

intelligence and achievement levels.

Behavioral checklists and adaptive scales should be completed by the child's caregivers and educators and scored by the primary care provider. These assessment tools are helpful in measuring social adaptive functioning in children with ADHD as well as providing benchmarks for evaluation of improved or worsening behavioral changes once therapy has begun. Psychiatric disorders, medical problems, and traumatic experiences are ruled out, including lead poisoning, seizures, partial hearing loss, psychosis, and witnessing of sexual activity or violence.

### **Therapeutic Management**

Treatment of ADHD depends on the child's age and severity of symptoms. Evidence supports behavioral therapy as the first-line treatment, but other approaches include family education and counseling, medication, proper classroom placement, environmental manipulation, and psychotherapy for the child.

### **Behavioral Therapy**

Behavioral therapy focuses on the prevention of undesired behavior. Families are helped to identify new appropriate contingencies and reward systems to meet the child's developing needs. They may also receive instruction in effective parenting skills, such as delivering positive reinforcement, rewarding small increments of desired behaviors, and providing age-appropriate consequences (e.g., time-out, response cost). Through collaborative teamwork parents learn techniques to help the child become more successful at home and in school.

### **Pharmacologic Therapy**

The most effective and frequently used medications are stimulants: methylphenidate hydrochloride and dextroamphetamine ([Minzenberg, 2012](#)). Non-stimulant medications, including norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors and adrenergic agonists, have also shown to be effective with fewer side effects in school-age and adolescent children ([American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011a](#)).

Children are given a small dosage initially, and the dosage is gradually increased until the desired response is achieved. Children who receive stimulants should be monitored carefully for side