

**Dear Counselling Corner:**

Pretty much every day after school, my child is full of energy I feed them a snack once home, let them watch TV, then turn it off and carry on with the evening. But I find my child is very hyper or full of energy, and trying to get them to help out with chores is kind of impossible. As a family, we do try to get out for some family time in the evening and that helps. Is it common for children to be full of energy after school? Are boys different from girls in this regard or are all kids the same? Any suggestions? Thanks!

**Tuckered Out**

**Dear Tuckered:**

It's both admirable and exhausting to realize how much energy little ones have, isn't it? A nutritious after-school snack is a great idea that many kids benefit from. I notice that you mentioned letting the kids watch TV, too. Here are a [couple of suggestions](#) pertaining to your specific scenario.

- Take a moment for movement. After a long day at school, make sure to give your child some opportunities to burn through the extra energy. This does NOT need to cost you lots of money or extra driving to activities! Just some time in the backyard or on a small trampoline can help re-set your child's system so they can regulate before doing "boring" tasks like homework or the bedtime routine. You may wish to check out Walmart: <https://www.walmart.ca/browse/sports-rec/exercise-fitness/aerobic-fitness-accessories/fitness-trampolines/10010-20090-31186-6000198907734>
- Give them a brain break. Raise your hand if you ever get into your car to drive home at the end of a long day, and you just want quiet? No music, no podcast... **just glorious silence for a few minutes**. Sometimes we don't even realize how much STUFF we process all day. Noises, social interactions, etc... it can be overwhelming, even for an adult! Give your child some "down time" to decompress and let their brain rest a little. This may look different for each child. One of my children takes brain breaks by swinging around and around on her gymnastics bar, while my other child will sit quietly with play-doh or another manipulative for a few minutes. It may take a little detective work to understand what works best for your family!
- Observe a mindful minute. This is a more structured approach to the brain break. Using apps such as Headspace or a free meditation on Youtube, you can give your child a structured meditation or "mindful minute" to calm and center. We love [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#) (also free on Youtube), and Zenimals meditation tool. (Note: This is not sponsored, just tools that we use with our own children!) For other relaxation ideas, check out our [FREE Relaxation Guide](#).
- Consider your parent presence. No judgement here! But something to consider: how regulated are you after school? As the parent, your own presence sets the tone for your children. Notice what works (and what doesn't work for you!) and problem solve from there. Does the stress of the school pickup line put you in a bad mood? Maybe find a funny podcast that you enjoy, which you can listen to when you are waiting. Are you

always arguing with your child about what snacks they can/cannot have? Try a snack basket filled with “approved” snacks, and let each child choose from those options.

- Many young children have a lot of energy, regardless of their sex or gender, which is why (quite a number of years ago) there was concern that many kids were being over-diagnosed with ADHD. It’s important to remember what’s developmentally appropriate, and that high energy doesn’t indicate ADHD all on its own. Depending on their age and what is developmentally appropriate, if kids are able to demonstrate impulse control, manage their emotions (aside from when they are hungry or tired/overtired), pay attention, and respond in an appropriate manner at home and school, they are likely just an energetic kiddo, and do not have ADD/ADHD. ADD/ADHD shows up in different ways for different kids. If you are concerned about this, please make an appointment with your child’s pediatrician, as counsellors and teachers cannot make a formal diagnosis.
- You may also may wish to check out [Positive Parenting Connection](#) which lists ten helpful strategies for parenting super high energy kids.

*The Counselling Corner is intended to offer some helpful ideas, encouragement, and insight on a variety of topics to support your child’s social and emotional learning.*

**Harriette Chang**  
**School Counsellor**