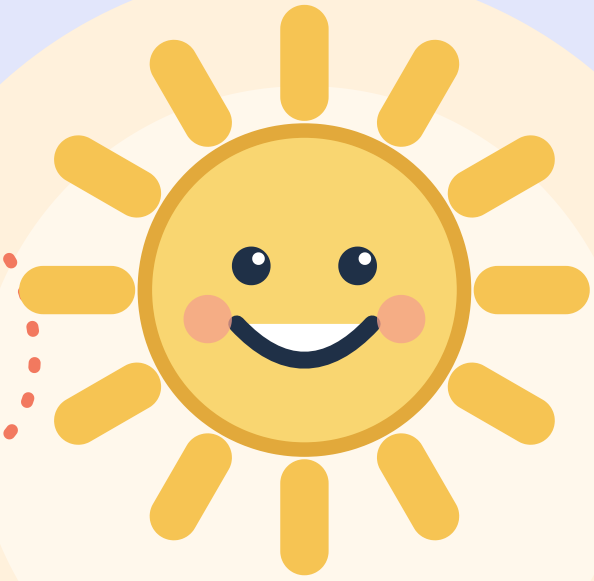


My Busy, Brilliant Brain

A book about ADHD, and all about me

This book belongs to .....

ANDREW RYDER Neuro-affirmative resources



Hello, I'm Ray!

I'm here to help you find out about ADHD, and about your busy, brilliant brain.

You may have met some people who asked questions, played games and talked with your grown-ups. They found out that **you have ADHD**.

ADHD is one of the ways a brain can work. It is part of what makes you, you. Lots of children have ADHD, and lots of grown-ups too.

Read it with a grown-up you trust

One or two pages at a time is plenty

Draw, colour and write on any page

How do I feel about finding out? Circle any.

Happy | Curious | Relieved | Confused | Worried | Excited | Not sure yet

Draw or write how you feel here. All feelings are OK.

What is ADHD?

A D H D

ADHD is short for **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**. That is a big, long name, and it does not tell the whole story. ADHD brains do not have too little attention. They have lots of it, and it likes to go where it wants to go!



My attention

zooms in on interesting things, and drifts away from things that are not.



My busy body

may want to move, wiggle and fidget. For some children, the busy part is in their thoughts.



My quick brain

often does or says things fast, before my thinking brain has caught up.



Ray's good-to-know facts

ADHD is **not your fault**. You were born with a brain that works this way.

It often runs in families, so someone in yours might have it too.

About 1 in every 20 children has ADHD. That could be one or two in your class!

If my brain was an animal, it would be a...

Draw it here! Is it fast, clever, curious, playful?

True or not true?

People sometimes say things about ADHD that are not right. Let's sort them out!

NOT TRUE

"Children with ADHD are naughty."
ADHD is about how your brain works, not about being good or bad. You are a good kid.

NOT TRUE

"Children with ADHD can never concentrate."
You can focus really hard on things you love. Sometimes so hard you don't even hear your name!

TRUE

"Lots of clever, creative, kind people have ADHD."
Artists, inventors, sports stars, scientists, chefs and teachers. Maybe even someone you know.

NOT TRUE

"If you just try harder, ADHD goes away."
You are already trying really hard. The right help and the right tools are what make things easier.

TRUE

"Lots of grown-ups have ADHD too."
ADHD is part of you as you grow up. Grown-ups with ADHD have jobs, families and adventures.

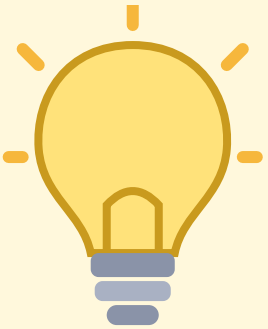
NOT TRUE

"ADHD means you can't do well at school."
With the right help, you can learn, grow and do brilliantly.

Your turn

Have you heard someone say something about ADHD? Write it here. Is it true or not true?

What switches my brain on?



ADHD brains are **interest-powered**. They light up for some things and find it hard to switch on for others. That is not being lazy. It is how your brain is wired.

- **Things I love**
- **Something new**
- **A challenge**
- **A race against time**
- **Fun and games**

Making boring jobs easier

- Turn it into a game or a race
- Do it with someone next to me
- Move while I do it
- Put some music on
- Break it into tiny steps
- Plan a fun thing for afterwards

My brain switches ON for...

It's hard to switch on for...

My body likes to move

Moving helps lots of ADHD brains wake up and focus. Wiggling is not being rude. It can be your brain's way of helping you listen and learn.

- Squeeze or twiddle a fidget
- Sit on a wobble cushion
- Stand up to work
- Doodle while I listen
- Have a movement break
- Do a job, like taking a message
- Bounce, jump or dance
- Push hard against a wall



Busy on the inside

Not every child with ADHD is wriggly. Some have busy thoughts on the inside, like daydreams and ideas that zoom about. That is ADHD too.

My favourite ways to move

My pause button



Sometimes my quick brain acts before my thinking brain catches up. I might shout out, interrupt or grab something. That does not make me bad. My pause button just needs practice.

1

Stop

Freeze like a statue for a moment.

