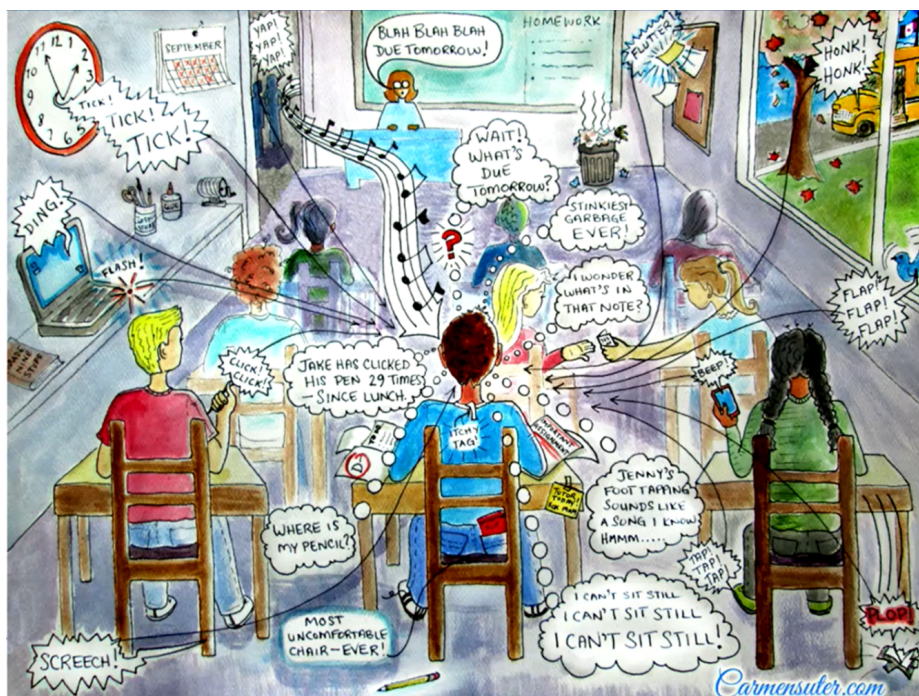


Understanding ADHD in Children

Simplistically, ADHD is a neurological difference involving many structural and neurochemical variations within the brain which are present from birth. These differences mainly impact one’s executive functioning, or what is referred to as our “control centre”. This is the *doing* part of the brain. Children with ADHD struggle with *performance*, not knowledge or skill.

Difficulties paying attention is, of course, a major hallmark of ADHD. However, this aspect is often misunderstood as not being able to pay attention, when in actuality difficulties arise because the ADHD brain pays attention to *everything*. This is because children with ADHD are highly geared toward seeking reward and activation, hence why they may struggle to engage in a mundane task, yet they can remain attentive when playing a video game – this is because they are receiving continuous activation, immediate feedback, and a sense of reward.

Children experience not only difficulties with attention but also organisation, planning, task initiation, hyperactivity and impulsivity which can result in difficulties learning and *applying* their knowledge. The control centre of the brain also is responsible for regulating behaviours and emotions, hence why they may often present with behavioural outbursts or difficulties calming themselves. This is a great depiction of what a child with ADHD often experiences within the classroom:



Carmen Suter, 2015, https://www.carmensuter.com/distracted-adhd-pictogram_adhd-infographic/

Understandably, this constant input of information can be very overwhelming for a child and may result in them falling behind academically. Management of ADHD needs to be at the point of performance and often relies on the re-engineering of their environment to compensate for their executive difficulties. Often the responsibility of implementing strategies falls on parents, teachers, and other supports, therefore, ongoing psychological support for you and your child can be very helpful.

