



## The ADHD National Gazette



### Wishing all our ADHD Community in Australia and Across the World a peaceful and safe Christmas

2022 has almost come to an end and the ADHD Foundation would like to thank all our dedicated and hardworking volunteers who have provided the opportunity for the ADHD Foundation and have responded to the needs of the community more than 12,000 times.

it is only with the help of our valued financial donors and those volunteers who donate their time that we have been able to achieve these results. So thank you. We appreciate every one of you. As we enter 2023 we have some exciting news to bring and will be introducing a new Team to the ADHD Foundation family. We will tell you more in our next newsletter.

*Merry Christmas!*  
*from the ADHD Foundation*

### What's inside

1. Chair Report by Edwina Birch
2. Too Young for School?
3. Career Ponderings for Students with ADHD, by Claire Pech.
4. Older adults: Dementia, Depression - or ADHD? Why not ADHD?
5. Research says it's best not to start: Vaping can affect many areas of a person's health
4. Upcoming Events for 2023





**Edwina Birch**  
**Chair, ADHD Foundation**

*Thank you Edwina for your passion and dedication and for being a Foundation member of the ADHD Foundation. And welcome to your continued role within the Advocacy Team.*

In 2023 Edwina, a Founding Member, Director and Chair will retire from the Governing Board and Chair role to take up an Advocacy role within the ADHD Foundation Advocacy Team.

There has never been a more important time to dedicate resources to Advocacy than now, and the ADHD Foundation Advocacy team are poised to focus on this work. In 2023 the ADHD Foundation understands the need for a dedicated and focused approach to address the many challenges in order to better serve our ADHD community. Therefore, we have made the commitment to include Advocacy as part of our revised strategic plan.

Edwina has been a driving force in the area of Advocacy and understands the commitment and dedication of time that is required. As a member of the Advocacy Team Edwina, we thank you for your commitment to engaging in this important work on behalf of the Foundation.





**Edwina Birch**  
Chair, ADHD Foundation



This will be my last report as Chair of the ADHD Foundation. I am stepping down to take a more focused role within the organisation which will be with the Public Policy and Advocacy Team, allowing me to focus on advocating for change at the national, state and territory government levels.

We need a major rethink about how ADHD is managed, as we have a serious crisis in the ability of both public and private health systems to cope with the demand. There is major inequity, with little or no public health services for ADHD, and no consideration for those who are financially vulnerable. It is time for major reform, yet as the new prescribing regulations for NSW show, the decision makers are raising the bar for diagnosis and treatment rather than making access easier and cheaper.

The Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 is currently in force and the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Bill 2022 recently passed parliament, and new regulations will be finalised later in 2023. We are assured that there will be an opportunity for the public to comment. However new regulations were published at the end of November which totally ignored the submissions the ADHD Foundation and the Australian ADHD Professionals had made earlier in the year. One of these new regulations require anyone 65 and over needing a repeat script, or newly diagnosed, to have a second opinion from an independent Psychiatrist. This is highly discriminatory and has no medical evidence to back it up. We are continuing to advocate with the NSW Prescribing Regulatory Unit for change.

Some of the work that I have been involved with since the last newsletter, includes meetings with several politicians who are advocating for change for the benefit of those with ADHD, including:

- Senator Allman-Payne, Education Spokesperson for the Greens.
- Senator Jordan Steele-John, Disability spokesperson for the Greens
- Senator David Pocock early in 2023
- Independent MP Zoe Daniels has also asked for a briefing paper for a meeting in the New Year.

I was a member of the delegation to the Assistant “Minister for Autism” in South Australia, organised by the Adelaide Adult ADHD Support Group. We raised the issue of broadening the scope of the Ministry to include all neurodiverse conditions, with those with ADHD being the largest group - also the need for adults to be supported. Sadly their total focus on children seems to replicate the message we are receiving from other state governments, who seem reluctant to acknowledge that children do not grow out of neurodevelopmental disorders—and therefore as adults, they also need support. Also worrying, was a comment that improving the Education system for children with Autism would benefit other special needs children, without any explanation of how that may occur!

