



supporting the ADHD Brain

What is ADHD?

When most people think of ADHD, they think:

- “They know what to do... but don’t do it”
- Starts tasks, then gets distracted
- Big reactions to small problems
- Constant reminders needed
- Trouble stopping, even when they want to

This isn’t a lack of intelligence, effort, or motivation. It’s a sign that the brain isn’t working as quickly or efficiently as it needs to.

So, what is needed for the brain to focus, stay on task, and regulate emotions?

These skills are built on foundational brain systems:

- Sensory processing
- Motor coordination
- Balance and body awareness
- Timing and rhythm
- Cognition

If these systems are inefficient, the brain has to work harder just to stay organized. The brain is more easily overwhelmed, leading to dysregulation. ADHD symptoms are the outward signs of imbalanced development across the foundational systems of the brain.

The challenges you see:

Inattention, disorganization, restlessness, and impulsivity, aren’t separate issues. They’re all connected to how the brain is functioning as a whole.



why this matters for parents:



When we only focus on the behavior:

- We rely on reminders, consequences, or rewards
- Progress feels inconsistent
- Kids often feel frustrated or misunderstood



When we understand the brain behind the behavior:

- We provide support, rooted in how the brain works
- We can learn what really works, instead of guessing
- We can begin building function for long-term change

Four Common ADHD Traits & What They Really Mean:

1. Attention Challenges:

- Difficulty staying focused
- Frequent daydreaming
- Trouble following instructions
- Easily distracted by sights, sounds, or thoughts

WHY: *This isn't about willpower. It's about how the brain filters and prioritizes information.*

Sensory processing weaknesses ➡ difficulty filtering out irrelevant input

Developmental Reflex immaturity ➡ the brain stays in a more reactive, "on alert" state, struggling to regulate

 *Their brain is often taking in too much at once or not organizing input efficiently, making it difficult to stay focused.*

2. Difficulty With Organization / Forgetfulness In Daily Activities:

- Starting tasks but losing focus partway through
- Struggling to manage time, materials, or responsibilities
- Frequently losing items or forgetting instructions

WHY: *Disorganization on the outside reflects disorganization in the brain.*

Weak integration between motor and sensory systems ➡ the brain uses more energy for basic processing and struggles to share information from different systems

Working memory is overloaded ➡ information isn't held long enough to use

 *They aren't just misplacing things. Their brain is struggling to hold, organize, and retrieve information in the moment.*

3. Restlessness And Need For Movement:

- Constant fidgeting, tapping, or moving
- Difficulty sitting still
- Seeking movement (crashing, climbing, pacing)

WHY: *What looks intentional is often the brain trying to organize itself.*

Motor development weaknesses ➡ the brain seeks movement to increase activation, body awareness, and focus

Sensory processing challenges ➡ movement provides input that helps the brain feel regulated

Developmental reflex immaturity ➡ reflexes can cause involuntarily motor reactions

 *Movement isn't always misbehavior. It may be the brain's way of getting the input it needs to stay alert, organized, and engaged.*

Four Common ADHD Traits & What They **Really** Mean:

4. Impulsivity and risk-taking / Carelessness:

- Acting without/before thinking
- Talking excessively, interrupting, or blurting out answers
- Rushing and making avoidable mistakes
- Missing details they know

WHY: *A brain in overdrive means the “brake pedal” is weaker than the “gas pedal,” making self-regulation difficult.*

Sensory overload ➡ The brain reacts quickly instead of responding thoughtfully

Developmental reflex immaturity ➡ Automatic reactions may override intentional control

Weak communication between lower-level and higher-level brain systems ➡

The areas responsible for reasoning, impulse control, and decision-making have less influence in the moment

 *They aren't always choosing to be careless or impulsive. Their brain may be reacting faster than it can pause, think, and choose a better response.*

What You Can Do Right Now

You don't have to wait to start helping your child. The strategies in this guide (movement, sensory input, environment, routines) are designed to:

- Support regulation in the moment
- Reduce overwhelm
- Make daily life feel more manageable

 *These aren't just “tips”—they're ways to support your child's brain.*

What Builds Long-Term Change

While coping strategies and supports help us get through today, lasting change comes from strengthening the brain itself.

