



Happy Thanksgiving

Family Matters is an outreach effort from the ANN JERKINS-HARRIS Academy of Excellence— Department of Special Services --- SPED Program. Family Matters will provide parents with information about special education and other resources available to assist them to help their children.

# FAMILY MATTERS

ANN JERKINS-HARRIS ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE  
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A monthly newsletter from the Department of Special Services  
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WORKING TOGETHER FOR FAMILY SUCCESS  
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## SPED PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the ANN JERKINS- HARRIS Academy of Excellence SPED Program is to create and maintain an effective learning environment by establishing behavioral supports and the social culture needed for all students in our school to achieve social, emotional, and academic success.



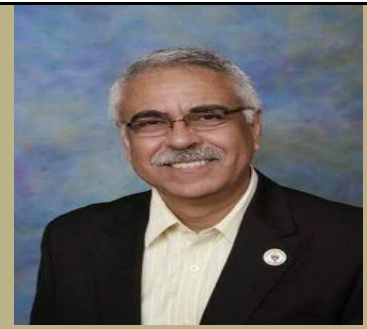
FROM OUR AJHAE FAMILY TO YOURS... HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!

**THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER**  
**SPED PROGRAM AND RELATED SERVICES**

**Editor—Family Matters Newsletter**

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Message from the  
Deputy  
Superintendent:  
SPED PROGRAM  
and Related Services

Dear Parents and General Readers:

If your child has ADHD, you know that some days are harder than others. Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder is a mental disorder classified into three types, according to the Mayo Clinic: ***predominantly inattentive, predominantly hyperactive/impulsive or a combination of both***. Once a medical diagnosis is established, families can use treatment plans that may or may not include medication.

Some children with ADHD usually struggle with executive function — the ability to focus, organize and meet goals, necessary skills for navigating daily life, according to the Child Mind Institute. They might talk too much, interrupt others, or fidget or squirm in class, among other habits.

There are physical differences in the brains of people with and without ADHD. An ADHD brain is smaller in size and volume in certain areas and the prefrontal cortex, where information is processed and contextualized, can mature slower than a neurotypical brain, sometimes up to three years. What's important to remember is that over time, ADHD brains catch up in their structural development.

Children with ADHD often feel misunderstood, judged, or shamed but with support, they can thrive. Kids with ADHD would like to do well, and they can with the right resources. These children want regulation, empathy, inclusion, predictability, and recognition.

Here are some specific things a child with ADHD wants you to know.

- When parents are upset, kids get upset, too.
- When frustrating moments with your child bubble up, parents should manage their own feelings first.
- If *you're* dysregulated there is little chance your child will regulate themselves. "The problem is parents of children with ADHD experience numerous provocations and triggers throughout the day. Pre-planning for those moments is key.
- Notice the physical signs — maybe your voice gets louder, or you feel hot — those are signs to regulate. I recommend going to the bathroom, something children understand that people do alone. Even if they bang on the door, you can stop, slow down and recover.

On this edition of *Family Matters* we are offering some parenting tips to help improve the relations amongst parents with children diagnosed with ADHD. On the other hand, if any parent suspects that their child is going through difficult attention and/or hyperactivity moments, we suggest consulting your child's pediatrician.

Cordially,  
Dr. Israel I. Koppisch

# Parenting Tips

No parent is superhuman. The truth is we all need a bit of help when it comes to the many aspects of parenting.

## WHAT IS ADHD?

### Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is a condition that can negatively impact a person's attention and behavior and can interfere with daily activities at school, at work, at home, and with friends. People who have ADHD have higher levels of inattention, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity than their peers.

ADHD is one of the most common brain-based disorders that affects about 1 in 10 school-aged children.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ADHD?

Some common symptoms of ADHD include trouble paying attention or focusing, impulsive behaviors, and being overly active. Symptoms may range from mild to severe. Children with ADHD may act out without thinking about the results, have learning challenges, make careless mistakes, forget, or lose things, and squirm or fidget when sitting.

### Symptoms of inattention

- Makes careless mistakes/lacks attention to detail.
- Lacks sustained attention in tasks or fun activities.
- Poor listener, even in the absence of obvious distraction.
- Fails to follow through on tasks and instructions.
- Difficulty with organization, time management, and deadlines:
  - Avoids tasks requiring sustained mental effort.
  - Loses things necessary for tasks or activities.
  - Easily distracted (including unrelated thoughts).
  -



- Forgetful in daily activities.
- Procrastinates and puts off tasks until the last moment possible.

### Symptoms of hyperactivity/impulsivity

- Fidgets, taps hands, or squirms in seat.
- Leaves seat in situations when remaining seated is expected.
- Excessive running/climbing or feelings of restlessness.
- Often "on the go"; acting as if "driven by a motor".
- Difficulty with quiet, leisure activities.
- Excessive talking.
- Blurts out answers before questions are even completed.
- Difficulty waiting turn.
- Interrupts or intrudes on others.





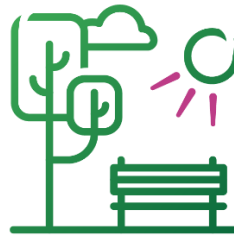
### AT HOME

- Is forgetful doing chores.
- Has difficulty keeping materials and belongings in order.
- Reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort, such as homework.
- Several inattentive or hyperactive impulsive symptoms are present in one or more settings (e.g., at home, school, or work; with friends or relatives; in other activities).



### AT SCHOOL OR WORK

- Does not follow through on instructions and fails to complete tasks.
- Overlooks or misses details.
- Is often restless and leaves seat inappropriately.
- There is clear evidence that the symptoms interfere with, or reduce the quality of, social, academic, or occupational functioning.



### IN RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL SETTINGS

- Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
  - Cannot wait for the turn in conversation.
- May intrude into, or take over, what others are doing.
- Has a difficult time making or maintaining friendships or romantic relationships.

### HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT TREATMENT FOR MY CHILD?

**Talk to your child's doctor. Be sure to communicate any questions or concerns you may have. That way, the doctor can properly evaluate your child and determine what is the best treatment path forward.**

An ADHD treatment plan that includes non-medication treatments, like behavior therapy and parent training, may be used before medication is tried. If your child's doctor determines that medication should also be part of your child's treatment plan, there are different options available.

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AT AJHAE WE ARE COMMITTED IN:  
Empowering your child's best Advocate: YOU

Parents of a child with special needs must learn to effectively navigate the maze of special education laws and go to bat for their kids. In a nutshell, this means parents must learn to be advocates.

*Family Matters* is a community outreach effort from the  
ANN JERKINS-HARRIS Academy of Excellence  
-Department of Special Services and its SPED Program-

*Family Matters* is here to provide parents with information about special education and other resources available to assist parents to help their children.

Information is power, and parents need to start with the facts about their child's special needs. Try and keep emotion out of it; as parents you need to have fact-based knowledge from your child's doctors, specialists, special education experts, parents of kids with similar special needs, attorneys, teachers, and anyone else who can provide information.

**ANN JERKINS-HARRIS ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE**  
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