

# THRIVING

with **ADHD**

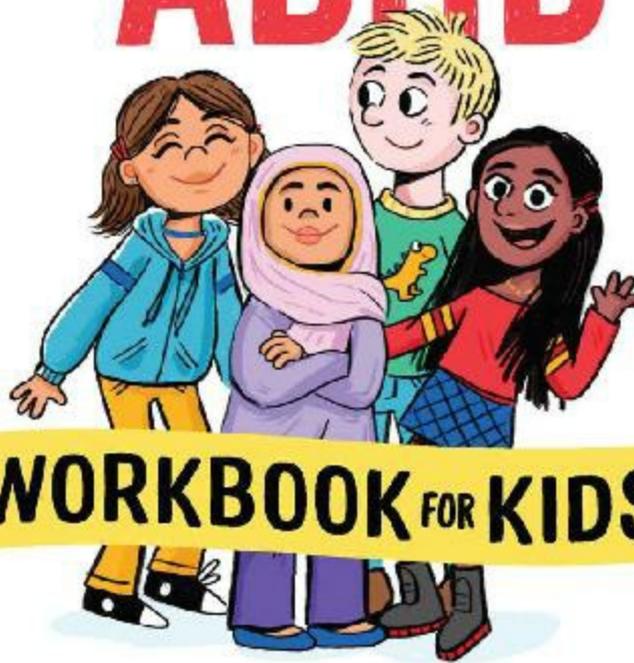
## WORKBOOK for KIDS

**60** Fun Activities to Help Children  
Self-Regulate, Focus, and Succeed





# THRIVING with **ADHD**



**WORKBOOK** FOR **KIDS**

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ILLUSTRATED BY **SARAH REBAR**

  
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**To my favorite “sweet chickens,” Remy and London.**



**You are my inspiration to write this book and to each day become a better mother and kinder human. Remy and London, you offer so much to the world. There is no doubt you were both born with ADHD to teach the rest of the world how truly special it makes you. I love you both.**



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## Introduction

# FOR PARENTS

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**CHANCES ARE, IF YOU ARE READING THIS** book, you are a parent, relative, educator, counselor, guardian, or therapist of a child with ADHD. Congratulations on wanting to learn more about ADHD and how you can help engage your child, student, or client. It's wonderful that you are being proactive about ADHD. You are making a tremendous difference on behalf of the child you care for.

My name is Kelli Miller, and I'm a licensed clinical social worker. I work with children who have ADHD as well as their caregivers. I'm also the mom of two children with ADHD. Yes, not just one but two children with ADHD! I understand the challenges, the frustration, and the heartache. I've sobbed on my kitchen floor out of pure exasperation. I've had my own meltdowns. And both my kids have been kicked out of IHOP.

I used to fight it—I'd ask myself, why can't my child sit still like *that* little boy or girl who is controlled, quiet, and listening? But as I've come to understand and accept the eccentricities that come with this diagnosis, I've learned how truly special kids with ADHD are. Children with ADHD have gifts that are unique. Their creativity, sensitivity, and humor are parallel to none. Their way of looking at the world is incredibly unique. In retrospect, I can honestly say children with ADHD have been my best teachers.

My goal is to help your child understand that ADHD isn't a "defect" at all, and with the right tools, ADHD can be an asset. In this book, I use what is called a "strength-based approach." That means I like to focus on each child's individual strengths, from which they can build self-confidence. In other words, I'm emphasizing what your child can do right rather than wrong. On some level, children with ADHD understand their limitations and may already be entering the world with negative self-views—this perspective does not help children thrive. We need to lift them up and show them how to live life to the fullest with their ADHD. Learning these skills, particularly at a young age, can be very beneficial.

I understand that as parents or clinicians, our time is limited, and

children can have a low frustration tolerance, so I tried to make the exercises as easy as possible so they can “do it themselves.” I also tried to use minimal equipment and vary the activities. Most importantly, I included only activities that have worked effectively with my own children or patients. Some children will take this book and make it their own. Other children may benefit from a team approach to this book, whereby you might work on activities together. Finally, some activities may feel very easy to your child while others will feel more challenging. That’s okay. Not all activities will resonate depending on your child’s personality and age. The important thing is that your child feels empowered while doing the activities. However you approach it, your child will have a book full of activities designed to help them with the many facets of ADHD, from self-control and organization to getting tasks done and making friends—whatever they need help with.

At times they may need your help or support to complete a given task. You may watch them and wonder why they are doing their homework standing up or putting sticky notes on your bathroom mirror. They may also ask you to come up with rewards for their Homework Jar ([here](#)). That said, your child may want you to do activities with them, or they may want to be left alone with their book and their thoughts—either one is natural as they explore within themselves. What’s important is that they are reading and working toward becoming more successful!

**Please note:** This book is meant to be a complementary tool to a full treatment program that works best for your child.

## Introduction

# FOR KIDS

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HI AND WELCOME! MY NAME IS KELLI, and I am a therapist who has worked with dozens of kids who have ADHD. I believe that kids should have fun with everything they do and not struggle so hard in school and life. So, I've created this book full of activities, puzzles, games, and tricks to help you learn, get organized, and be the best you can be.

First, I'm going to help you understand what ADHD is. By now I'm sure you've heard these initials quite a bit, and you may be wondering what these four letters really mean. *ADHD* stands for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. My eight-year-old son, Remy, has ADHD, and he describes it as "a disorder in the brain that causes you to do certain things." He's on to something. ADHD is a condition or a difficulty in the brain's normal functions. It affects people in different ways. You might be more active, jumpy, or preoccupied than other kids. You might struggle to do your homework every night. But I'm here to show you that you can do *exactly* what other kids can do—you just may need more support or tools, which I'll give you, too.

