

1.1 What is ADHD

ADHD, which stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, is a medical condition characterised by distinct differences in brain development and activity. These differences influence key aspects of an individual's behaviour, such as their attention span, ability to remain still, and self-regulation. For children with ADHD, these challenges can have a significant impact on various areas of their lives, including their performance in school, their interactions with others, and their self-confidence.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder is a prevalent neurodevelopmental disorder that usually appears during childhood. It manifests through a variety of symptoms, including challenges with sustaining attention, a tendency towards hyperactivity, and a propensity for impulsive actions. Children with ADHD often find it difficult to manage executive functions, which affects their capacity to organise, plan, and carry out tasks efficiently.

The impact of ADHD on children is multifaceted, influencing their academic achievements, social relationships, and overall self-perception. It's crucial to acknowledge that ADHD doesn't have a one-size-fits-all presentation; the disorder varies widely among individuals. Some children might primarily exhibit inattention, others may show more hyperactive and impulsive behaviours, and many will display a mix of both symptom types. Understanding these nuances is key to providing appropriate support and interventions for each child with ADHD.

1.2 Signs and Symptoms of ADHD

ADHD is characterised by symptoms like inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity, typically evident before the age of 12. These symptoms can range from mild to severe and may persist into adulthood.

There are three main types of ADHD: predominantly inattentive, predominantly hyperactive-impulsive, and combined presentation.

Predominantly Inattentive Presentation:

Example: A child with predominantly inattentive ADHD may struggle with completing school assignments. For instance, they might overlook important details in a maths problem, leading to incorrect answers despite knowing the concept.

Example: During playtime, they might start building a Lego structure but quickly lose interest and move on to another activity, leaving the project unfinished.

Example: In a classroom setting, they may appear distant or daydreaming, missing key instructions or information provided by the teacher.

Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive Presentation:

Example: A child with predominantly hyperactive-impulsive ADHD may find it difficult to engage in quiet activities. For instance, during a visit to the library, they might struggle to keep their voices down or continuously shift from one bookshelf to another.

Example: In a situation requiring patience, such as waiting in line, they may find it challenging to remain still and quiet, constantly fidgeting or tapping their feet.

Example: During group activities, they might blurt out answers before others have finished speaking, unable to control their impulses to contribute immediately.

Combined Presentation:

Example: A child with combined ADHD may exhibit a mix of inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive behaviours. For example, during a class discussion, they might struggle to stay focused on the topic, frequently shifting in their seat and interrupting others to share their thoughts.

Example: In social situations, they might have difficulty waiting their turn in games or conversations, often interrupting others or monopolising the discussion.

Example: When given a task requiring sustained mental effort, such as studying for a test, they may procrastinate or avoid the task altogether due to both inattentive tendencies and a desire for immediate gratification.

These examples illustrate how ADHD symptoms can manifest in various contexts, impacting academic performance, social interactions, and daily functioning.

Recognizing these behaviours is crucial for providing appropriate support and interventions to help individuals with ADHD thrive in their personal and academic lives.

1.3 Distinguishing ADHD from Typical Development:

It's common for children, especially younger ones, to display behaviours like inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity from time to time. For instance, preschoolers often have short attention spans and may struggle to stick to one activity for long periods. Similarly, children can vary in their levels of energy, with some being naturally more active than others.

However, it's important to distinguish between typical childhood behaviour and signs that may indicate ADHD. Simply being different from peers or siblings doesn't necessarily warrant an ADHD diagnosis.

A diagnosis of ADHD should consider various factors, including the child's behaviour across different settings such as home, school, and social environments. If a child

struggles in one area but functions well in others, there may be other underlying factors at play. For example, difficulties in school might stem from factors like learning disabilities or environmental stressors rather than ADHD.

Conversely, if a child displays inattentiveness or hyperactivity at home but performs well academically and socially, ADHD might not be the primary issue. It's essential to consider the broader context and gather comprehensive information before reaching conclusions about a child's behaviour and potential need for intervention or support.

1.4 Another side to look at:

While ADHD is often discussed in terms of challenges and difficulties, it's essential to recognize and celebrate the positive attributes that come with it.

Creativity: Children with ADHD often have a nonlinear thought process, which can lead to unique and innovative ideas. Their minds may not follow traditional paths, allowing them to make connections that others might not see.