The public profile of ADHD has increased in 2022, and we need to keep up the pressure for change to ensure we will have better news this time next year.

*from The ADHD Foundation*



# Too Young for School?



Parents who are thinking of sending their child to school before they have turned five years, need to consider if they are 'emotionally and socially' ready for the education process.

The effects of being too young for school can be devastating and lifelong. The first few years of a child's school life will determine that child's attitude to learning for the rest of their days. There is far too much stress on these younger children far too early. Why? Why do they have to be started as early as possible?

Many of our kindergarten children are only four and a half years at the beginning of the school year. The schools, keeping their numbers up, take these little people before Easter when they are 4 and 9 months, just as half the kids in the class are about to turn 6 years. At that stage of their development, the young ones are a good 15 months behind their classmates. "Immediately the little boys are disadvantaged," says Prof. Simon Clarke, Paediatrician.

"What do kindergarten children get rewarded for most? Sitting still."

"Who does that best? Little girls who are five and a half years."

"Who does this worst? Little boys of four and three-quarter years, whose motor development is not yet up to keeping them still for longer than a few minutes".

"So Susan gets a star and Simon is out in the corridor again."

Too many young children are suffering physically, emotionally and academically from having started school before their bodies, their minds or both were read.

Additionally, ADHD and learning disabilities are highly genetic. And more than half of all children with ADHD have problems with learning. It is tough at school when you can't concentrate or stick at a task, but even tougher if there are unrecognized learning problems

All parents whose children have mid-year birthdays should consider holding them back until the following year. The same applies to parents who feel their five-year-old is not socially or emotionally ready for school. The law does not require compulsory school attendance until a child is six years.

**Confirm with the School or State Education Department.**

Policies may vary or change therefore we recommend that parents wishing to find out what the policy and guidelines are should contact the child's school and/or contact the relevant State Education Departments as there can be variations.



### Development not related to age.

Parents, teachers, and education authorities – need to realize that development is not related to age.

“Boys develop more slowly than girls. The worst affected children are the little boys with mid-year birthdays,” said Dr Clarke.

July is the cut-off point for NSW school enrolments. “By the time they get to high school the youngest boys are actually two years behind girls in the same class.

The girls are experiencing puberty and the boys are still children.” This, he believes, is going to drastically affect their work and their attitudes to theoretical study.



All parents whose children have mid-year birthdays should consider holding them back until the following year. The same applies to parents who feel their five-year-old is not socially or emotionally ready for school. The law does not require compulsory school attendance until a child is six years. An extra year at home or at preschool can do no harm, whereas spending that year at school before they're ready, can do irredeemable damage.

Mothers don't need to teach. All they have to do is turn off the TV and other devices, and let the kids be kids.

Let them use their imagination– especially outdoors, invite other kids to visit, and take them to Playgroup, the park, the beach, for bush walks. Make shopping a learning experience, and importantly, read with your child.

### Transitioning into the school environment

Remember – even if the child is managing reasonably well with his school work, then there will be even greater expectations on the child to manage in a busy classroom.

A major problem occurs when the parents realize their child is not coping and the school is reporting ‘behavioural issues’, often threatening suspension. The child may simply not be ready for the education process.

Parents and teachers need to consider a situation where the child may be ‘socially immature’ – poor concentration, can't sit still, won't co-operate, share, or join in group games.

Or ‘emotionally undeveloped’ – school upsets or frightens him, he cannot make decisions, nightmares, cramps, bedwetting. “Schools are loathe to repeat children who are bright,” said Prof. Clarke, “however in this situation repeating is a simple and frequently effective solution”.

Parents must consider too that while a child may appear to be coping well academically, despite any other issues, he is probably not operating at his full potential. A younger child who is making average progress, could possibly be brilliant if he had not been put into a class for which he is too young.