2

Breathe

Take one big, slow breath in and out.

3

Think

What could I do next?

When I have to wait my turn, I can...

- Hold my idea in my fist until it's my turn
- Draw my idea on a sticky note
- Put my hand up and count to five
- Use a "my turn next" card

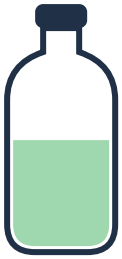


Oops moments happen to everyone. If something goes wrong, I can say sorry, help fix it and try again. Mistakes help my brain learn.

Times I might need my pause button

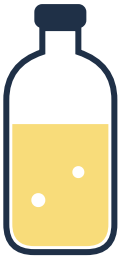
Big, fizzy feelings

ADHD feelings can arrive fast and big, like a fizzy drink that has been shaken up. Happy can be very happy. Cross can be very cross. All feelings are OK, and they always pass.



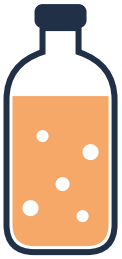
1 Calm

Still and settled. I can think clearly.



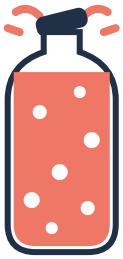
2 Bubbly

A few bubbles. Wriggly or a bit wound up.



3 Fizzing

Hot, loud or tearful. Hard to listen.



4 Ready to pop

Too full. I need help to feel safe again.

When feelings get hurt

Being told off, left out or told "no" can feel like a really big hurt inside. That feeling is real. Telling a grown-up you trust can help it shrink.

My body clues that the fizz is building

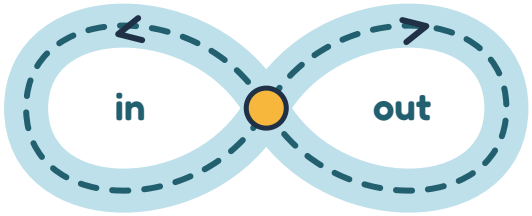
Like a hot face, fast heart, tight fists or loud voice

What helps the fizz settle

Turn the page for some calm tool ideas

My calm tools

When the fizz is building, these tools can help my body and brain settle. Practise them when you feel calm, so they are ready when you need them.



Lazy 8 breathing

Start at the yellow dot. Trace one loop with your finger as you breathe in. Trace the other loop as you breathe out. Go round as many times as you like.

More calm tools. Circle the ones that work for you!

Birthday candles

Hold up five fingers. Blow each one out slowly.

Squeeze and flop

Squeeze every muscle tight, then go floppy like spaghetti.

Heavy work

Carry, push or pull something heavy. Wall push-ups are great.

Move it out

Jump, run, bounce or dance until the fizz settles.

My cosy corner

A quiet, comfy spot with cushions and things I like.

Spot five things

Find five things I can see. Can I find something blue?

My own calm tool

Remembering things



My brain has a little notepad for things I need to remember right now. In ADHD brains, the notepad can be small, so things fall off it. That is why I can forget my PE kit even when I really tried!

Helpers for my memory

Picture checklists
Pictures of what I need, so I can tick them off.

One thing at a time
Grown-ups can give me one instruction, then the next.

Say it back
"So first I need to..." helps it stick.

A home for my things
Shoes, bag and coat live in the same place every day.

Reminders
A note on the door, a sticker or an alarm.

Get ready the night before
Pack my bag with a grown-up before bed.

My bag checklist

☐ ..... ☐ .....

☐ ..... ☐ .....

☐ ..... ☐ .....

Ideas: water bottle, reading book, lunch, PE kit, coat, homework folder. Draw a little picture next to each one!

Tricky time

ADHD brains often feel time in two ways: **now** and **not now**. Ten minutes can whizz by when I'm having fun and drag on forever when I'm bored. Being able to *see* time helps a lot.



Fun time
whooshes past like a rocket!



Boring time
creeps along like a snail.

Ways to see time



Sand timer



Colour timer that shrinks



Picture timetable



"5 more minutes" warnings

Time detective game: guess how long a job takes, then time it. Brushing teeth, getting dressed, tidying my room. Were you close?

My First and Then board

First

Then

My senses

Lots of children with ADHD notice the world in their own way. Some things can feel too much, like scratchy labels or loud noise. Other things I might want more of, like spinning, crunching or bright colours.

My sense	Too much for me	I want more!
Hearing		
Seeing		
Touch		
Taste and smell		
Movement and balance		

Things that might help

- Ear defenders or headphones
- Snipping out labels
- Soft, comfy clothes
- A crunchy snack
- Swings and trampolines
- A quiet space to reset

Winding down for sleep



ADHD brains can find it hard to switch off at bedtime. My thoughts might keep zooming even when my body is tired. A calm routine, the same every night, tells my brain it's time to rest.

My bedtime routine

1

2

3

4

5

6

Sleepy ideas to choose from

Bath or shower · Pyjamas on · Brush teeth · Screens off early · Story or audiobook · Dim the lights · Calm music · Cuddly toy · Lazy 8 breathing

Busy thoughts? Tell them to a grown-up, or draw them on a note and pop it in a worry jar until morning.

