

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder – ADHD

There are three subtypes of ADHD – predominately inattentive, predominately hyperactive/impulsive, and combined type.

Inattentive: These children often have difficulty sustaining attention in tasks, difficulty organizing, excessive distractibility, and forgetfulness.

Hyperactive/impulsive: These children are often restless, fidget with their hands or feet, squirm in their seats, have difficulty playing in leisure activities quietly and talk excessively. They may often blurt out answers before questions have been completed, have difficulty waiting turns, and interrupt or intrude on others.

The Harris School addresses the needs of children with ADHD in a number of ways. First, every child is respected as an individual. Kids with ADHD may not be able to remain sitting while doing their work and at our school they don't have to. Our classrooms are set up to allow freedom of movement and choice about where a child wishes to work.

Second, we help children to become empowered in the management of their symptoms by helping them to become aware of what they can control and what they can't. This is done through our low student/teacher ratio, which allows the teachers to act as an outside ego support, giving frequent reminders and redirections to aid the student as the day progresses.

Third, too many classrooms are set up in a way that can easily distract a child with ADHD. Our classrooms are simplified and warm feeling, incorporating rugs and soothing colors without too many distractions, i.e. things placed on the walls that might draw the attention of the student.

Finally, many children who have struggled with ADHD have developed school phobias and internalized a sense of failure in regards to school. Through positive, non-punitive interactions with teachers, and in the weekly group therapy for the older children, our students are helped to reflect on what has hampered their efforts in previous schools, and are given the confidence to overcome those issues and feelings.