## If your instincts tell you to, hold them back.

Parents know their children better than anyone else. Use your own superior knowledge of your child's development in deciding whether your boy or girl is truly ready for school. Has your pre-schooler been slow with his developmental stages, or does he seem 'different' to other children of same age?

**If unsure, ask your child's preschool or child care centre, Paediatrician, or your GP. But whatever you do when considering your children's needs, make rational, intelligent decisions, and make them early.**

### Before starting 'big school', children need to be able to:

- Recognise their own name
- Dress themselves
- Put their own shoes on (Velcro straps will help)
- Have a good pencil grip
- Copy individual letters and numbers
- Know the primary colours (red, blue, green and yellow)

### Remember:

- To have their sight & hearing checked.
- Every child develops at a different pace. However, if you are already concerned, start your search before they start school. Don't be put off by being told "you are just a worrier" or "they will grow out of it."
- So often the pre-schooler who is "different" or "slow in developing" can be caught and helped before going to school. Not all of these younger children will develop learning difficulties. Some of them seem to get by. However, it is not worth the risk to wait and see "if they will grow out of it".

Sourced from an article of the same name by Prof. Simon Clark, and publications "Help Your Child to Learn" by Barbara Pheloung, and Understanding ADHD by Dr Christopher Green.

### Find more information on school readiness below:

ADHD Foundation Website: [www.adhdfoundation.org.au](http://www.adhdfoundation.org.au)

ADHD National Helpline: 1300 39 39 19



# Career Ponderings for Students with ADHD

**By Claire Pech**

[clairepechcareers.com](http://clairepechcareers.com)



Something that I see often working with teenagers and young people in trying to find their feet and launch a career is a feeling of being 'stuck'. What do I mean by this?

I mean that some students have not enjoyed their time at school and as a result, they can assume that if uni/TAFE/tertiary study is an extension of school, then maybe they won't be very good at it. Or if school has been a real hassle - especially with time management and not getting assignments in on time, then there can be a perception that "What am I going to do anyway? What is next for me? I don't seem to be very good at any of 'this'".

The key here is to remember that at school only certain traits are being used and tested. Often students are only trying out a certain skill set. And quite often that skill set can be limited (ie learning by rote, memorising quantities of information, or relaying that information in written format). Very often the very things that a student with ADHD may be very good at (and there are too many to mention here) may be the very skills that are not being assessed.

For example - bringing in spontaneous and creative ideas to a problem. Being great in crowds and with people. Being great in performances. Being able to bring a high energy and positive mood to a group. Being able to learn and perform by doing. Being able to verbalise (not necessarily write) out great ideas. Being able to grow a thriving business and so on... a huge variety of skills that very often overlooked in a busy curriculum. As a result, the perception can be that they are not valued. All students should be given a chance to discover what they are good at. For everyone, this can take time. For someone with ADHD this can take a bit longer and at times can need a different approach or a more patient attitude.

**For more information please read some of my articles below. I can be contacted here at <https://clairepechcareers.com/contact/> for any more information or to make a booking so we can put a plan in place for you..**



The key to any career fulfilment and enjoyment – for everyone – regardless of brain makeup is to find out what you are good at. Once anyone figures this out – work becomes extremely enjoyable.

This is when we use the phrase 'to thrive'. The difficult part of this can be knowing where to start, which is why I always advise anyone with ADHD, to go and speak to their school Careers Advisor and let them know about your brain specialities.

The other part is to remember that the road ahead, in terms of careers, is non-linear and messy. Very, very few students know where they are going and certainly, many derail, take a detour and get lost along the way. I know I did, and most of my friends and colleagues did too. These detours can be where all the magic happens.

Keeping all of this in mind can be crucial to launching yourself out of school and into the world of further studies and work.