Providing children with ADHD various outlets for their creativity. Art supplies, musical instruments, building blocks, and writing tools can offer them ways to express and explore their imaginative ideas. Celebrating their creative outputs fosters their confidence and reinforces the value of their unique perspectives.

This creative process is invaluable in fields like art, science, and entrepreneurship, where innovative thinking is prized.

Flexibility: The tendency of children with ADHD to explore a wide array of options and not get immediately locked into one viewpoint can make them exceptionally flexible thinkers. Engaging children with ADHD in activities that require problem-solving and critical thinking. Games that involve strategy, puzzles that require out-of-the-box thinking, and activities that encourage them to consider multiple solutions can enhance their natural flexibility.

This cognitive flexibility can be beneficial in dynamic environments where adapting to new information or changing circumstances is crucial.

Enthusiasm and Spontaneity: The vibrant and spirited personalities of children with ADHD can be infectious. Their broad range of interests and ability to engage intensely with subjects they find fascinating can lead to a lively and engaging learning and playing environment. Whether it's a particular subject in school, a hobby, or a sport, facilitating deep dives into their interests can lead to significant achievements and a strong sense of self-efficacy. Their spontaneity can encourage a more exploratory and adventurous approach to life and learning.

Energy and Drive: When children with ADHD are engaged and motivated, their focus and drive can be extraordinary. Their high energy levels, when channelled into activities or subjects they are passionate about, can lead to impressive achievements and a strong sense of accomplishment.

Positive reinforcement can boost their self-esteem and motivation. This might include individualised learning plans, breaks for movement, or the incorporation of interactive and hands-on learning activities. Encouraging participation in community activities where they can showcase their strengths and feel valued. This might include arts programs, sports, science clubs, or volunteering, depending on their interests.

1.5 ADHD in Girls

Approximately 8.4% of children and 2.5% of adults are believed to have ADHD, which is commonly first recognized in school-aged children when it leads to classroom disturbances or academic difficulties. The condition is diagnosed more often in boys than in girls, but this does not imply that boys are more susceptible to ADHD. Typically, boys exhibit more overt, externalised symptoms such as hyperactivity, while girls tend to show subtler, internalised symptoms.

Research from 2018 indicates that boys are more than twice as likely to receive an ADHD diagnosis in childhood compared to girls. Yet, a study from 2014 reveals that this disparity lessens in the adult population receiving ADHD diagnoses. The higher diagnosis rates in boys do not inherently suggest a greater incidence of ADHD among them.

There is a consensus among experts that ADHD in girls frequently goes undiagnosed due to various reasons:

- Their symptoms are often more internal and less observable.
- They are more likely to adopt coping strategies that mask their symptoms.
- There is a lower likelihood of girls being referred for diagnosis and treatment by parents and educators.
- If girls with ADHD do not receive a timely and accurate diagnosis, they are at risk of encountering ongoing difficulties that can persist from childhood into adulthood, potentially impacting their academic and occupational performance, as well as their social and personal relationships.

2.0 Introducing Mini YOGI

Mini Yogi is a creatively designed card game that merges the engaging aspects of card gaming with the therapeutic benefits of yoga, making it particularly advantageous for children with ADHD. The game focuses on nature-inspired yoga poses that are more than just physical exercises; they are avenues to boost focus, foster calmness, and enhance overall health.

By weaving yoga into a playful card game, the activity is reimagined for children, shedding any preconceptions of yoga as an ancient or complex practice. It becomes an exciting, approachable, and rewarding element of their everyday play. This approach not only makes yoga fun but also instills in children the idea of yoga as a valuable resource for lifelong health and wellness, moving it beyond merely a routine exercise or educational lesson.

2.2 Gameplay Mechanics of Mini Yogi:

Objective:

The primary objective of Mini Yogi is to encourage children, particularly those with ADHD, to improve their memory, focus, and physical activity through a fun and interactive card game that incorporates yoga poses.

Setup:

- The game consists of a deck of cards, each featuring different yoga poses inspired by nature, with two cards for each pose.
- The cards are shuffled and laid out face down in a grid pattern.

