

# **Self-care, support and treatment in brief**

for children and young people with a  
neuropsychiatric diagnosis

Regional assessment clinic



# Contents

This information is for family members of a child or teenager who has had a neuropsychiatric assessment at the Regional assessment clinic and received a diagnosis of ADHD or autism.

This brochure describes in brief:

- how you can help your child with ADHD or autism to function and feel well
- what kinds of support and treatment are available from the state, municipality and medical system

# **Daily support and treatment for children and young people with a neuropsychiatric diagnosis**

Needs for support may vary. We usually achieve the best results through adaptations to the child's day-to-day environment.

To achieve this goal, and for the best possible functioning for the child within the family, at preschool or school, and in their free time, the work always begins with improving your understanding of how your child functions. This is done for example by reading this information, attending classes for parents, and learning more from books, TV shows and online. Along with this brochure, you received a leaflet with suggested books and TV shows, as well as links to websites that may be helpful.

Others in your family may also need support to understand and handle any challenges that come up, or to take on the additional work of having a child who functions differently than most. There are several societal functions with which it is good to be familiar and we will go through them in this brochure.

## **Advice for interactions**

Children and young people with ADHD need a great deal of support and help from their parents. Classes for parents typically suggest the following:

- try to have realistic demands and expectations
- help the child have the experience of success
- build a daily life based on what works
- encourage and leverage your child's strengths
- show your appreciation often and abundantly
- give clear, direct and regular feedback
- communicate in simple and concrete terms; minimise nagging
- define and break down information into parts or steps
- anticipate problems and be a step ahead
- pick your battles and ignore a lot

Find more good tips for easing daily life here:



Find tips on preventing and handling emotional outbursts here:



## **Cognitive support as a tool**

Children with ADHD and/or autism may need help with planning and organising their day, remembering what to do, and keeping track of time. Different forms of cognitive support may help your child handle daily routines and are often available as mobile apps. A cognitive support might be a calendar that provides an overview, a schedule with pictures that split an activity into multiple steps, timers, clocks, or various reminders. You may need to use trial and error to see what works best for the individual.

Some suggestions for cognitive tools that are often helpful can be found here:



## **Support at preschool and school**

All children need clarity, structure, an adapted environment and to be treated based on an understanding of how they function. Almost all children with neuropsychiatric diagnoses need support and adaptations at school, and a great deal can be done to make things easier for them. If your child requires support at school, then contact your child's mentor or form teacher first. You can also contact the school's special education teacher or principal.

As the parent of a child with a neuropsychiatric diagnosis, you will likely have more frequent and more extended contact with your child's school than other parents. A good partnership between parents and the preschool or school is therefore important.

Many teachers will not be experts in neuropsychiatry, so you may want to share some tips that you find useful at home. The school may have also come up with an adaptation that you might be happy to try at home. If you run out of joint ideas, the school can always turn to the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (SPSM) for more help.

## Extra adaptations



Here, you will find information in brief on extra adaptations and special support at school.

Extra adaptations are documented in the individual development plan, which is drawn up at the development talk. Extra adaptations are simple measures that can be done directly in the classroom, and could include:

- Additional and clearer instructions and support when starting assignments
- Help with planning the school day/tasks
- Guidance for understanding texts
- Reading practice in class
- Individually tailored learning materials and smart tools, such as an iPad/apps/spelling assistance
- Audiobooks
- Reminder tools
- Time management tools
- Visual schedule
- Individual special education initiatives shorter than 2 months



For more information, see the Swedish National Agency  
for Education:

For more information, see the Swedish School  
Inspectorate:



## Special support

If extra adaptations are insufficient, it may be time for special support. Special support involves drawing up an action plan. Before an action plan can be drawn up, the school must map/investigate the student's needs for support in greater detail. The principal is responsible for the action plan being drawn up.