Me and my friends



Children with ADHD often make brilliant friends. Sometimes friendships feel tricky too, and that is OK. Everyone is still learning how to be a good friend.

What I bring to a friendship. Circle yours!

Fun ideas | Kindness | Lots of energy | Jokes | Imagination | Being brave | Sticking up for others

Friendship helpers

Take turns
Count to three in my head before I jump in.

Ask a question
"What do you want to play?"

Check in
"Are you OK? Do you still want to play this?"

Fix it
After a fall-out, say sorry and try again. Friends can mend.

It is fine to have lots of friends, one or two close friends, or to like playing on your own sometimes.

My friends and what we like doing together

Help at school

School can be easier when the grown-ups there know how your brain works. Your family and teachers can make a plan together. Tick the things that help you.

- [ ] Sitting where there are fewer distractions
- [ ] Instructions one step at a time
- [ ] Help to get started on my work
- [ ] A fidget or wobble cushion
- [ ] A grown-up to check in with
- [ ] Being noticed when I do well
- [ ] Movement breaks
- [ ] Instructions written down or in pictures
- [ ] Work in shorter chunks
- [ ] A quiet space when I need it
- [ ] Extra time for some tasks
- [ ] A job that lets me move about

My help or break signal

A card, a thumbs up, a hand on my head? Draw it.

The grown-ups who help me at school

If something at school feels too hard, tell a grown-up. Finding school hard does not mean you are not clever. It means something needs to change.

My superpowers

ADHD brains come with some brilliant strengths. Colour in the stars that sound like you!

Creative	Curious	Full of energy	Funny
Brave	Big ideas	Kind	Quick thinker
Super focus on things I love	Bounces back	Notices things others miss	Great at trying new things

My own superpower

Ask a grown-up who loves you what they think it is, too!

Your busy brain is not something to fix. It is something to understand, look after and be proud of.

All about me

Fill this in with a grown-up. You could share it with your teacher, your club or anyone new who looks after you.

Draw me here

My name is

I like to be called

My favourite thing right now

I am brilliant at

I love

My brain works best when

I find it tricky when

You can help me by

When I'm upset, please



You are brilliant, just as you are

My brain is busy and brilliant.

ADHD is part of me. It is not all of me.

Hard moments do not make me bad.

I can ask for help any time.

I am learning what works for me.

I am loved just as I am.

If something is worrying you, tell a grown-up you trust. You can also call **Childline** for free on **0800 1111** and talk about anything.

A note for grown-ups

This book helps your child understand their diagnosis in a way that is honest, positive and right for their age. Read it together a little at a time and follow their lead. There are no right answers on the activity pages.

Understanding ADHD

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental difference in how attention, activity, impulses and emotions are regulated. It is strongly hereditary and is not caused by parenting. Many children with ADHD focus intensely on things that are interesting, new, challenging or urgent, and find it much harder to start tasks that are none of these. This is about how their brain gets going, not how much they care.

Approaches that tend to help

Connection before correction. A warm relationship is the foundation.

Name strengths often. Aim for far more positive moments than corrections.

Regulate, then reason. Calm first. Talk it through later, briefly.

Make it visible. Timers, checklists and routines support memory and time.

Movement is a tool. Fidgeting and breaks often help focus.

Separate child from behaviour. "That was a hard moment", not "you are naughty".

Big feelings and sensitivity

Feelings can arrive fast and big, and criticism or feeling left out can hurt deeply. Keep corrections short, private and calm, and repair quickly after hard moments.

Talking about the diagnosis

Use the word ADHD openly, alongside their strengths. Let your child help decide who to tell, and keep the conversation going as they grow.

Sleep and routines

Sleep difficulties are common. A predictable wind-down and earlier screen cut-off can help. If sleep or eating is a real worry, talk to your GP or your child's team.

Looking after you

This can be joyful and tiring. ADHD often runs in families, so you may recognise some of it in yourself. Support for you is support for them.

Support and next steps

At school

Share the report with school and ask to meet the SENCo to agree a support plan. Support should be based on your child's needs. Pages 15 and 17 can help with that conversation.

About medication

Some families consider medication alongside understanding and adjustments. It is always a choice made with your child's specialist team, who will explain benefits, side effects and monitoring.

Your assessment team

Your clinician can talk through the report and answer any questions.

Contact the service that completed your child's assessment.

Helpful organisations

ADHD UK	Information and resources for families	adhduk.co.uk
ADHD Foundation	Neurodiversity charity with family and school resources	adhdfoundation.org.uk
Contact	Advice for families of disabled children, including benefits and education	0808 808 3555 contact.org.uk
IPSEA	Free legal advice on special educational needs (England)	ipsea.org.uk
Local SENDIASS	Free, impartial SEND advice. Search for your local service.	Your council's Local Offer
YoungMinds	Advice for parents about children's mental health	youngminds.org.uk

If you are worried about your child's wellbeing or safety

Speak to your GP, or call **NHS 111** and choose the mental health option. In an emergency, call **999**. Children can call **Childline** free on **0800 1111**.

Details checked October 2026. Services can change, so please check websites for the latest information.