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It's not easy being a parent these days. There are so many things you want to shelter your child from yet you don't want to smother them from learning the important lessons they need in order to develop into successful, able-bodied adults. So, what do you do when you think your child may be hyperactive, easily distracted and can't concentrate well in school or at home?.

As a psychotherapist and lifestyle coach I work with lots of parents of children who fit the bill for ADHD; but being a parent who has to hear that your child may have ADHD can be disconcerting and uncomfortable. Is it my fault? What could I have done to prevent this? Can he grow out of it? Will he have to take medication? So many questions surface when a parent hears the statement: your child has ADHD. For parents of children with ADHD there are some telltale signs that include hyperactivity, impulsivity, inability to concentrate for extended periods of time, lack of focus, difficulty sitting still (in multiple settings), it can become quite frustrating for both the child as well as the parent to live with this disorder. The child may feel ashamed. The parent may feel guilty. But none of that will empower either person to address 1 important thing: your child needs help; and is entitled to receiving support as

part of their educational and social/ emotional needs.

If you are a parent and you have concerns that your child may need an evaluation for supportive services, here are a few tips to parent from an empowered position:

1. Talk to your child's pediatrician: If you are getting calls from your child's school that he(boys are twice as likely as girls to be diagnosed w/ ADHD) can't sit still in class, is blurting out, distracting other students from learning and can't focus on completing his assignments, first talk to his pediatrician about the behaviors. It could be other issues going on and his pediatrician would be best able to assess if he has ADHD and refer you back to his school for an evaluation or to a family therapist or specialist to assist you and your child at home.

2. Work with your child's teachers on ways to assist with learning at home: Being a parent includes involving the entire community. Whether there's concern about their learning or not, it's very important to communicate with your child's teachers. Ask questions about what your child is learning. Find out if he or she is meeting their targeted tasks in learning, social and emotional

development. Attend Parent/Teacher night and if that's an impossible task ask their teacher if they do email or Skype chats.

3. Talk with other parents who've been there: In many social and community settings it has been said that having peer advocates eases the stress of the “going through it alone” mentality. There may be other parents in your child's class, another class, or quite possibly within your pediatrician's practice who have a child with ADHD. Sometimes talking to a parent who has been where you're going can be helpful. It adds an extra component to receiving supportive services. The process of screening and evaluation can be daunting and cumbersome. It's ok to speak with someone who understands what you're going through. Reach out and ask for support!

4. Your child is entitled to help: So many times parents are afraid their child will be labeled, teased or exposed for being “different.” Well, no one can guarantee what type of experience your child will have after an official diagnosis. But beyond that, intervention services for him and you, his parent, are very important. The risks of not intervening when you notice or it has been brought to your attention that he or she has a special need

places your child at more risk of getting poor grades, having low self-esteem and getting into trouble in the community as they age. There's a lot of evidence of children with developmental or learning disabilities becoming less successful later in life, especially if children are born into vulnerable conditions including poverty, lack of family structure or failed community support. Part of being a child in America also gives you the right to special services that have been created to help your child to succeed. Evaluation and follow up is necessary to determine exactly what type of help they may need and for how long. It doesn't always require medication but it does require a commitment on the parent's part to see it through. Remember this: your child's success depends on the things you do for their academic, emotional, social and environmental education that helps them to be the best that they can be!

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“How to Parent Assertively with a Child with ADHD”