

By Dawn Jackson, M.Ed, Homeschool and ADHD Coach

I love the idea of redefining the labels we give our children. I am on a quest not just to change the way we see our differences, but how to reframe them and celebrate our unique gifts.

ADHD is a term now that is used for every brain that moves quickly or appears inattentive in a learning setting. As a teacher of Special Education, at one time, I left the field out of frustration due to the lack of interest in redefining the meaning of labels for children and how they impact their lives. I have always had an eye for seeing things in a different way, and this is just one way I would like to share.

In this article I hope to help you see there is another way to think about girls diagnosed and undiagnosed with the label of ADHD; I call them smart girls for a reason. Inattentiveness is a way parents and teachers may question that there may be a need for an intervention. Some traits may include; Missing details, short attention span, poor listening skills, lack of follow through, disorganized, apathy toward tasks, losing track of important items, forgetfulness, easily distracted, and daydreaming. As we well know, these traits can also show up in children that have been traumatized through some life event unknown to the parents or teachers. We have to be careful when we use labels and try not to give a diagnoses that only a professional can give.

Before I ever begin to question a child as being ADHD I try to learn more about them. What are the gifts that they have? What are their talents? How do they handle stressful situations like tests or doing a new tasks? I have learned there is usually more to the story.

What is interesting about girls and especially smart girls with ADHD, is that you don't often recognize any of their struggles because they don't often show up. The problem is that can actually hurt them in the long run.

I love working with children because they are all unique and have gifts that often go unnoticed. The reason for this is partly due to the way they see themselves. In my work as a certified learning styles specialist I have enjoyed helping children and parents discover their learning strengths and natural gifts. I find that when a smart girl learns who she is and what her natural talents are, she becomes more secure in trying those things. Its almost like watching a baby see their reflection in a mirror for the first time, there is a giggle and a burst of joy. So it is with our smart girls, not

living under labels and fear but learning to celebrate their curiosity,  
spontaneous, joyous and inventive minds.