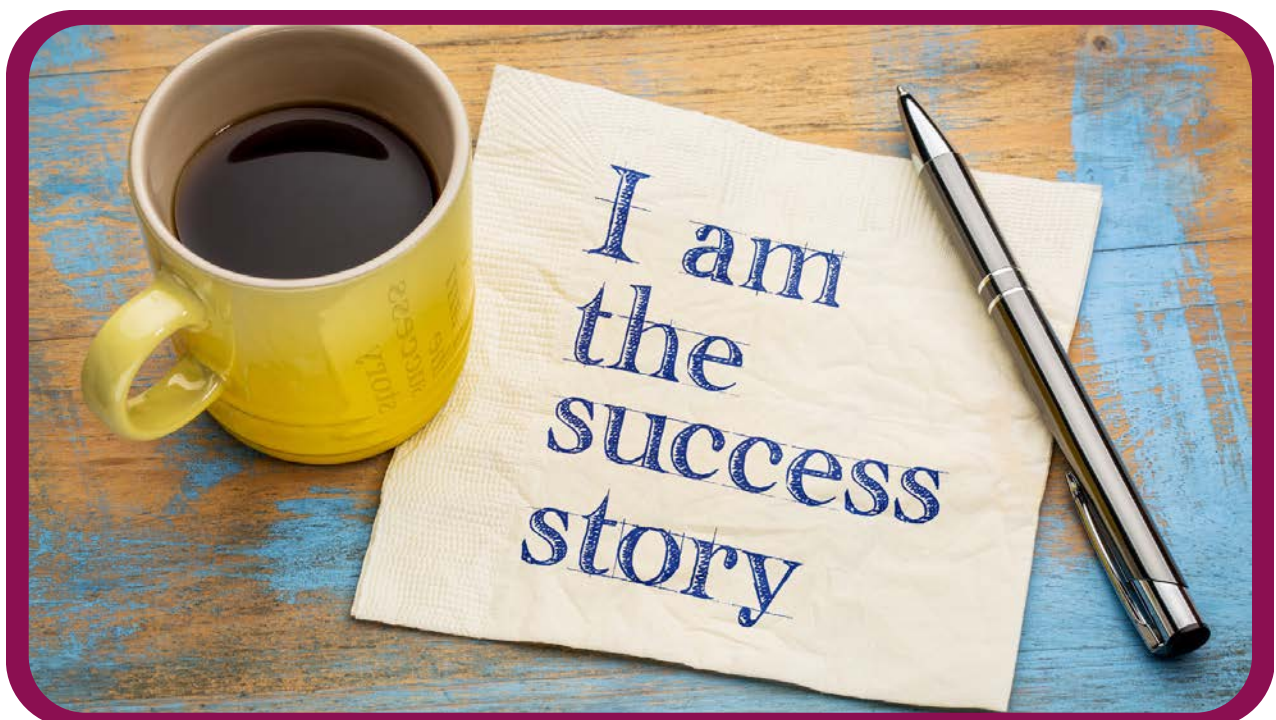
### **More articles by Claire Pech:**

[The Role ADHD can Play in Career Planning and Progression, with Study Work Grow](#)

[Practical Tips to Support Teens with ADHD, embarking on their Careers – Claire Pech Careers](#)

[5 Things Year 12 Students Must Know, in Sydney Morning Herald July 2020](#)

[A Letter to the Class of 2022 – Claire Pech Careers](#)





# Older adults: Dementia, Depression – or ADHD?

## Why not ADHD?



We know ADHD rarely disappears from childhood to adulthood, so why should it not be found in 2-5% of older adults, as it is for younger adults? Do we grow out of ADHD in our 60's?

Definitely not! Although It may not look quite the same, as ADHD can appear differently in children to adults.

### **Managing ADHD can be more challenging for older adults.**

Misdiagnosed as early Dementia. As the brain ages, there is a normal cognitive decline. This is especially in the brain's ability to sustain attention, meaning it has to work harder to stay focused and on task. If you don't pay attention you are unlikely to remember what you have been doing.

With retirement comes a loss of structure and routine which we know is so important to feeling in control and achieving goals. It's an excellent coping strategy. So if you have ADHD and are considering retirement, make sure you have enough activities planned to keep your active ADHD brain occupied.

