



ADHD: Help Your Child Succeed

As a parent, you know how attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can make life hard for your child—and for you. ADHD makes it a challenge for your child to pay attention, sit still, and get things done.

ADHD can challenge the patience of any parent. To be the best parent you can be, make a point of getting breaks and a chance to de-stress whenever possible. You don't have to go through this alone. Get support from a counselor, a friend, or other parents of children with ADHD.

You can help your child succeed.

What can you do to help your child?

Start fresh each day. Build success one day at a time. Help your child remember what's worked well before now. Together, think of new ways that can help your child focus, organize, and get things done.

BUILD POSITIVES

- Do things together that you both enjoy.
- Look for chances for your child to succeed. Support activities that your child likes and can do well.
- Praise and reward your child when you see positive behavior.
- Give praise for success and for effort, even if a task isn't completed to your standard.
- Make sure your child knows that ADHD is a medical condition, not a character flaw or weakness.
- Do your best to be neutral or positive, especially during frustrating times.

Ask yourself: "What about my child am I grateful for? What does my child need to hear from me to learn and grow from what's happening right now? How can I say it in a firm, yet loving, way?"

TEACH HOW TO FOCUS AND GET THINGS DONE

- Show your child how to break projects into small steps.
- Give simple instructions. Be clear about what you expect.
- Teach your child how to remove distractions when doing a task.
- Use a timer to remind your child when to have something done. This method usually works better than nagging. And it's less stressful and frustrating for both of you.

TEACH HOW TO ORGANIZE

- Teach your child how to use lists and calendars.
 - Together, make a list of daily responsibilities. Teach your child how to use the list and check off things when they are done. At the end of each day, review the list together.
 - Help organize schoolwork. Even young children can learn to use lists, daily planners, or calendars to keep up with homework assignments, tests, and activities. A young child may need a teacher's help to write down assignments.
 - Try making a nightly list to get ready for the next day. Include any items your child will have to remember. Keep the list where it will be a handy reminder each morning.
- Show your child how to “stop and look” before leaving home. Teach your child to first do a “body scan” and ask, “Am I washed, brushed, and fully dressed?” Then have your child scan over his or her things to make sure that nothing is missing.

FOCUS ON THE BASICS

Teaching and guiding a child with ADHD isn't easy. But structuring your approach with some parenting basics may help. Try to:

- Keep to regular schedules as much as you can. Change can make it hard for kids with ADHD to focus and stay organized.
- Use time-outs or the loss of a privilege to discipline your child.
- Step back and let your child learn cause and effect when possible.
- Help your child avoid overwhelming or “no-win” situations.

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