ADHD have a specific learning disability — reading, writing or math.
- Dyslexia and underdeveloped handwriting are common.
- ADHD may interfere with concentration and attention in school, negatively affecting performance.

*Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: Characterized by unreasonable thoughts and fears (obsessions) that lead you to do repetitive behaviors (compulsions).
*Tourette Syndrome: A nervous system (neurological) disorder that starts in childhood. It involves unusual repetitive movements or unwanted sounds that can’t be controlled (tics).