Examples of special support could include:

- Special education, if it is ongoing for an extended period
- Student assistant/resource person
- Teaching in smaller groups

## Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the support initiatives provided, you can file a complaint/feedback. Here is how:

- Talk to the mentor/form teacher
- Talk to the principal
- Submit feedback on the municipality's website
- Notify the Swedish Schools Inspectorate

## **Mental illness in people with neuropsychiatric diagnoses**

Unfortunately, it is common for people with neuropsychiatric diagnoses to have mental health issues. Information, understanding and adaptations are often beneficial, because the basis of illness is often partly a result of a challenging psychosocial situation.

### **Learning about the basic diagnoses**

All treatment is based on knowledge about the diagnosis and functioning. To be able to interact well with their child, parents must understand what the disability entails and have strategies for dealing with everyday life in the family. When the results of the assessment are in, parents receive information about the diagnosis and may then attend a group class for parents. The child will also need help understanding their disability, how they work, and with finding ways to accept and handle it.

## Organisations and associations

Many parents may need additional support and indeed, no one can provide better support than others in the same situation. Many areas throughout the region have parent groups and associations, for example Autism Sweden or Attention. There are also groups for kids or teens themselves, where they can learn more and socialise with others who understand what it's like.

For more information on Autism Sweden, see:



For more information on Attention, see:



## Information on psychiatric diagnoses

Throughout our lives, depression, fear and anxiety affect us all as natural reactions to things that have happened to us. For people with a neuropsychiatric diagnosis, it can sometimes be hard to understand and handle emotions, and they might need extra support from those around them.

To make things easier for your child, together, you can attend a class to learn about emotions and how they work, and come up with a common language for talking about them. As the parent, you are responsible for teaching your child to understand, hold and handle common feelings and reactions.

You can find a class on emotions online here:



As a guardian, you can also read up on common psychiatric diagnoses to learn how to help your child help themselves when they have mild issues, such as worry or sadness. 1177.se has good basic information about common psychiatric problems, how to recognise them, and what you can do yourself.

You can find basic information about common psychiatric diagnoses here:



## **Support and treatment when self-care and adaptations are not enough**

### **Support and treatment from health and medical care**

Sometimes, adaptations and self-care are not enough and in that case, the medical system is here for you. If your child is experiencing depression, fear, or worry that is not going away despite your and the school's efforts to help, then contact primary care, i.e. your healthcare centre or UPH (Adolescent Mental Health). If primary care treatment does not work or if you believe your child's illness is more severe, your primary care provider can refer you to a psychiatrist.

A youth clinic can offer early interventions for mental and psychosocial health – but your child must seek care there on their own.

Primary care does not provide medication for ADHD (see below).

If you are unsure where to go or if you want advice on how to help your child, you can always call "A Way In" ("En väg in") on 010-435 86 50.

## Medication

Often, people who have been diagnosed with ADHD are offered medication. Medication should always be combined with psychosocial and educational interventions, and can help to improve their efficacy.

The purpose of treatment with medication is to improve attention and reduce hyperactivity and impulsivity in the child. Medication can also impact conditions for learning and social interaction.

The doctor providing treatment will determine whether the child should be offered medication.

The doctor will also recommend the type of drug and provide guidance on handling any side effects.

## **Support from the municipality**

Your family may also need support from the municipality's social services. If your child has autism and/or an intellectual disability, you may also be entitled to support from the municipality's LSS unit. Your family may need practical help to facilitate daily life, classes, support for parents, individual contacts, or a contact family with which the child can stay for short periods, for example during weekends. Contact your municipality for information about what is available to you.

## **Support from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency**

When your child has a disability, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency offers additional support/contributions.

In a few pages, you will find a summary of information on the child carer's allowance and additional cost allowance (formerly the care allowance), contact days and care of a sick child (VAB).

For more information and to apply, visit:



To apply for the child carer's allowance, you will need a certificate from an assessment unit. If you have not

received one, contact us as soon as possible because it may be harder to obtain one retroactively.

## **LSS – Act Concerning Support and Service**



The Act Concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) is a law that sets out rights to ensure that people with disabilities can live good and independent lives.

