

# A NEW DAY PEDIATRIC PSYCHOLOGY

Healing the hurt. Educating the mind. Inspiring the soul.

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AND ADHD

*Excerpts taken from "You Are Not Alone", ebook from Dr. Lockhart*

### What is ADHD?

This seems like a strange question; doesn't everyone know what ADHD is? Well, I am going to explain ADHD from the research side and from my clinical experience.

Data collected from a variety of sources between the years 2005-2011 published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that 6.8% of children ages 3-17 years currently have a diagnosis of ADHD.

Two million more U.S. children were reported by their parents to be diagnosed by a health care provider with ADHD.

In addition, 1 million more U.S. children were reported to be taking medication for ADHD in 2011 compared to 2003.

More than 1 in 10 (11%) U.S. school-aged children have received an ADHD diagnosis by a health care provider by 2011, as reported by parents.

There are hereditary and genetic links, as well. This means that if you suspect your child has ADHD or has been diagnosed with ADHD, one of the biological parents and/or a first-degree relative will likely have the diagnosis, as well. Parents often are not aware if they themselves



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have the diagnosis. Although our knowledge of ADHD has been around since the early 1900s, actually receiving a diagnosis is relatively a newer practice.

ADHD is an executive functioning dysregulation issue with the role of the frontal lobes being the focus of attention. It is a neurodevelopmental disorder, which means it is based in the brain. It is important to understand why your child behaves, reacts, and processes things the way he/she does. When you have that knowledge and understanding, you are significantly more empowered to interact with and handle situations in a more productive and beneficial manner.

Executive functioning primarily involves the role of the frontal lobe (located in the front part of your brain behind your forehead). This is the boss of your brain. ADHD involves the role of the frontal lobe and how it interacts with the other lobes. Children with ADHD have a frontal lobe that is both under-developed (like every other child) and under-active (a feature of ADHD).

Executive functioning involves the ability to inhibit, hold back, or stop certain behaviors and emotions, which are regulated and controlled by the prefrontal cortex and frontal lobe (impulse control, judgment, decision-making, time management, personality, task initiation, persistence) and the limbic system (regulation of emotions).

Children with ADHD often don't hold back thoughts, behaviors, and feelings once they have them. This is why they seem to say the most inappropriate things at the absolutely wrong time. Children with ADHD are often believed to be inattentive and hyper, but the truth is that it is more about the inability to regulate attention, emotion, and behaviors.

This is the really important part. Children with ADHD are not bad kids. They are not trying to make poor choices. They just don't regulate as well as other kids. We need to teach them these skills, every day, through repetition, encouragement, education, support...and lots of patience.

**Learn more about ADHD  
and how you can thrive  
with it.**



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## STAY TUNED

This newsletter is issued every first and third week of each month.

The purpose of this newsletter is to educate, inspire, and bring healing and awareness by discussing a variety of behavioral health and medical conditions.

  
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