

## 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 their 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.