Gameplay:

1. **Turns and Matching:** Players take turns flipping over two cards at a time. If the cards match, the player earns the pair.
2. **Performing Yoga Poses:** Upon making a match, the player leads the group in performing the depicted yoga pose. This not only celebrates the successful match but also integrates a physical and mindfulness exercise into the gameplay.
3. **Memory and Focus:** As players try to remember the positions of the cards to find matches, they exercise their memory and focus—skills that are crucial for children with ADHD to develop.
4. **Sequential Turns:** After performing the pose, the turn ends, and the next player proceeds. If the cards do not match, they are turned back over, and the game continues.

Encouraging Mindfulness and Physical Activity:

- When a player finds a match and the group performs the yoga pose, they are encouraged to focus on their breathing and the physical sensations of the pose, promoting mindfulness and presence.
- Each pose should be held for a few breaths, allowing players to experience the benefits of the stretch or balance challenge.

Inclusive Play:

- The game is designed to be inclusive, ensuring that every player gets a chance to participate actively, regardless of their skill level in yoga or the game itself.
- Instructions for each pose can be provided on the back of the cards or in an accompanying guide to ensure that all players can perform the poses safely and correctly.

Winning the Game:

- The game can continue until all pairs are matched. The winner can be the player with the most pairs, although the focus should be on participation and enjoyment rather than competition.
- Alternatively, the game can emphasise collective achievement, with the group aiming to complete all yoga poses together, reinforcing the idea of teamwork and shared success.

Adaptability:

- The game can be adapted for different age groups or levels of physical ability by selecting appropriate yoga poses or adjusting the complexity of the game.
- Additional rules or variations can be introduced to keep the game engaging and challenging as players become more familiar with the mechanics.

By blending memory-enhancing card gameplay with the physical and mental benefits of yoga, Mini Yogi offers a holistic approach to supporting children with ADHD, fostering improvements in concentration, body awareness, and emotional regulation in a playful and supportive environment.

2.3 Elaboration on Selected Yoga Poses and Their Benefits for ADHD

Cobra Pose (Bhujangasana): This pose helps in stretching the chest while strengthening the spine and shoulders. It encourages a sense of openness and can alleviate feelings of tightness or constriction, which is beneficial for children who experience anxiety alongside ADHD. The pose also fosters self-awareness and confidence.

Cat Pose (Marjaryasana): By articulating the spine and engaging core muscles, this pose helps in enhancing focus and mental clarity. The rhythmic movement in sync with breath promotes calmness and mindfulness, essential skills for managing ADHD symptoms.

Downward Dog Pose (Adho Mukha Svanasana): This inverted pose revitalises the body by improving circulation, especially to the brain, which can enhance alertness and concentration. It also stretches the hamstrings, shoulders, and hands, helping to release energy blockages.

Tree Pose (Vrksasana): A balancing pose that aids in improving focus and attention while strengthening the legs. It helps children with ADHD cultivate a sense of grounding and stability, teaching them to stay present and centred despite distractions.

Butterfly Pose (Baddha Konasana): This seated pose is effective in calming the nervous system and reducing stress and anxiety. It also opens up the hips and groin, areas where stress and tension can accumulate.

Cow Face Pose (Gomukhasana): stretches your entire body—your shoulders and arms, your ankles, hips, thighs and back. In the pose, the folded legs are said to resemble a cow's mouth; the elbows form the shape of a cow's ears. It's a pose that allows you many opportunities to explore the symmetry of the body. This pose helps in releasing emotional tension, particularly in the hips and shoulders. It supports emotional regulation, an essential aspect for children with ADHD who may experience rapid mood shifts.

Eagle Pose (Garudasana): is a challenging practice of wrapping arms and legs around each other while balancing on one leg. This is a wonderful hip and heart-opening practice. It is an excellent practice to strengthen both the upper and lower body while improving focus and awareness to find balance and stability in this balance yoga pose. The intricate positioning required helps children enhance their mental clarity and physical coordination.

Lion Pose (Simhasana): This pose is particularly beneficial for releasing tension in the face and chest, areas that can hold stress. It encourages self-expression and can be fun for children, helping to improve focus and relieve stress.

Warrior Pose (Virabhadrasana): This family of poses boosts confidence, focus, and stability. It strengthens the body and mind, encouraging perseverance and resilience, qualities beneficial for children with ADHD.

