



ADHD: Helping Your Child Get the Most From School

Table of Contents

- ADHD: Helping Your Child Get the Most From School

Overview

Children with ADHD may have difficulty in school. That's because their symptoms—trouble paying attention, being impulsive, and being hyperactive—can get in the way of learning. Success in school is important to help children build healthy self-esteem and confidence.

With patience and creative thinking, you can help your child with their education, social skills, and overall development.

How can you help your child be successful in school?

Make sure to use treatment methods as recommended by your child's doctor. These may include medicine and/or behavior management techniques. They will help your child manage symptoms of ADHD at home and school. You may also help your child succeed in school by doing these things.

- Educate yourself.
Learning as much as you can about ADHD and your child's education rights will help you work with the school system more effectively.
 - **Learn about ADHD.** Go online to locate national organizations. Ask your doctor or visit your local library for information about ADHD.
 - **Know your child's symptoms and treatment plan.** Talk with your doctor about your child's behaviors that may interfere with learning and about ways to control those behaviors. Develop a record of your child's treatment plan.
 - **Learn about your child's education rights.** Laws exist that ensure education rights for children who have conditions that interfere with learning. These laws also state that parents have a right to be informed about and participate in educational decisions concerning their child. Contact your state and local education departments for information about ADHD in the schools and your rights to educational accommodations.
 - **Talk with other parents of children with ADHD.** Join a support group for ADHD families. Find out how others have effectively worked with school systems.
- Build relationships.
A positive relationship with teachers and other school staff will improve your child's chances of being successful in school.

- **Start early.** Before a school year begins, get to know the principal and other appropriate school staff. Find out as much as you can about the school policies and rules, especially how behavior problems are handled. Find out if there are other children with ADHD in the school and how their behavior is being handled in the classroom.
- **Share what you have learned.** Find out if the teachers and other staff need information about ADHD. Look for ways to help them get that information, such as suggesting books, pamphlets, or any local educational programs.
- **Get to know your child's teacher.** Before the school year starts, talk with your child's teacher about the teacher's style of teaching and discipline in the classroom. Find out whether the teacher has experience teaching children who have ADHD. Share information about your child's symptoms and what behaviors may interfere with your child's ability to learn. You may want to share your child's treatment plan with the teacher.
- **Make a school plan.** Work with the teacher to design a plan to help your child perform to your child's potential. Address how to minimize misbehavior and how to react to it. Your plan will change as your child grows and develops. You may need to work with the school to develop an individual education plan (IEP) for your child. An IEP is a tool for classroom and homework adaptations for a child with a disability. For children with milder symptoms, the school may suggest a plan that is used for medical conditions that do not meet the IEP standards (called a 504 plan).
- **Ask school staff for help when needed.** Tutoring or services that help with study or organizational skills are sometimes provided through the school. If not, school staff often have a list of local resources that can help your child.
- Keep communication open.
Open communication with your child's teacher can help resolve problems that may occur throughout the school year. Here are a few ideas for working and communicating with your child's teacher:
 - **Understand the demands upon your child's teacher.** Most children with ADHD can be taught in a regular classroom, although adjustments are sometimes needed. Not all teachers are trained to do this. Also, teachers are stretched to their limits by large numbers of children in the classroom, making it hard to give each child personal attention. Ask the teacher what they need from you to help assimilate your child.
 - **Keep the teacher informed.** Share with the teacher any relevant changes in your child's treatment plan. Help facilitate the sharing of information among you, your child's teacher, and your child's doctor.
 - **Visit the classroom.** If possible, volunteer for school activities and parties. This will let the teacher know that you are interested in your child's education and are willing to help.
 - **Request progress reports.** Children with ADHD often lose or forget their assignments. Ask the teacher to complete regular progress reports of your child's performance and behavior.
 - **Have a final conference.** Meet with the teacher at the end of the school year to discuss your child's overall progress and the teacher's suggestions for the next year. Ask about possible teachers for the next year and how to help your child get the best chance for success in school.
- Work with your child.
 - **Keep your child involved.** Let your child know that you support the teacher. Clearly outline your expectations and the consequences of misbehavior. Talk with your child about how the teacher will let your child know that a behavior is becoming inappropriate.
 - **Link school and home.** Use the same signals (such as hand signals) that the teacher uses at school to indicate when a behavior is becoming inappropriate. Also, you can reward your child with privileges for remembering to bring home school progress reports. You can further reward your child if the report is positive.
 - **Help your child organize.** 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 in writing down assignments.
 - **Have short sessions.** Keep homework sessions to no more than 20 minutes without a break.

- **Use learning aids.** Teach your child how to take notes and to underline important information. If your child seems to learn best visually, ask about books that have helpful pictures and diagrams or workbooks.
- Keep good records.
Health and school records can help monitor your child's academic and behavioral progress as well as help identify when treatment adjustments are needed. You should keep and update the following records:
 - **ADHD evaluations.** Collect copies of any records that are used to evaluate your child for ADHD. These records often identify the type of ADHD that your child has, which helps with treatment.
 - **Evaluations for any other conditions with similar symptoms.** Other conditions with symptoms similar to ADHD include learning disabilities, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and anxiety disorders.
 - **History of medicines.** Record all medicines that your child has taken or is taking to treat ADHD.
 - **School progress records.** Keep copies of any school plans, daily school progress reports, and formal progress reports throughout the year. Also, keep your child's final grades and any achievement test results. You may find them helpful as you develop school plans for the next year.
 - **Individual education plan.** If your school developed an individual education plan (IEP) for your child, ask for a copy. You may need to share that information with the health professionals who work with your child.

Related Information

- ADHD and Hyperactivity
- ADHD: Impulsivity and Inattention

Credits

Current as of: July 31, 2024

Author: Ignite Healthwise, LLC Staff (<https://www.healthwise.org/specialpages/legal/abouthw/en>)

Clinical Review Board (<https://www.healthwise.org/specialpages/legal/abouthw/en>)

All Healthwise education is reviewed by a team that includes physicians, nurses, advanced practitioners, registered dietitians, and other healthcare professionals.

Note: The "printer friendly" document will not contain all the information available in the online document. Some information (e.g. cross-references to other topics, definitions or medical illustrations) is only available in the online version.



This information does not replace the advice of a doctor. Ignite Healthwise, LLC, disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.

© 2024 Ignite Healthwise, LLC.