

Teachers' Role in the Diagnosis of ADHD

Teachers are often the first to notice that a child is having problems at school. These may include:

- problems with school work, including problems finishing assignments, organizing work, or staying on task
- problems remembering to bring books and materials to class
- problems listening to instructions
- behaviour problems, including restlessness or high activity levels



There are many reasons why a child might have these problems. It is important to work with your child's teacher to find out:

- if the problem is related to a stressful event, such as moving or a death in the family
- how long the problem has lasted
- whether your child is having problems at home as well as at school
- if the problem appears in only one subject, in which case it could be related to a learning disability

You and your child's teacher may be able to address the problems by working together. If your child is still having trouble at school, he may need a more in-depth evaluation. This could take place either at the school or in the community. Your school board may have a policy that deals with referral procedures.

Information from your child's teacher

For a diagnosis of ADHD, the child must have symptoms in at least two different settings, such as home and school. Because your child probably spends a lot of time at school, it is very important to get input from there. Usually, the teacher who knows him best is the person who should provide this information, but in some cases the school principal or a counsellor may be able to provide it instead.

With your permission, the doctor may ask your child's teacher to complete a questionnaire or a rating scale, to provide a written report, or to give her input over the telephone. The information your child's teacher can provide includes:

- specific symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity
- how your child behaves in the classroom
- learning patterns, strengths, and weaknesses

- o language skills
- o anything the teacher is doing to help your child with behaviour or learning problems
- o whether the teacher believes your child is having problems as a result of these symptoms, for example with school work, friendships, or self-esteem
- o how your child is doing in school, including school reports and samples of school work if they are available

For more information about the teacher's role in the diagnosis of ADHD, please consult the [TeachADHD](#) web site.

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