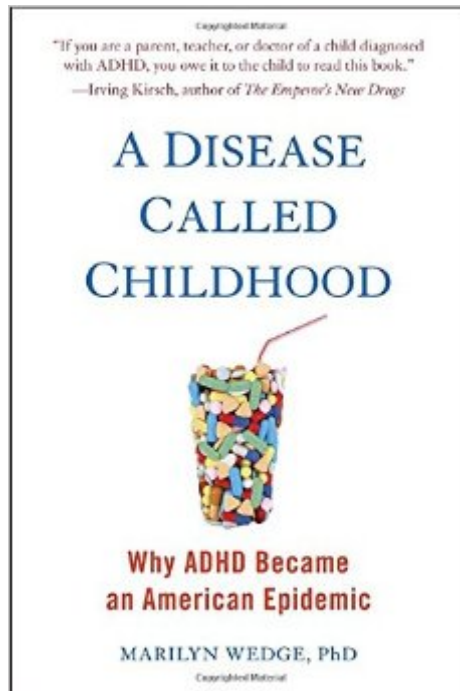


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# A Disease Called Childhood: Why ADHD Became An American Epidemic



## Synopsis

A family therapist offers a surprising new look at the rise of ADHD in America, arguing for a better paradigm for diagnosing and treating our children. Since 1987, the number of American children diagnosed with ADHD has jumped from 3 to 11 percent. Meanwhile, ADHD rates remain relatively low in other countries such as France, Finland, the UK, and Japan, where the number of children diagnosed with and medicated for ADHD is 1 percent or less. Alarmed by this trend, family therapist Marilyn Wedge set out to understand how ADHD became an American epidemic and to find out whether there are alternative treatments to powerful prescription drugs. In *A Disease Called Childhood*, Wedge examines the factors that have created a generation addicted to stimulant drugs. Instead of focusing only on treating symptoms, she looks at the various potential causes of hyperactivity and inattention in children, and behavioral and environmental as opposed to strictly biological treatments that have been proven to help. In the process, Wedge offers a new paradigm for child mental health and a better, happier, and less medicated future for American children.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am a Learning Specialist at a New England Prep School -- Vermont Academy. I am also a Freestyle Skiing coach. I have been working with high-energy "attention deficient" teens for 13 years. Doctor Wedge's book "A Disease Called Childhood" validates all of my beliefs and gut instincts about our society's lack of patience with the natural maturing process of adolescents -- particularly males, the overprescription and dangers of amphetamine meds, and the precarious

nature and overuse of the ADHD diagnosis in the first place. Her book is a compelling and refreshing read with strong credibility. Dr. Wedge and her book is an important voice that needs to be amplified through more readers asking more questions.

Many of the negative reviewers are disagreeing with Dr. Wedge's statements in the book, but are not even discussing the facts she presents. Her discussion of American psychiatry's move from a psychoanalytic model of diagnosis and treatment to a biological model was enlightening. I am a pediatric occupational therapist and have worked with children diagnosed with ADHD for 15 years. I strongly believe that the environment in most American schools requires behavioral expectations for children that are developmentally inappropriate. (For example, children in preschool being expected to sit for 30 minutes for a circle time in class, or being expected to write their name before kindergarten, or kindergarteners being expected to write sentences...NONE of this is age-appropriate.) Wedge's book should be read for the information it gives into the history of why ADHD is being over-diagnosed at such alarming rates. We need to consider our cultural biases in America and truly look at making environmental changes for children that need them, rather than labeling them at such young ages. Another thing we need to be willing to do as parents is to examine our own interactions with our children and consider how they may be contributing to a child's challenges; the trouble is that- for many reasons- there will always be parents who can't or won't do this. In some cases, medication may be appropriate for treating ADHD, in my opinion-- BUT I still give this book 5 stars for the thought-provoking nature of its contents, especially regarding this historical shift of psychiatry in America from a psychosocial to a biological/medical approach that has resulted in massive increases in the number of children diagnosed with ADHD.

Well informed author knows what she is talking about because it's been her job for thirty years. Well written, easy to follow with excellent, real life examples. Most parents should read this. If you have a child diagnosed with ADHD- read this book. It's worth it.

A must-read for any parent with a child displaying so-called ADHD symptoms. Dr. Wedge cogently argues that these symptoms are not caused by a biological disorder (except in the case of brain damage) but are a child's response to stress in his/her life from such events as divorce or illness of a parent. As such, the child is best served by therapy addressing the stress and not by medication. This book is aptly titled and highly readable.

Very well done book. Explored the social, physical and nutritional aspects of how and why the rates of ADHD have skyrocketed. Plenty of case studies of the many diverse and sometimes complex situations in which children are being unnecessarily diagnosed, and made it shockingly clear how quick physicians are to hand out psychotropic drugs to our children! Although I was skeptical of some of them (the trauma-safe schools), the author did provide a variety of ideas and suggestions on how we can reverse the trend. Also thought she did a great job of comparing and contrasting different nations' perspectives, approaches, and ADHD rates to show the bigger picture.

My wife and I both read this book and found it incredibly enlightening. We saw so many of our friends with kids go down the road of medication and we really wanted to try to avoid that so we've been looking at other methods. We both think that this book should be mandatory reading for anyone with kids or who is even considering having kids. It makes you look at the whole pharmaceutical industry very differently and makes you realize that there really are other options.

As a mom with three children I found this book to be very informative. The history of the changes that have taken place through the decades regarding the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD are thought-provoking. It is also interesting to see how other cultures in the world differ from the United States in their attitudes and beliefs about childhood issues.

This is how I've always felt about the disorder era.. being neck deep in it. Making my struggles about the mind made them worse instead of better.. I knew the diagnosis wasn't helping me or my friends.. took me years to find an alternative and understand the power of the heart.

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