### **Misdiagnosing the underlying cause of Depression.**

If the ADHD brain has not enough action to keep it healthy, it is likely to get depressed, and if it is struggling with the stress of trying to keep up as before, or adjusting to major life change, depression and anxiety is a risk.

For women, there are hormonal changes with age, which can affect cognition and which we know are more challenging to adapt to if you have ADHD. Sleep can be disturbed which will impact a person's ability to manage ADHD symptoms.

### **Could it be a turning point in ADHD Research and Treatment?**

A new meta-analysis of studies from the last 15 years, involving more than 3.9 million participants, concluded that "ADHD medication use was not statistically significantly associated with the risk of any CVD (cardiovascular disease) among children and adolescents, young and middle-aged adults, older adults, or overall."

The analysis, published in JAMA Network Open, was the most comprehensive to date on the association between ADHD medication and CVD risk. According to William Dodson, M.D. clinicians should not outright disallow ADHD Medication.

Kathleen Nadeau, the author of "Still Distracted After All These Years", has studied ADHD in Older Adults and recommends that we have specific guidelines to identify and treat ADHD in the over 60s.

Her articles and podcasts are available on the Additude website:

<https://www.additudemag.com/author/kathleen-nadeau-ph-d/>



## Need to take self-report seriously.

One major stumbling block may be how to prove a patient had ADHD in childhood. There are unlikely to be school reports, and there may not be family around who knew you back then. We have to accept the patient's word.

It was hoped that the recently published Australian Evidence-Based Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Treatment of ADHD would be able to provide guidance on the diagnosis and treatment of older adults. However, NHMRC only accepted one research paper, and essentially it found no difference in treatment outcomes for older adults. Dr David W Goodman, an Associate Professor of Psychiatry from John Hopkins University who specialises in ADHD in adults, has the same message.

We hear of GP's refusing to refer patients on to a Psychiatrist, and we are aware of how difficult it is to find a Psychiatrist who will diagnose ADHD.

Then there are roadblocks, especially in NSW as anyone first diagnosed at 70 or over needs to see another Psychiatrist for a second opinion before medication can be prescribed on the PBS. Some Psychiatrists who diagnose and treat adult ADHD, refuse to do so after the age of 70. Why?

Diagnosis and treatment in older adults is more rather than less important. It can, as in many cases can lead to many years of a productive and satisfying life. Those with ADHD can contribute to society rather than be a burden.

Symptoms that can be managed with a younger brain, may need the added help of ADHD medication as the brain ages.



If only every Geriatrician could add ADHD to their professional toolkit, Neuropsychologists may not be blinded by age.

If you are someone who is having difficulties or you have a loved one who may be asking for a diagnosis or they have been refused treatment please let us know.

This information will support our work on increasing awareness within relevant government agencies.

### Reference:

Zhang L, Yao H, Li L, et al. (2022). Risk of Cardiovascular Diseases Associated with Medications Used in Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. JAMA Netw Open. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.43597>





# What is Vaping?



**Many Parents and carers across Australia have been speaking to our National Helpline because they are concerned about their young adults and the dangers of Vaping.**

New research is underway and to date, the findings are not positive. Particularly with the celebrations, and school holidays comes more risk of access to dangerous activities including Vaping.

The ADHD Foundation conducted an online webinar to provide information for parents and anyone interested to learn more about the dangers of Vaping. If you missed this you may still be able to watch it.

Email [events@adhd.foundation.org.au](mailto:events@adhd.foundation.org.au) and let the ADHD Foundation know that you would like to know how to access this back webinar.

Young people who vape nicotine are exposed to a toxic chemical that can harm adolescent brain development (the brain continues to develop until the age of 25) and lead to dependence.

**Educating our community, particularly teenagers and young adults of the risks.**

More research is needed, however, a comprehensive study was done in January 2018 by the Academies of Science, Technology, and Medicine.

