

Working with children with ADHD

1. Make directions clear and short. Repeat if necessary.
2. Make each task specific...in other words; instead of giving several directions at once, split the directions into smaller steps.
3. Give reminders often, coaxing the child to finish. It is important to complete projects once started to help the child learn to sequence beginning to end.
4. Use interesting materials; hands-on activities, visual and auditory aids.
5. Reduce classroom clutter. Take down bulletin boards, objects hanging around. To a child with ADHD it is mind-boggling and confusing!
6. Help the child organize and keep their work area free of clutter. Defined spaces for everything help.
7. Cut down noise and movement in the room. Take a look at who the child is seated next to.
8. Talk less and use short sentences (this actually is beneficial to ALL children).
9. Plan activities well. Think in advance what you will do when s/he gets fidgety, can't sit still, and can't follow the lesson. Have plan B in place BEFORE the problem occurs.
10. Reward correct responses. The child with ADHD is only too aware of his/her failures.
11. Be specific with praise. Instead of, "You did a good job," say, "I see you followed the instructions perfectly! You put all the words in the right place."
12. Let a restless child move; stand at the desk. Don't take away recess as punishment. Not ever!



13. Mix active and quiet periods. Give the ADHD child extra time to transition between them. Give warnings as you come to an end of an active period so the child has time to start readjusting their thinking.
14. Prepare a child for any change. KEEP a routine! These children aren't well structured and a lot of their difficulties come from confusion, not knowing what's coming next, and anxiety or over stimulation because of it.
15. Avoid spills/messes by using smaller containers.
16. Set aside a "thinking space" where the child can go when feeling out of control. This is not punishment. It is simply a place to calm.
17. Keep a notebook between home and school. I call this "both ends against the middle!"
18. Help the ADHD child develop his/her OWN strategies for when their behavior gets out of control, by asking, "what can you do when..."
19. Make up games to preoccupy the child during transitions, such as being as quiet as a mouse while passing the principal's office.
20. Recognize that the child is going to have "difficult days." Don't take them personally. Help the child over those hurdles, or help him/her recognize them before they are coming.
21. Differentiate the child from the behavior. See the child first, then the disorder.
22. Help the child use strengths in a group. If you know the child is good at math, call on him to give answers in math.
23. Point out the positives. Don't forget to tell him/her when their behavior is good.
24. Involve parents in what you do. You can't believe how much it helps to know you're not alone dealing with this. Rapport with parents will help minimize difficulty in the child.