Happy Baby Pose (Ananda Balasana): A soothing and relaxing pose that promotes emotional calm and stress relief. It can be particularly grounding for children, offering a sense of security and comfort.

2.4 Additional Poses to Include

Frog Pose (Mandukasana): This pose is good for releasing energy and tension in the hips and groin areas that can be particularly tight in children with ADHD. It promotes relaxation and focus.

Fish Pose (Matsyasana) In this pose you lie down on your back, bend your knees with the soles of your feet on the floor, arms alongside the body, palms down. Lift your hips and slide your hands underneath the upper buttocks. Inhale and press into your elbows and shoulders, lifting the chest. It Boosts energy levels and reduces anxiety, enhancing the sense of calm.

Mountain Pose (Tadasana): Though it may seem simple, this standing pose helps develop posture, balance, and calm focus. It's a grounding pose that helps children with ADHD feel more centred and present.

Bridge Pose (Setu Bandha Sarvangasana): This backbend opens the chest and can improve mood and energy levels, counteracting the tendency for children with ADHD to slump or hunch over, which can lead to feelings of lethargy or low mood.

2.5 Gameplay Integration: Introduction of Wild Cards

Wild Card: Breathing Exercise Cards

Adding a "Wild Card" feature with breathing exercises to the Mini Yogi game introduces a dynamic twist, enriching the gameplay and offering additional ways to engage with mindfulness and relaxation techniques.

Here's how we can integrate this:

Setup Addition:

Along with the yoga pose cards, include several "Wild Card" breathing exercise cards in the deck. These cards can feature different breathing techniques, each designed to be fun and beneficial for children, especially those with ADHD.

Gameplay Integration:

Introduction of Wild Cards: Shuffle the breathing exercise Wild Cards into the deck. When laid out, they are indistinguishable from the yoga pose cards, adding an element of surprise.

Identifying Wild Cards: When a player flips over a Wild Card, they pause the regular sequence of the game to lead a group breathing exercise.

Engaging in Breathing Exercises: The player who uncovers the Wild Card reads out or demonstrates the breathing exercise for all players to follow. For instance, if a player turns over the "Ocean Wave Breathing" card, everyone takes a brief pause from the game to engage in this calming breathing practice together.

Resuming Gameplay: After completing the breathing exercise, the player takes another turn to flip over a second card, aiming to find a matching pair of yoga pose cards.

Special Rule for Wild Cards: If a player flips over two Wild Cards consecutively, they can choose to keep them, earning a point or a special privilege, like an extra turn or the ability to swap a difficult pose card for an easier one in future rounds.

Types of Wild Cards: (13 asanas)

Mystical Nostril Switching Card: Imagine you're a curious wizard casting a spell as you switch between nostrils. With a gentle touch, block one nostril, inhale as if you're gathering magical air, switch nostrils, and exhale, releasing the spell into the world. It's a mystical way to find balance and focus in your wizardly adventures.

Buzzing Bee Breath Card: Pretend you're a busy bee in a garden. Take a deep breath in, and as you exhale, buzz like you're flitting from flower to flower, spreading joy and pollen. This buzzing not only calms the hive but also sharpens your bee-like focus.

Ocean Wave Breathing Card: Imagine you're the ocean, vast and rhythmic. As you breathe in, feel the wave gathering strength, and as you exhale, the wave crashes gently on the shore. This breathing is your internal tide, soothing and rhythmic, bringing calmness to your oceanic heart.

Superhero Belly Breathing Card: Channel your inner superhero! As you breathe in, imagine your belly filling with the power of flight, strength, or invisibility. Exhale slowly, releasing any kryptonite doubts. This is how superheroes center themselves before saving the day.

Fierce Lion's Roar Card: Transform into a mighty jungle lion. Inhale deeply, gathering your roar, then open your mouth, stick out your tongue, and let out a powerful "ha!" scaring away any fears or stress. It's a lion's way of shaking off worries and boosting their jungle energy.

Enhanced Benefits:

These Wild Cards serve as impromptu moments of mindfulness, aiding players in refocusing and immersing more fully in the game.

They serve as a playful gateway to various breathing strategies, offering young players a set of invaluable skills for managing their emotions and enhancing their concentration. These skills, cultivated in the context of the game, are designed to be transferable to everyday life, equipping children with tools for self-regulation that are beneficial long after the game ends.