The legislation covers all people with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or with an intellectual disability. In other words, they are entitled to apply for initiatives. Then an assessment will be made to determine need. The municipality has primary responsibility for initiatives through the LSS legislation. Read on for brief information on the most common LSS initiatives for children and adolescents. For more information, and for information on how to apply, visit the municipality's website.

### **Relief service at home**

The purpose of the relief service in the home is to relieve parents. With the relief service, someone comes to your home to take care of the child while you, the parent, run errands or engage in a leisure activity. You do not have to leave your home; you could be home preparing food or doing laundry, for example.

## Contact person

The purpose of the contact person is for the child/adolescent to be able to participate in activities outside the home without a parent in attendance. For example, going to the cinema, having coffee, or swimming at the pool. It is possible to apply for a contact person for a child/adolescent as of the age at which they are expected to be able to do activities outside the home without a parent.

## Companion service

The purpose of a companion is to have support from someone in order to get from point A to point B. It is possible to apply for a companion if the child/adolescent cannot get somewhere, such as a leisure activity, by themselves. The idea is for the child/adolescent to be able to do the activity independently. The companion simply provides support on the way to the activity. However, some municipalities choose to grant companions for essentially the same purposes as a contact person, that is, as someone who also offers support during the activity itself.

## Short-term stays away from home

The purpose of a short-term stay is for the child/adolescent to have a change of scenery, to relax, and to have an opportunity for personal growth. A

short-term stay could mean spending certain days per month at a short-term home, attending a camp on weekends or holidays, or staying with a family for a weekend each month.

## Short-term care for children over 12

Short-term care can be seen as extended leisure time after the school's responsibility for leisure time concludes, when the child turns 12. As with leisure time, the child/adolescent can receive short-term care before and after school, on holidays and on training days. Short-term care solutions can vary.

## Family homes and housing with special services

If the child/adolescent has a significant need for support, and cannot stay at home with their parents despite various support initiatives, then it is possible to apply for a family home or housing with special services for children and young people.

## Swedish Social Insurance Agency



When your child has a disability, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency offers additional support/contributions. Here, you will find brief information on the child carer's allowance and additional cost allowance (formerly the care allowance), contact days and care of a sick child (VAB).

For more information and to apply, visit:



### Child carer's allowance and additional cost allowance

The child carer's allowance and additional cost allowance (formerly the care allowance) are forms of financial support for parents who need to care for a child with a disability or long-term illness. The allowance can be paid through June of the year the child turns 19.

To receive the allowance, your child must have needs for care and supervision that exceed what would be expected of a child the same age.

The following are considered care and supervision:

- Special practice (such as language practice)
- Need for support to maintain routines and structure
- Increased need for support to be active and motivated
- Additional costs

## Contact days

If your child is covered by LSS legislation, then as a parent you are entitled to 10 contact days per year from the time the child turns 16.

The purpose of contact days is for you as a parent to be able to miss work in order to learn about your child's disability or to go with your child to activities and other environments.

Contact days can be used for classes for parents, school visits, or to be present at a field day or something similar with your child.

## Care of a sick child (VAB), ages 12-16

You can receive VAB compensation when your child is over 12 but not yet 16, if your child needs more help than usual at this age.

Compensation for VEB can be paid out if:

- You need to accompany your child to a medical appointment
- Your child is sick and cannot take care of themselves
- Basic illness worsening in a child with a long-term disability

You can submit a doctor's certificate later, after you are home. If your child always requires your presence at home while sick or if you are accompanying them on medical appointments, you can request a doctor's certificate that is valid for a longer period of time. In that case, you can receive an advance decision from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and you do not need to submit a separate certificate each time you are home.

## Care of a sick child (VAB), ages 16-21

If your child is covered by LSS legislation (has a diagnosis on the autism spectrum), you can receive VAB compensation from when the child is 16 until they are 21 years old. However, VAB is more limited after age 16.

