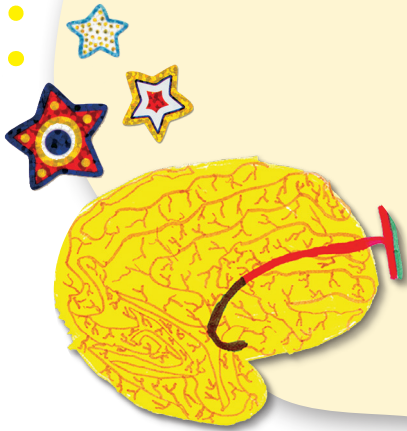


Dr. Annick Vincent

My Brain Needs Glasses



4th
edition

ADHD explained
to kids

Comments from adults who grew up with ADHD

When I was little, people called me names like scatter-brain and chatterbox. Despite my parents' help, it was very hard for me to study. I was unfocused, impulsive and slow. I had trouble getting organized. People thought I was lazy. I felt inferior and was always worried about failing in school. But in spite of everything, I loved to learn.

My own childhood and Tom's are separated by 34 years. If I had been as lucky as him, I would have been more successful in school and had a more rewarding social life, a career I enjoyed and, consequently, better self-esteem.

Today I understand myself, I'm proud of who I am, I have strategies I rely on and I take care of myself. My love of learning remains, but now I'm more enthusiastic than ever before. I'm better equipped, and life seems to hold a lot more promise.





As a child, I was like Tom. School was a nightmare that gave me stomachaches. Still, thanks to my parents' support and my somewhat creative and perfectionist side, I made it all the way to university. However, I always handed in my assignments late and filled with errors caused by distraction. The result: I was constantly stressed and convinced that the engine I had to rely on – my brain – was not up to the task.

Since then, I learned what the trouble really was. Now I wear the “glasses” I need, and I no longer feel like I’m lost in a maze. I know how my engine works and I’m cruising confidently down the highway. I’m successful in my work and proud of what I’ve accomplished. My son is now facing the same problems I faced. I don’t want him to go through the same sort of doubt and uncertainty that cast a shadow over my own childhood.

Fortunately, he is surrounded by people who understand the nature of his difficulties. With the “glasses” he needs, he’s doing great. He uses helpful tips and techniques, he concentrates better and he retains the information he learns in class. Best of all, he has better self-esteem.

My only regret today is that I didn’t wear “glasses” when I was Tom’s age. How lucky he is!

Carole



Acknowledgments

A very special thank-you to the adults and children affected by ADHD who, by sharing their experiences and their strategies for adapting to this neurological disorder, have helped us better understand their difficulties and intervene with more suitable treatments. Thank you to the parents, teachers, health professionals and researchers for their continuous efforts to better grasp the complexity of this disorder and to find personalized treatments.

A thank-you from the bottom of my heart to all those who helped develop this book, from near or far: my family and friends, my patients and colleagues and the students, parents and the staff at École Les Sources. Your contributions, support and enthusiasm for this project have allowed it to take shape and to become what it is today.

Thank you also to the readers – with hopes that your curiosity and interest in better understanding ADHD is contagious. Happy reading!

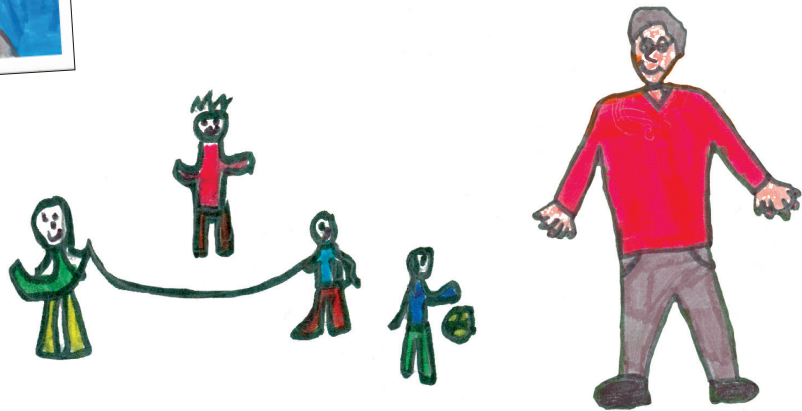
Dr. Annick Vincent
Psychiatrist





HELLO, my name's Tom. I'm
8 years old and I'm in grade 3.

