

## PARTICIPANTS WITH ADHD

In performing their duties, referees will most likely interact with judoka with ADHD. Whilst the contest rules are entirely unchanged, referees may benefit from adapting their style both on and off the mat to better support these judoka.

### **About ADHD** (from [ADDiSS](#))

ADHD - attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is a condition, which affects those parts of the brain which control attention, impulses and concentration. It is thought to affect 3 to 7% of school age children and in approximately one third to one half of children with ADHD, the symptoms continue into adulthood. The best description for ADHD is that a child shows disruptive behaviours, which are not in keeping with those of the same-aged people with similar intelligence and development. These behaviours are usually first noticed in early childhood, and they are more extreme than simple "misbehaving".

Children with ADHD have difficulty focussing their attention to complete a specific task; they can be hyperactive and impulsive and can suffer from mood swings and 'social clumsiness'. Children with ADHD are restless and cannot sit still or do any one thing for very long. They are easily distracted and, because they find it so hard to pay attention. They appear not to listen when someone is talking to them, they find it hard to wait their turn and they can be disruptive in play.

### **Some advice for referees**

Referees are not expected to be experts, but some simple steps may be beneficial. If you are in any doubt, ask the coach or parent responsible for the child to assist.

📌 **Set clear boundaries** - Make sure everyone knows what behaviour is expected, be clear and reinforce positive behaviour with immediate praise or reward.

📌 **Be positive** - Give specific praise. Instead of saying a general: "Well done," you could say: "Your grip fighting worked really well. Well done." This will make it clear that you're pleased and why.

📌 **Giving instructions** - If you're asking a child to do something, give brief instructions and be specific. Instead of asking: "Can you wear shoes please?" say: "Please put shoes on when you aren't on the mat, so that you don't get dirty feet." This makes it clearer what the child needs to do and creates opportunities for praise when they get it right.

📌 **Intervene early** - Watch for warning signs. If a child looks like they're becoming frustrated, overstimulated and about to lose self-control, intervene, and ask their coach or parent for support.