The strategic inclusion of breathing exercises within the gameplay introduces an element of surprise and variety, keeping players intrigued and motivated to see what unique challenges await them next. This not only keeps the game fresh and exciting but also subtly encourages players to practise mindfulness techniques without it feeling like a chore.

By integrating these Wild Cards into Mini Yogi, the game transforms into more than just a source of entertainment. It becomes a dynamic and interactive platform for teaching mindfulness and concentration in a manner that resonates with children, particularly benefiting those with ADHD by providing them with a fun, engaging way to develop their focus and relaxation skills. In this way, Mini Yogi not only captivates children's attention during play but also contributes to their personal growth and well-being.

2.6 Incorporating "Breathing Challenge" cards

Game Variation Introduction:

In addition to the regular yoga pose cards, include "Breathing Challenge Cards" in the deck. Unlike Wild Cards, these are not mixed in with the yoga pose cards but are kept in a separate stack.

Gameplay Variation:

Acquiring Breathing Challenge Cards – How It Works:

In this variation, the game is designed to integrate mindfulness more systematically. When a player successfully forms three pairs, it's a signal for a Breathing Challenge, integrating mindfulness seamlessly into the game's progression.

Alternatively, matching yoga pose cards not only allows a player to lead the group in a yoga pose but also rewards them with a Breathing Challenge Card. This card represents a strategic asset, offering players the choice to use it immediately for a communal breathing exercise or save it for a moment when they might need it most, adding a layer of tactical depth to the game.

Using the Breathing Challenge Cards – The Process:

At the beginning of their turn, a player can decide to play one of their Breathing Challenge Cards. This decision replaces the usual action of flipping two yoga pose cards and introduces a group breathing exercise. This not only serves as a collective mindfulness moment but also as a strategic pause in the game's flow. After completing the breathing exercise, which acts as a brief yet impactful break, the player continues with their regular turn, maintaining the game's rhythm while embedding a mindful practice within it.

Breathing Exercise Options – Enhancing Engagement:

Offering a choice between two breathing exercises on each card empowers players, especially children, by giving them control over their mindfulness experience. For instance, a card might present a choice between the calming "Ocean Wave Breathing" and the energizing "Buzzing Bee Breath." This choice fosters a sense of autonomy and personal connection to the mindfulness practice, encouraging children to engage more deeply with the exercises and find what best suits their needs at that moment.

Strategic Play with Breathing Cards – Tactical Considerations:

The strategic use of Breathing Challenge Cards introduces an intriguing layer to the game. A player might use a card to break the momentum of an opponent who is advancing too quickly or to provide themselves with a necessary mental break. This strategic element not only enhances the game's engagement factor but also teaches children to recognize and act upon their need for a pause, embedding a valuable life skill within the gameplay.

Rewards for Completing Breathing Challenges – Motivational Aspects:

Introducing rewards for completing breathing challenges adds an incentive structure to the mindfulness aspect of the game. Whether it's an extra turn, a chance to preview a hidden card, or an option to skip a challenging pose, these rewards not only motivate players to engage with the breathing exercises but also integrate the mindfulness practices more deeply into the game's core mechanics, making them an integral and rewarding part of the gameplay experience.

Benefits of the Breathing Challenge Cards:

Fun Choices: Kids get to pick their own breathing adventures with the cards! They can decide which fun breathing game they want to play, making them the bosses of their game time. It's like choosing between becoming a calm ocean or a buzzing bee, and what kid doesn't love being in charge of their own fun?

Be a Game Master: Using the Breathing Challenge Cards is like having a secret power-up! Kids get to think and plan when to use their special card to win the game. It's like having a magic trick up their sleeve that they can use to surprise everyone and turn the game around.

Memory Magic: Remembering where those yoga pose cards are and deciding when to use the breathing cards is like a fun brain workout. It's like playing detective, keeping an eye on all the clues, and making smart moves to solve the mystery of the game.

Learn Cool Moves: These cards are not just about winning; they're also a cool way to learn different ways to chill out or pep up, just with breathing! Kids can become little experts on how to calm down with a deep ocean breath or get energized with a roaring lion breath, all while playing and having a blast.

