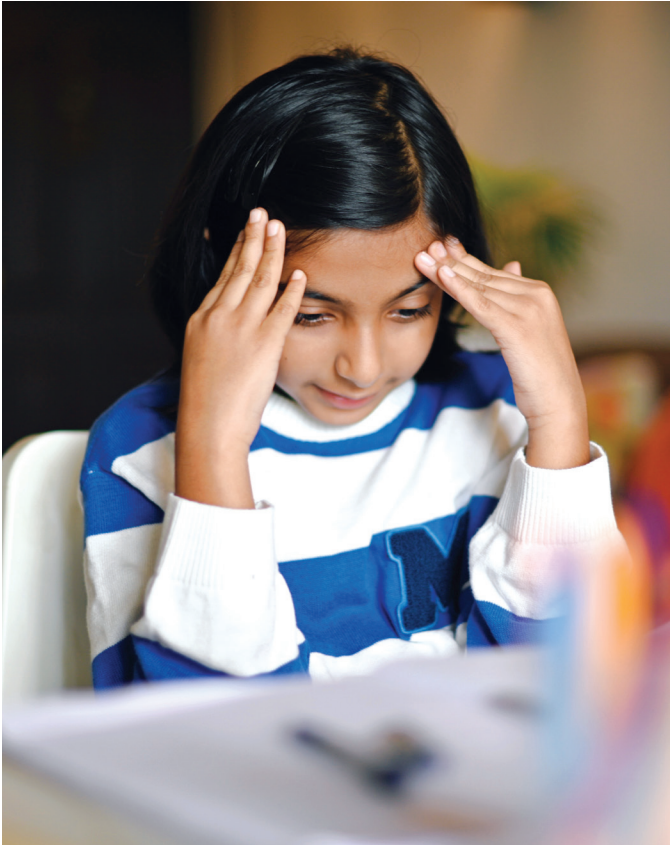


# DIFFICULTY WITH ATTENTION AND THINKING



**All children and adolescents go through phases where they seem less able to focus and learn. They may also have difficulty remembering information or a hard time paying attention.**

Major life events and poor physical health (such as a medical condition or poor sleep) can cause temporary changes in attention. Low mood or stress can also cause these changes.

## What are some tips to help my child or adolescent with attention and memory?

**Focus on one task at a time.** It may be helpful to complete one task before starting another.

### **Break complex tasks into smaller pieces.**

Sometimes, children and adolescents lose focus with long or complex tasks. Breaking big assignments or projects into smaller steps can help.

**Limit distractions.** Create a quiet area for homework and studying that is free of distractions. Some children study better with music or fidget toys.

**Set (and enforce) a regular bedtime.** Children and adolescents need plenty of sleep each night. Getting enough sleep improves memory and concentration.

**Take breaks.** It can be hard to sit still for long periods of time. Taking breaks during homework and studying can increase focus. Movement breaks can also be very helpful (such as dancing, running, or jumping).

**Time management.** Learning to use a daily planner to write down tasks, homework, and activities will help to stay organized and keep track of due dates.

## When should I ask for help?

Speak to your child's teacher(s) and doctor if:

- your child continues to have difficulty with attention for more than a few weeks after trying these tips
- your child is not doing well in school

A teacher can refer your child for school testing. Test results will help identify resources and accommodations your child needs for learning challenges.

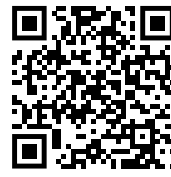
Depending on their diagnosis, your child may qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan to support their learning needs at school.

**Sometimes, inattention and forgetfulness are symptoms of a more serious condition.** A doctor can help identify health conditions and guide you with next steps for your child's care. They may refer you to a specialist, who can assess your child for mood and/or learning issues, or neurodevelopmental conditions such as:

- Anxiety
- Mood concerns
- Sleep challenges
- Language delays
- Learning disabilities
- Long-term effects of a medical diagnosis
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

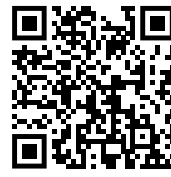
Treatments for children with attention or thinking difficulties depend on their diagnosis. Treatment may include therapy, behavioral strategies, medicine, or a mix of these.

## Where can I find online resources for more support?



[Not Just ADHD? Helping Children with Multiple Concerns – English](#)

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*



[15 Strategies for Managing Attention Problems – English](#)

*Reading Rocket*



[6 Ways to Help Your Child Focus – English](#)

*Understood.org*

