

# Behavior Therapy for Young Children with ADHD

## What Healthcare Providers Can Do

*Healthcare providers can:*

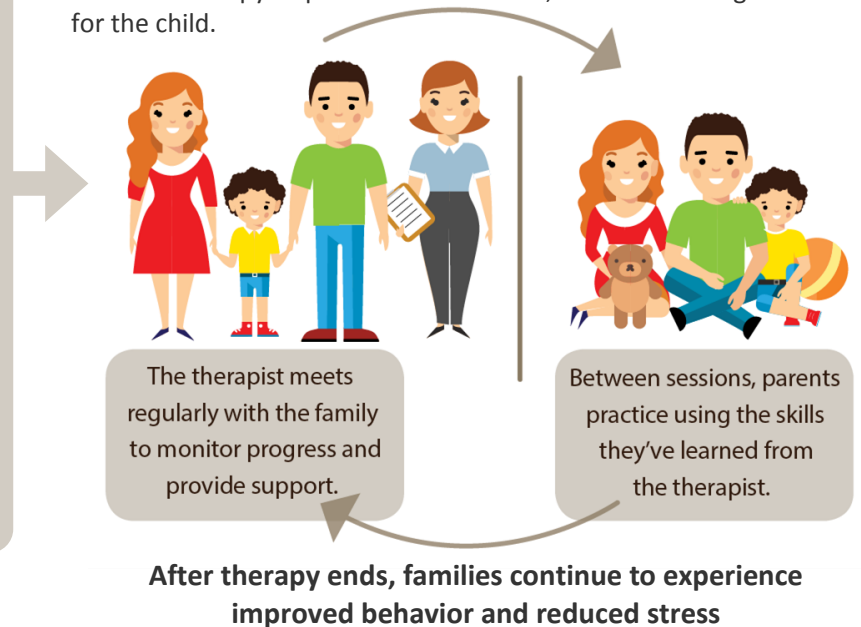
Refer parents of children with ADHD for training in behavior therapy before prescribing medicine.

### Steps for healthcare providers

1. **Assess** a young child with ADHD symptoms using clinical practice guidelines.<sup>1</sup>
2. **Talk** with parents about ADHD treatment and explain the benefits of behavior therapy.
  - Improved behavior, self-control, and self-esteem for children.
  - Better relationships and reduced stress for families.
  - Benefits are lifelong for children and families.
3. **Refer** parents to a therapist before prescribing medicine.<sup>2</sup> Find a therapist who:
  - Teaches parents to better manage their child's behavior and strengthen the parent-child relationship.
  - Encourages parents to practice between sessions, regularly monitors progress, and adjusts strategies as needed.
4. **Follow up** with the family during and after treatment to confirm progress.

### What parents can expect in behavior therapy

With the support of healthcare providers and therapists, parents can learn skills to help improve their child's behavior, leading to improved functioning at school, home and in relationships. Parents typically attend 8 or more sessions with a therapist. Sessions may involve groups or individual families. Learning and practicing behavior therapy requires time and effort, but it has lasting benefits for the child.



For more information about behavior therapy, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/behavior-therapy.html>

### What parents learn when trained in behavior therapy



Behavior therapy, given by parents and with the support of healthcare providers, teaches children to better control their own behavior, leading to improved functioning at school, home and in relationships. Learning and practicing behavior therapy requires time and effort, but it has lasting benefits for the child.

<sup>1</sup>Clinical practice guidelines for primary care: <http://bit.ly/1nCUenn> and child psychiatry: <http://bit.ly/1UYugZ8>

<sup>2</sup>In areas where behavioral treatments proven to work are not available, the healthcare provider should weigh the risks of starting medicine at an early age against the harm of delaying diagnosis and treatment, as recommended in the American Academy of Pediatrics practice guidelines.