



Helping Your Child With ADD (ADHD) at School

One of the biggest concerns for the parent of a child with ADD (ADHD) is the impact of ADD (ADHD) on academic functioning. ADD (ADHD) often makes it difficult for a child to stay focused on his classwork, difficult to listen and remember the teacher's directions, and difficult to complete work in a timely fashion.

Stay Organized

Because kids with ADD are prone to losing things, you can help your child stay organized by designating places for his or her clothes, shoes, school stuff, toys, and so on. Be sure to encourage your child to always return things to their correct spot. You can also organize schoolwork with accordion folders, binders, or color coding for each subject. Even if you don't consider yourself to be a particularly organized person, do your best to maintain organization in your home to set a positive example for your child.



Collaborate and communicate with your child's school.

Teamwork between home and school is critical. It is important that the school faculty be aware of all that you are doing for your child with ADD (ADHD). That way, everyone is working on the common goal of helping your child achieve independence and academic success. The school will need information about your child's diagnosis, treatment and academic recommendations so that a plan of action can be set in place.

It is critical to establish consistent and open communication with your child's teacher. Collaborate with your child's teacher to find solutions for your child's ADD (ADHD) challenges.

With your busy schedule, it's not always easy to meet with your child's teacher in person, so here are some ways to keep in touch:
Communicate by phone or email on a regular basis.

Create a notebook that travels back and forth with your child for the teacher to write down any notes about your child. You can also add any important information that you think the teacher should be aware of as it arises.

Provide the teacher with a set of stamped, self-addressed envelopes that the teacher may use to mail important information home rather than sending it with your child.

Learn strategies to reduce homework hassles.



Let your child take an active role in making homework decisions. Homework isn't optional, but there are many options about when and how to do homework.

Help your child observe himself or herself so that the child knows when and how he or she works best. Some kids need vigorous exercise after school before tackling homework, while others need to "veg-out." Still others do better if they complete homework before dinner. Similarly, some need to work in the same room with a parent to stay on track. There are kids who concentrate best while listening to music; others need total silence.

Encourage your child to try different approaches to homework. Together with your child, develop a daily homework plan that best suits his or her individual needs. Then encourage your child to stick to the plan until it becomes a habit.

Remove distractions that interfere with homework completion. Whether it's television, the phone or instant email messages, anything that repeatedly interferes with homework should be removed until homework is finished.

If your child takes medication, it's important that she be on the medication during homework and after-school activities. Be sure she schedules her difficult reading assignments and written work for times when the medication is most effective.



Don't try to "tutor" your child. That doesn't mean that you can't help your child once in a while. But if your child needs a lot of help, has a specific learning disability or has major problems with planning, time management and completion of long-term assignments, he needs professional help.

Don't do the work *for* your child. By spending many hours helping your child, and/or doing much of the work for him or her, you are not allowing the child to learn to deal with her ADD (ADHD). Give your child support and encouragement, along with the message that she is strong enough to carry the load.