



## Advanced Pediatric Associates ADHD Policy Statement

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is real and is treatable. There are significant risks associated with not treating ADHD, but effective long-term management of ADHD provided with continuity of care in a scientifically proven treatment program makes a difference.

### ADHD is Real

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common neurobiological disorder characterized by developmentally inappropriate levels of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. It is one of the most common chronic childhood health conditions, affecting 11% of school age children. Symptoms of ADHD persist into adulthood in as many as two-thirds of cases.

More than 20 genetic studies have shown evidence that ADHD is, to a large extent, genetic.

- ADHD is a complex disorder, which is suspected to be the result of multiple interacting genes. Other factors (such as low birth weight, prenatal maternal smoking, drug and alcohol exposure, and other prenatal problems) may contribute to ADHD.
- Parenting styles may make ADHD better or worse, but they do not cause the disorder.
- ADHD is clearly a brain-based disorder. Current research is underway to better define the areas and pathways that are involved.

### ADHD is Treatable

ADHD can significantly affect academic achievement, well-being, and social interactions of those affected. However, with treatment, significant improvement can be made. Representatives of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the Child Neurology Society, the Society for Pediatric Psychology, the National Association of School Psychologists, the Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reviewed and consolidated evidence-based treatment recommendations for diagnosis, evaluation, and treatment. This provides a standardized approach to care of individuals with ADHD.

### There Are Significant Risks Associated With Not Treating ADHD

Although individuals with ADHD can be very successful in life, without identification and proper treatment, ADHD may have serious consequences. Some consequences include school failure, family stress and disruption, depression, problems with relationships, substance abuse, delinquency, risk for accidental injuries, and job failure. Once thought of as a “school-day disorder”, the symptoms of ADHD affect children morning, noon, and night and make it difficult for them to follow rules and get along with family and friends.

*Individuals with ADHD experience difficulties with executive function. Executive function refers to the variety of functions within the brain that activate, organize, integrate, and manage other functions. This permits individuals to appreciate the long-term consequences of their actions and guide their behavior more effectively. Teens with ADHD present a special challenge. During these years, academic and organizational demands increase. In addition, these impulsive youngsters are facing typical adolescent issues: discovering their identity, establishing independence, dealing with peer pressure, exposure to illegal drugs, emerging sexuality, and the challenges of teen driving.*

*- National Resource Center on ADHD*

*Due to the fact that the importance of executive function increases as a child ages, early identification and treatment of ADHD are extremely important in preventing risks associated with not treating ADHD. And these risks do not end at adolescence -- without treatment, up to two-thirds of children with ADHD continue to experience significant symptoms in adulthood.*

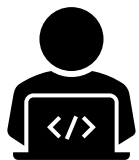
The key to effective long-term management of ADHD is continuity of care with a scientifically proven treatment program:

*The American Academy of Pediatrics developed a guideline for treating ADHD which includes the following five recommendations:*

1. **Approach and treat ADHD as a chronic health condition.** Emphasize ongoing parental and child education about ADHD and its treatments.
2. **Collaborate with partners in designing and evaluating treatment plans and outcomes.** This includes engaging the family, child, and school professionals in assessment and long-term treatment, with the primary goal of maximizing the child's functioning in the home and school, as well as to prevent risks associated with non-treatment.
3. **Provide medication management.** For most children, stimulant medication is highly effective in treating the core symptoms of ADHD. There are several proven medications and sometimes more than one must be tried before determining the best medication for a child. Starting with a low dose and adjusting until ADHD symptoms are manageable is generally recommended. Frequent follow-up visits are necessary during this time to determine an effective treatment dose. Once an effective dose has been determined, follow-up should be continued every three months.
4. **Provide regular follow-up.** In addition to annual well care visits, children with ADHD need regular follow-up visits to assess effectiveness of treatment and monitor for any side effects of ADHD medication. This includes feedback from home and school.
5. **Evaluate treatment as needed.** Treatment goals and objectives may need to be modified over time as a child grows older and meets new challenges. Medications may need to be changed or adjusted. Regular office visits provide the opportunity to do this.

When managed as a chronic neurobiological disorder, ADHD can be effectively treated and significantly improve academic and social success for most children, as well as reduce the serious risks associated with non-treatment. The staff at Advanced Pediatrics follows a consistent protocol in the treatment of ADHD, following guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Please contact one of our referral/ADHD team members at 720-974-7188 to request an appointment with one of our providers.

Sincerely,  
The Providers of Advanced Pediatric Associates



Visit [AdvancedPediatricAssociates.com](http://AdvancedPediatricAssociates.com) for an even larger collection of ADHD resources - you'll be happy you did!