The Broad Continuum of Attention Problems

Developmental Variations: Behaviors within the Range of Expected Behaviors for That Age Group*

Early Childhood
The child runs in circles, doesn't stop to rest, may bang into objects or people, and asks questions constantly.

Middle Childhood
The child plays active games for long periods. The child may occasionally do things impulsively, particularly when excited.

Adolescence
The adolescent engages in active social activities (e.g., dancing) for long periods, may engage in risky behaviors with peers.

Problems--Behaviors Serious Enough to Disrupt Functioning with Peers, at School, at Home, but Not Severe Enough to Meet Criteria of a Mental Disorder.*

Early Childhood
The child frequently runs into people or knocks things down during play, gets injured frequently, and does not want to sit for stories or games.

Middle Childhood
The child may butt into other children's games, interrupts frequently, and has problems completing chores.

Adolescence
The adolescent engages in “fooling around" that begins to annoy others and fidgets in class or while watching television.

* Adapted from The Classification of Child and Adolescent Mental Diagnoses in Primary Care (1996). American Academy of Pediatrics.