This is my family. I go to school.
These are my friends and
my teacher.



I'm creative, excitable, funny
and I have a big heart.

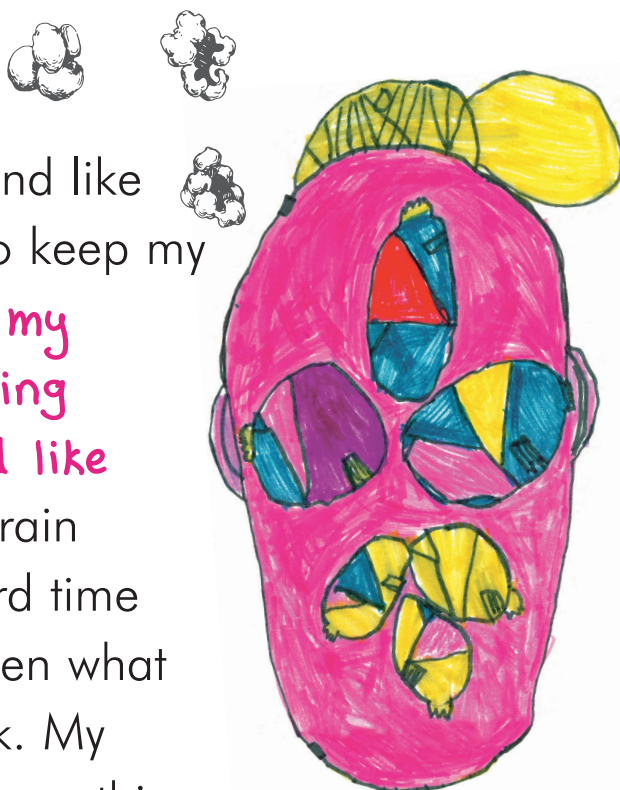


I'll tell you a secret about me:

Ever since I was little, I've had a
tendency to get "spaced out."

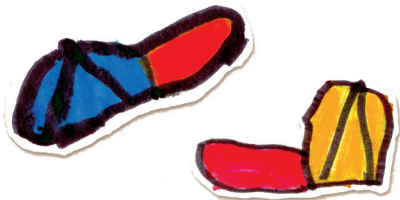


My ideas jump around like popcorn. It's hard to keep my concentration when **my thoughts are banging around in my head like bumper cars**. My brain seems to have a hard time distinguishing between what I see, hear and think. My attention wanders to anything happening around me.



I try hard, but I'm easily distracted, and I still make careless mistakes – even when I go over my work, I miss items! I forget things – so many things! I've even handed in a test and forgotten to fill in a section. I forget my lunch box, my notebook, my gym bag...

So many times my parents have had to bring me something I forgot to take to school – or had to go back to school to get something I left there. They say I'd make a great astronaut, because I'm always spacing out – and they need a spaceship to keep up with me. So much time is wasted on finding things I lose and forget!



"Where did my hat go?"

I try hard, but the problem is too big for me. When I read, I have to start over again and again, because I forget all the details.



I don't notice time passing,
and I often end up being late.
Sometimes my brain has a
hard time getting started,
and sometimes it seems to
be racing at top speed – but
not always in the right direction.



People call me a
weather vane

because I'm always turning
every which way. It's hard
to start a project, and
also to finish it: I lose my
focus and get scattered.

It's really frustrating:
no matter how hard I try,
I can't get organized



Sometimes it really bothers me – sometimes it even makes me angry. One day, another kid said that I must be stupid or lazy. That really hurt.

I wish someone could help me control the storm of thoughts in my head.

I'm so lucky that my parents and my teacher give me support! I don't do it on purpose...





It feels like the bandleader in my brain doesn't know which direction to go.

I can't even keep up with myself sometimes. When I'm really interested and passionate about something, when I'm excited about a project or scrambling at the last minute, I can be super effective. If you think of it like a race, I'm an expert at sprinting!

