

Understanding ADHD in the Classroom

1 Eye Contact:

Avoidance of eye contact may be a characteristic behaviour of a child with ADHD or Autistic Spectrum Disorder. They may look as if they are ignoring you, but some children find making eye contact really difficult.

2 Fidgeting:

Not standing or sitting still, or fiddling with something while you are talking to them, e.g. pens, books, or something on your desk. This behaviour does not mean that they are not taking in what you are saying to them- they will be. If unsure, ask them to repeat back what you have said to ensure understanding.

3 Wandering:

Work avoidance is an ADHD behaviour. Possibly they don't know what to do or what you want from them, so rather than fail, they just won't do it: "If I don't do it then I can't go wrong." Sometimes children with ADHD prefer to be told off than get it wrong and be seen as 'stupid'.

4 Inappropriate Behaviour:

Children with ADHD have difficulty understanding inappropriate behaviour burping in class and other uncontrollable noises. They may see this as funny and socially acceptable. They may also make remarks inappropriate to the situation e.g.: "Sir, why have you got a hole in your sock?" They say what they see, but have difficulty reading social cues.

5 Consequences:

Children with ADHD make no connection between behaviour and its consequences. If you point out a behaviour issue to a child, he/she may acknowledge it and be sorry,



but five minutes later may do the same thing again. Children with ADHD take time to understand consequences- it does not come naturally.

6 Daydreaming:

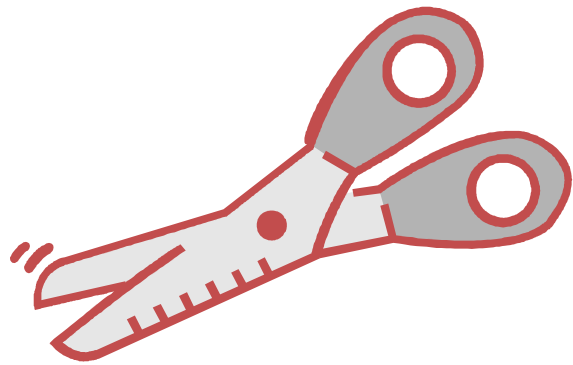
Daydreaming is a characteristic of ADHD - not paying attention, or being distracted by events outside/inside. It is not that the child is 'not' paying attention; it is more likely that he/she is paying attention to everything and not focussing on one thing.

6 Negative Self-Esteem:

This causes real problems for children with ADHD e.g. "I can't do that" before they even try, for fear of getting it wrong. They may scribble out work or scrunch it up, which may cause confrontation with teachers, parents, or carers.

7 Being the Class Clown:

Trying to make people laugh and cause disruption - possibly due to work avoidance: "I can't do it, so the class won't be able to do it either."



9 Waiting Turns:

Children with ADHD find waiting turns, either in line or group work, very difficult. They act or speak without thinking (in the head, out of the mouth). This is the impulsivity of ADHD. They may be clumsy or accident prone, may break things or accidentally hurt others.

10 Rule breaking:

Children with ADHD test out rules and structures. They are not just being defiant - they need boundaries and to know how far they can go. These children can't judge this, as they have poor social observation.