

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS ADHD?

If you are concerned that you or your child has ADHD, you will want a comprehensive assessment conducted to confirm a diagnosis. The comprehensive assessment statement and items below are excerpted from The National Resource Center, the national clearinghouse for the latest evidence-based information on ADHD.

The clinical evaluations of ADHD should be comprehensive and multidimensional and capture its impact on home, school and social functioning. The assessment may include the following:

- parent and child interviews
- a bio-psycho-social assessment interview including family history
- parent- and teacher-completed child behavior rating scales
- parent self-report measures
- direct behavioral observations of the child in natural and clinical settings
- clinic-based psychological tests
- review of prior school and medical records
- individually administered intelligence testing, educational achievement testing or screening for learning disabilities if there are academic challenges
- a standard pediatric examination or neurodevelopmental screening to rule out any unusual medical conditions that might produce ADHD-like symptoms
- additional assessment procedures, including vision and hearing screening, as well as formal speech and language assessment

There are many health care professionals who are trained in the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD in children, including child psychiatrists, pediatricians, child psychologists, clinical social workers and professional counselors. In seeking their services, it is important to be a savvy consumer and ask questions regarding their specific experience and training with persons with ADHD. Prior to making an appointment for your child, you may want to ask them about their assessment procedures to be sure that they engage in a comprehensive ADHD evaluation process.