You can only receive VAB if:

- Your child's basic illness has worsened
- Your child is acutely ill with another sickness

NOTE! You are therefore not entitled to VAB when accompanying your child on medical appointments or staying home if your child is sick.

# When your child becomes an adult

Many parents worry about how things will go for their child in adulthood. ADHD and autism are lifelong conditions, but most adults make life work and can live fulfilling lives with a family, job and friends.

The challenges may change over time and as adults, most find strategies for handling different situations. Often, people with ADHD still have issues with concentration and attention, but the visible hyperactivity and impulsivity reduce. For people with autism, the challenge is often in learning to use their social energy wisely and finding settings in which they are able to recover.

Many adults with neuropsychiatric difficulties may have problems structuring their day, managing time, staying organised and handling money, but with support and understanding from the people around them, life can still run smoothly.

Some adults experience internal restlessness and impatience for which they need an outlet, for example by doing exciting and varied things. Many adults also find strategies for controlling their impulses.

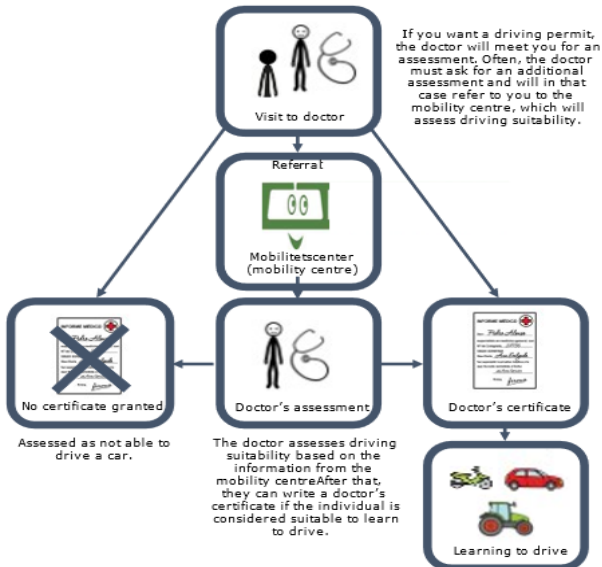
As a parent, you play an important role throughout your child's development, and in children with

neuropsychiatric diagnoses, this often takes more time relative to other children. A parent is the best person to help a child come into their own and find strategies for handling their challenges.

# Driving license



When you have a neuropsychiatric diagnosis, you must submit a doctor's certificate when applying for a driving permit in order to be a student driver. This applies to both mopeds and cars. The doctor's certificate should state that the disability does not affect the ability to drive.



## Swedish Transport Agency

When you apply for a driving permit, the Swedish Transport Agency will check that the requirements applicable to everyone seeking a driving licence are met. The Swedish Transport Agency grants driving permits to individuals deemed suitable to drive, given their personal and medical conditions. With a neuropsychiatric diagnosis, you need a doctor's certificate.

For more information on Körkortsportalen, the driving license portal, see:



## Mobilitetscenter (mobility centre)

Mobilitetscenter, the mobility centre, is an organisation with unique resources and enormous expertise in matters related to driving and disabilities. The mobility centre assesses suitability for a driving permit and driving lessons. The assessment guides the doctor when the doctor determines whether or not to issue a certificate. To go to the mobility centre, you need a referral from a doctor.

For more information about Mobilitetscenter, see:



## **In conclusion**

We hope that you and your child have found the advice in this leaflet helpful. If you want to learn more, there are many excellent books, TV shows, podcasts and websites that provide information at various levels. Some are listed in the attached sheet, but you can surely find even more. There is a great deal of well-intended advice out there, but remember that you know your child and situation best.

Having a child with a disability puts significant demands on you as a parent. Things will go up and down and it can be easy to feel worried, tired and frustrated. Often, it can be hard to find time for your own recovery. That is why, lastly, we want to remind you to try not to be too hard on yourself. Sometimes things go awry, despite the best of intentions. It is only natural to occasionally feel angry, irritated, and low on energy.

You are doing your best – both you and your child.  
Thank you.