This twist-turns the Mini Yogi game into an even cooler adventure! It's like having a secret comeback button, giving players who are a bit behind a chance to catch up and get back in the game with a fresh focus. Imagine it's like having a magic wand that helps kids switch from one activity to another with a swish and a flick, perfect for those who find hopping between tasks a bit tricky. It's like learning to be a nimble ninja, moving smoothly from one move to the next!

Learning breathing exercises becomes a blast with this game. It's like mixing and matching your favourite flavours to make your own special ice cream sundae. Kids get to pick and choose the breathing exercises they love the most, making it a super fun way to learn cool, calming moves, especially for kids with ADHD.

2.7 Example Breathing Challenge Cards:

Giggle Breath: Sit up straight and take a big breath in through your nose, imagining your body filling with laughter. Then, open your mouth and laugh out loud as you breathe out. Think of it like inflating a balloon with giggles and then letting all those giggles burst out!

Balloon Breath: Sit comfortably and place your hands on your belly. Breathe in deeply through your nose and feel your belly expand like a balloon. Then, slowly breathe out through your mouth as if you're letting the air out of the balloon, feeling your belly fall. You're like a magician controlling this magical belly balloon with your breath!

Wave Breath: Breathe in slowly through your nose, and imagine a wave rising in the ocean. As you exhale slowly through your mouth, imagine the wave gently falling back into the sea. With each breath, you're riding the waves, feeling the rise and fall with your body, just like a dolphin in the ocean.

Mystical Nostril Switching: With one hand, gently close your right nostril and breathe in through the left. Then, close your left nostril, open the right, and breathe out. Next, breathe in through the right nostril, switch, and breathe out through the left. It's like you're a magical creature, channelling mystical winds through a secret forest, one nostril at a time.

Buzzing Bee Breath: Close your mouth, take a deep breath in through your nose, and then hum like a bee as you exhale, feeling the vibration around your face. Imagine you're a bee, buzzing from flower to flower, spreading joy and music, and feel the fun vibrations chase away all the fidgets.

Ocean Wave Breathing: Breathe in deeply through your nose, and as you do, make a slight constriction in the back of your throat to create a soft ocean sound. Then, breathe out the same way, keeping the sound going. You're the sea wizard, and with each breath, you command the ocean's waves, feeling the power and calmness of the sea with you.

Superhero Belly Breathing: Take a deep breath in through your nose, and watch your belly rise like you're filling it with superpowers. Then, breathe out slowly through your mouth, feeling your belly fall, releasing the energy to save the world. Each breath charges your superhero energy, ready for action!

Fierce Lion's Roar: Take a deep breath in through your nose, then open your mouth wide, stick out your tongue, and roar out your breath. Imagine you're a fierce lion in the jungle, roaring to show your strength, letting all the stress out with your powerful roar, and feeling bold and fearless.

Each exercise is a mini-adventure, helping you master your breath while transforming you into joyful, calm, or even mighty characters. Incorporating these playful and imaginative breathing exercises into the Mini Yogi game turns it into a magical adventure, where children can explore their inner powers, find their calm, and unleash their joy, all while mastering the art of focus and relaxation in a world of fun.

3.0 Sample Illustrations



4.0 Conclusion

Turning yoga into a fun and interactive activity like Mini Yogi is changing the way kids see and participate in this practice. This fresh approach makes yoga more interesting and easy for children especially those with ADHD to enjoy and join in. Presenting yoga as a game makes the practice more understandable, for children showing it not as something outdated but as an enjoyable, accessible and beneficial part of their daily routine.

The game-like features of Mini Yogi appeal to kids' natural love for play and exploration making it especially effective for those with ADHD who benefit from interactive ways of learning to keep their attention and focus. The game transforms yoga into an adventure where each card and pose encourages children to have fun exploring movement, balance and mindfulness.

Integrating yoga poses and breathing exercises into the gameplay serves a purpose; teaching kids important physical and mental health techniques while keeping them engaged with challenges, achievements and enjoyment. This method allows children to advance at their speed, discover their abilities and celebrate victories in a supportive non competitive environment.

It inspires individuals to view yoga as a means for maintaining health and wellness rather than simply a workout or class. This approach promotes well being and mental focus while also bringing joy and curiosity into the mix setting the stage for a healthier more mindful generation to come.

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