It was concluded that it is dangerous and unsafe to inhale glycerin and propylene glycol.

## Reference

**What Is Vaping? A New Health Threat for Teens with ADHD ([additudemag.com](http://additudemag.com))**

Additionally, in 2009, the FDA tested several types of pre-filled vaping cartridges and found traces of diethylene glycol, a toxin that is found in antifreeze.

A 2018 study of 56 e-cigarettes found the presence of toxic metals — including lead, nickel, and chromium — in the aerosol.

Though it's been banned in Europe and shown to cause bronchiolitis obliterans, or "popcorn lung," the chemical diacetyl is used by some e-cigarette manufacturers. Similarly, the chemical acetaldehyde, found in some e-cigarette smoke, is shown to damage the lining of the mouth, throat, and stomach.

The dangers of vaping, unlike tobacco, are not fully known — but early research is not promising.

## What are Australian health organisations saying?

The Australian Medical Association (AMA), Cancer Council Australia and the Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH) have published positions on e-cigarettes, saying:

- There is insufficient evidence to promote the use of e-cigarettes for smoking cessation. There is increasing evidence of health harm.
- E-cigarettes may normalise the act of smoking and attract young people. E-cigarettes should be more properly regulated.

Read more on their official websites.



## More events coming in 2023

To book this event and see other events as they are uploaded please click on this link to book your ticket. early bird tickets are limited but a few are still available.

**ENHANCING LIVES, CREATING CHANGE**

**“ADHD AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE LAW - WHERE ARE WE TODAY AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?”**

 **MON 27 FEB 2023**

 **3:00 PM (AEDT) START  
4:00 PM (AEDT) END**



 **BOOK NOW**

[adhdfoundation.org.au](http://adhdfoundation.org.au)

**Dr Joey Q Le**  
**Psychiatrist**  
*Guest Speaker*



### Who should attend:

- Professionals working in the areas or youth
- justice, law, social workers, counsellors, etc.,
- Educators, Teachers, Teachers Aides and teaching support staff
- Parents or carers of young people
- Organisations working with young people who may be at risk of coming into contact with the law.
- Clinicians and those who provide medical treatments
- Law, Medical and Allied Health Students.

### ADHD, Young People in contact with the Law - Where are we today and where to next

**Dr Joey Le is a child and adolescent and forensic**

Dr Joey Le is a psychiatrist who works in NSW and ACT.

In this talk, he explores some of the challenges that young people with ADHD have when they come into contact with youth justice services.

Despite the difficulties, Dr Le argue that there remains many reasons to be hopeful, and that supporting young people with evidence-based interventions for ADHD is essential to keeping them out of custody and to help them return to a normative developmental trajectory.

**Register now - a few early bird tickets available**



The ADHD Foundation is your ADHD Australian national community across Australia.

Your donation helps to support the work that we do, and is appreciated more than you know

With generous financial and volunteer support the ADHD Foundation has achieved many milestones in ADHD Foundation. To help us continue our work you can contribute in various ways:

- Financial Support - via our online donation button
- Corporate partnerships - please connect with us at [office@adhd.foundation.org.au](mailto:office@adhd.foundation.org.au)
- Pro-bono and/or in-kind as an individual or an organisation - your expertise is valued
- Use your workplace giving to add value to the work that we do
- Philanthropy or grants If you are looking for a charity that gives 100% of its time and any finance back to the community in many ways.

Our guarantee to you is that your donation will be spent wisely and carefully and in line with what we say we do. Your donation supports the ADHD Community.

### Membership

Be sure to register for **our Membership portal** for free additional resources and support.

### Helpline

Email our team, **fill in our contact form** if you are seeking support for yourself or or loved one.

### Donate

We would be very grateful if you are able to provide a tax deductible **donation to support our work.**



Contact the office for media enquiries, partnerships, admin and other enquiries.

Post Address: PO Box 22 Epping NSW 1719  
[www.adhd.foundation.org.au](http://www.adhd.foundation.org.au)

