



Advanced
Pediatric
Associates^{LLP}

Advanced Pediatric Associates ADHD Policy Statement

We firmly believe that ADHD (Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder) is real.

We firmly believe that ADHD is treatable.

We firmly believe that there are significant risks associated with not treating ADHD.

We firmly believe that the key to effective long-term management of ADHD is continuity of care with a scientifically proven treatment program.

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 prevalent chronic childhood health conditions, affecting 5 – 8% 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 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:

In 2001, the American Academy of Pediatrics published an evidence based clinical practice guideline for the treatment of ADHD based on the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) “**Multimodal Treatment Study of Children with Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (MTA)**”. The MTA is a large study that compared three different treatments for childhood ADHD (medication treatment alone, intensive behavioral treatment alone, and a combination of medication management and behavioral treatment) to a control group, following children for ten years after initial treatment and diagnosis.

The MTA study showed that medication treatment for ADHD was more effective than behavioral treatment alone, and that combination treatment was no better than medication alone (except when the children also had a comorbid anxiety or oppositional defiant disorder).

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, including 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. According to the National Resource Center on ADHD, “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 longer 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.”

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** - Includes engaging the family, child and school professionals in assessment and long term treatment, with the primary goal to maximize 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 particular child. Starting with a low dose and adjusting until ADHD symptoms are manageable is generally recommended. Frequent follow up visits are necessary to determine an effective treatment dose. Once an effective dose has been determined, follow up should be continued at least twice a year.
4. **Provide periodic systemic follow up** – Children should receive regular well care to assess overall health and monitor any side effects of ADHD medication.
5. **Evaluate treatment failure 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. Behavior therapy and programs to help parents understand and deal with behavioral difficulties may be added as *complimentary* to medication treatment alone.

When managed as a chronic neurobiological disorder which is treatable with proven medications and regular follow up, 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 specialists at 720-974-7188 to request an appointment with one of our providers.

Sincerely,

The Providers of Advanced Pediatric Associates

A Note on Alternative Treatments for ADHD:

Our treatment program for ADHD is based on years of scientific research by nationally recognized experts in the field and follows recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the National Institute of Mental Health. There are many popular unscientifically tested alternative medications and treatment programs available in the community and on the internet which we do not recommend to our patients. Please discuss with your provider before considering any complimentary or alternative treatments.