Let's imagine a child who needs glasses. They can see a little bit without the glasses, but once they put the glasses on, they can see so clearly and don't have to strain. It's easier for them with the support of their glasses. In a similar way, my hope is that with education, skills, and fun activities—the support—you can learn smart ways to help focus and manage your ADHD more clearly.

ADHD is a condition you're born with. It is not your fault or something you did. It also doesn't have anything to do with the way you were parented, nor a lack of rules, nor what you ate. You are who you are, and you're awesome.

You are also not alone. Millions of children across the world have ADHD. Many children with ADHD have grown up to be very successful. In fact, one of the best Olympic swimmers in the world, Michael Phelps, has ADHD. Same with American gymnast Simone Biles. Popular musician Adam Levine also has ADHD. Ty Pennington, star of *Extreme*

*Makeover Home Edition*, has ADHD.<sup>1</sup> Finally, check this one out: A boy named Dav Pilkey grew up with ADHD. He was always getting in trouble in school, and he would escape in his mind by inventing and drawing superheroes. Dav went on to create the Captain Underpants book series!

There are hundreds of CEOs (chief executive officers, or the bosses of companies), teachers, doctors, firefighters, engineers, artists, journalists, and even therapists who have ADHD. Some even say that one of the smartest people ever, Albert Einstein, had ADHD. You can be just as successful and live a wonderful, full life just like other kids without ADHD. And I want to help!

We're going to explore new skills and techniques together that are very entertaining. In fact, you probably won't even notice you're learning! But as you try out these skills, you'll soon see that you are developing new ways to manage your ADHD. If you read and follow the suggestions in this book, you'll feel better and understand more about yourself and how to help yourself. I want you to feel more confident and less frustrated both at school and at home. You ready? Let's begin!

PART ONE



# ADHD and Me

**In this section, we'll explore what ADHD is, the different types, and how it affects you. This may be your "aha" moment where you say, "Wow! That sounds like me!" or, "Hey, I do that!" You may see how your behavior or actions are related to your ADHD. It may make you feel relieved because you finally understand things about yourself that perhaps you didn't understand before. My hope is that you will learn more about you: what you're already great at and what you may need to improve. Just remember: No one is perfect, and everyone can improve in something. The most important thing is that you're willing to try and to be open to learning new skills!**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

## **UNDERSTANDING AND GETTING TO KNOW MY ADHD**

**A lot of people don't understand what ADHD is. I want to educate you, and then you can educate others! Again, ADHD is not your fault or something you chose to have. The great news is that once you understand ADHD a little bit more, you will be more aware of how it affects you and what you can do about it. Can I look to you to be my investigator of ADHD? Then you can share what you know with others who don't understand it!**

## What Is ADHD?

Like we talked about previously, ADHD is a condition in the brain. Brains are extremely complicated. Have you ever heard someone joke that “you don’t have to be a brain surgeon to figure that out”? This means that brain surgery is very difficult and not an easy job. Why? Because there is so much to learn about the brain and its functions. It takes years to learn about the brain and how it works. So, let’s learn a little bit today that will help you understand yourself better (and make you smarter in the process).

There is something in the front of our brains called the frontal cortex. This is the area where the brain gets organized and motivated and manages emotions. It’s also called our executive functioning area. Is there a boss in your family? Well, the executive functioning area is the boss of your brain! But people with ADHD have a delay in the prefrontal cortex or executive functions.<sup>2</sup> Your mental boss is smart; it just moves at its own pace!

What does this mean for you? I’ll explain: Have you ever traveled on an airplane and your flight was delayed? You probably still got to your destination, but later than you expected. It is the same with ADHD. You can get organized or manage your emotions, but maybe not as quickly as you would like. Interestingly, when you have ADHD, your brain may process things slower, but your thoughts can actually be faster—this is part of what makes your mind race and gives you so many great ideas!

## EVERYONE'S DIFFERENT



Most people feel they are different in some way. Some children have parents who are divorced, and so they feel different from their friends. Some kids have braces, others develop very early or very late, and some might have a parent or sibling who died. Some have medical conditions like diabetes. Some may feel like their red hair makes them different. Try not to look at ADHD as something that makes you less than awesome. It just makes you *you*, and you're already awesome just the way you are.

## DIFFERENT TYPES

Did you know there are three different types of ADHD? They are called: primarily hyperactive-impulsive, primarily inattentive, and combined type.<sup>3</sup> If you are diagnosed with ADHD, you have one of these three types. Why does this matter? Well, if you know what type you are, you can find out exactly how your ADHD affects you and your life. This way you can learn which tools you need to succeed. We'll explore each type later in a little more detail.

A doctor can help you find out what type of ADHD you have and how much your ADHD is impacting your life—whether it's a little bit, somewhat, or a lot. You may not know those answers yet, and that's okay. It's for a doctor and/or your parents to determine.

I like to think of the different types of ADHD as animals. Can you relate to one of the following types?

### ADHD, PRIMARILY HYPERACTIVE-IMPULSIVE TYPE “HIGH-SPIRITED HUMMINGBIRD”

This is the most common type of ADHD in children. People with hyperactive-impulsive type ADHD love to be on the move! They like to stand rather than sit. They tend to fidget and squirm. Their teacher may say, “Do you have ants in your pants?” They talk a lot, sometimes fast, and run around a ton. They are also super curious. People with primarily