That means:

- Improving how the brain processes sensory input
- Strengthening coordination and motor systems
- Supporting integration and communication between brain regions
- Building the foundation for executive function and regulation

 *The brain needs the right inputs to build and maintain connections. The Brain Balance program is built on the science of how brains actually change: the right practice, at the right intensity, with the right frequency. That precision is what drives real, lasting change.*



Tips & Tools for Supporting the ADHD Brain While addressing underlying brain function through specific, targeted sensory, motor, and cognitive exercises is the most efficient way to build long-lasting change in ADHD symptoms, there are many things you can do right now, at home, to support your child.

engaging the senses:



movement



visual



smell



auditory



touch

Move the Body = Engage the Brain

While it can sometimes feel counterintuitive, the body needs movement to help organize and engage the “brake pedal” of the brain. Aim for 30 minutes a day of big body movement (running, climbing, jumping, dancing, etc). Provide movement breaks before, during, and after challenging times like homework, meal times, or transitions.

Touch: Deep pressure can help calm the nervous system. When emotions are high or your child needs help calming down, try big hugs, blanket “burritos”, or a weighted blanket.

Sound: Fast-paced, wordy music and background noise could be ramping up the brain and making it difficult for your child to calm down (even if they love it!). Instead, try nature sounds or low and slow spa music / instrumentals for a calming environment.

Visual: Colors that promote calm are blues, turquoise and lavender.

Smell: The sense of smell is one of the fastest ways to help the brain slow down and calm down. Try using eucalyptus, peppermint, pine, or lavender.

Pro tip: Taking 5 minute brain breaks during learning times doesn’t just help with fidgeting or restlessness. It actually helps the brain understand and retain the information!

Studying for a test? Try reviewing facts while stretching.

Building a “brain healthy” environment that supports regulation:

The brain is constantly changing with every experience. For kids with ADHD or ADHD-type symptoms, it is important to build an environment that supports development. Even small adjustments can make a BIG impact. The ADHD brain often needs help slowing down.

Use the cards on the next page for quick ideas to support focus.

Smell

Essential Oils



Essential Oils can help stimulate the brain to improve focus. They can also help to reduce anxiety and help facilitate sleeping.



Auditory

Music



Music can help stimulate the brain. It can also help in promoting sleep and can bring a calming sensation to your child.



Movement

Gross Motor



Gross Motor Movements can help activate the brain promoting focus, a sense of calm and reducing behaviors.



Visual

Visual Activities



Visual activities help strengthen eye tracking. Eye tracking is crucial for reading & processing visual information.



Music for focus



"On the Edge" by Mickey Hart
"Winterfall Music" by Paul Warner
"Eagle's Call" by Bruce Hurnow
"Dawn" by Steven Halpern
"Kitaro Ki" by Kitaro
"O'cean" by Larkin
"Fairy Ring" by Mark Rowland

Smells for focus



- Peppermint
- Eucalyptus
- Lemon
- Coffee
- Pine

Always consult with your doctor and a trained, qualified aromatherapist when using essential oils with children

Visual activities



Have your child jump rope, do jumping jacks, or jump on a trampoline. Hold up a picture or word cards and see how quickly your child can identify what's on the card while jumping.

Movement for focus



- Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes
- Jump Rope
- Indoor Trampoline
- Jog in place • Jumping Jacks
- Sky writing (Writing in the air) ABC's, spelling words, etc.



Screentime Planner

Screentime: The access to technology today is incredible. However, extended screentime can have a negative impact on brain development and regulation. Prioritize family connection and sleep whenever possible:

- Shut down screens 1 hour before bed to help the brain relax
- Eat meals together as a family without phones
- Sandwich screentime between movement opportunities

Feel like screentime is impacting your family? Check out our guide on managing screens. Scan the QR Code or click link:

<https://qrco.de/bgliEb>



Routines & Family Planner

Predictability creates safety: A brain that feels safe, is a brain that is less likely to become overwhelmed. Creating a predictable routine lessens the pressure for your child. They don't have to spend precious resources figuring out what comes next. Try to keep anchor times throughout the day the same: wake time, meal times, bedtime. Have reliable, repeatable routines for times of transition like bedtime.

Want a worksheet to create your families routine? Check out our guide on building routines. Scan the QR Code or click link:

<https://qrco.de/bgliiE>

dear parents,

We know how challenging it can feel to raise a healthy, happy child in today's world, and we hope the information we presented empowers and encourages you.

Sometimes, though, it takes more than tips — and that's okay. Your child may need extra support, and that's our expertise. Visit [BrainBalance.com](https://www.brainbalance.com) to find the center closest to you. You don't have to do this alone. We are here to help.

With care and understanding,
Your Brain Balance Team