



## 10 Point Observation List on ADHD Behaviour

### 1. Eye contact

Avoidance of eye contact can sometimes be an ADHD/ASD behaviour – children or young people may look as if they are ignoring you, but some people can find making eye contact really difficult to do, often suggesting it is painful or distracting for them.

### 2. Fidgeting

Being unable to stand or sit still without needing to fiddle with something whilst you are talking with them does not mean that a child or young person is not paying attention or listening to what you are saying to them. They may be fidgeting with something which sometimes helps them focus better; if unsure ask the child or young person to repeat back what you have just said to them to confirm that they have heard you and understand what you have said.

### 3. Wandering

Avoidance of work, this can be seen as an ADHD behaviour. It may be that the child or young person doesn't know what to do, has not heard or processed what you want from them, so, rather than ask for help or fail at a task, they may just choose to wander about and not complete an action or task suggesting that. "If I don't do it then I can't get it wrong". Sometimes children or young people with ADHD prefer to get told off than to get work wrong and be perceived as 'stupid'. They often have a physical need to move around and can be very uncomfortable if made to sit still for periods of time that would be acceptable for other pupils without ADHD.

### 4. Inappropriate behaviour

Children and young people with ADHD sometimes have difficulty understanding the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, for example, burping loudly in class or other 'uncontrollable' noises. They see these things as being funny and socially acceptable. We on the other hand can see it as being unacceptable. They also tend to make remarks inappropriate to the situation such as, "Sir, why have you got a hole in your sock?" They say what they see; they have difficulty reading social cues which is similar to children or young people with ASD.

### 5. Consequence

Children or young people with ADHD often make no connection between behaviour and its consequences. If you point out a particular behaviour issue to a child or young person, they may acknowledge it and be very sorry for what he / she has done but without thinking they may do the very same thing again. Learning from consequences is not easy for them and will need to be specifically taught to children and young people with ADHD.



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### 6. Daydreaming

Daydreaming is a predominantly ADHD behaviour, not fully paying attention to a task in hand or being easily distracted by other activities or events outside/inside can cause problems for children or young people with ADHD. It is not that the child or young person is choosing 'not' to pay attention. It may seem to you that they are just choosing to daydream, it is more likely that their mind will often drift towards something of more interest or relevance to them. This prevents them focusing when they need to.

### 7. Negative self-esteem

This can cause real behavioural problems for children and young people with ADHD. They can often feel that they are unable to do or complete tasks or activities that others can do. They may believe that they can't successfully complete tasks before they even try. Many children or young people with ADHD fear failure; they fear they will get tasks wrong, that they are not good at tasks or activities (based on past experiences) and so they often give up trying. They may scribble out school work or scrunch up what they have done and destroy it, causing frustration, anger and confrontation whilst reinforcing negative self-belief or negative self-esteem.

### 8. Being the 'class clown' or 'the distractor'

Often children or young people with ADHD as do all children and young people, like to be liked. They try to make others laugh and this can often cause distraction or disruption (possibility due to work avoidance) in the classroom and at home. Link this up with inappropriate behaviour, they quickly realise that this is a way to avoid completing a particular task or activity they find difficult and therefore believe "if I can't do it, the class won't be able to do it either".

### 9. Waiting turns

Children and young people with ADHD often find waiting or taking turns difficult. Managing their own time or judging the time it takes to complete a task or activity can often lead to difficulties for them and others they work with. Children or young people understand time, can learn to tell the time but judging time can cause them difficulties, this is down to a deficit in their executive functioning difficulties which can lead to presenting with a range of problematic behaviours, time management being one of them.

### 10. Rule breaking

Children and young people with ADHD will test out rules and structure because they need to know that they are there. They are not being defiant! They need strong boundaries and they need to know how far they can go. Children and young people with ADHD find judging boundaries difficult as they have poor social observation skills. If we link this to their difficulties in making the connection between behaviour and consequences we can see how it can sometimes lead to children or young people with ADHD being seen as 'rule-breakers' or presenting with risky behaviours. It can also often lead to challenging behaviours or anti-social behaviours.

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