

CDC Vital Signs

ADHD in Young Children: What You Should Know

Children diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, may be overly active or have trouble paying attention or controlling their behavior.

In the United States, more young children two to five years of age are taking medicine for ADHD than receiving psychological services, which may include behavior therapy. Clinical guidelines for treatment now recommend behavior therapy *before* prescribing medicine for young children with ADHD. This therapy teaches parents ways to improve their child's behavior and can work as well as medicine, without the risk of side effects. It requires time and effort but the benefits are lifelong for children and their families.

Healthcare providers: Follow the clinical guidelines for diagnosis and treatment of ADHD, and discuss the benefits of behavior therapy with parents and refer them to training.

To learn more, visit [cdc.gov/vitalsigns](https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns).