

## MANAGEMENT OF ADHD AT HOME

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1. Remember that your child's poor attention span, distractibility, impulsive behavior and restlessness are the result of the way his brain chemistry works. They are not willful misbehaviors or the result of poor parenting.
2. Remember to praise your child frequently. Sometimes it is helpful to make a list of things that you can praise your child for, then pat yourself on the back every time you remember.
3. Have a simple routine for the child to follow every day. It will take a while to train the routine, but it will be well worth it. If the routine is written out, it helps the adult to be consistent, and gives older children necessary reminders.
4. Use short, simple sentences when speaking to the child. Limit directions to one or two at a time and check your child's understanding with questions such as "What do you need to do now?" Do not use lengthy explanations - they usually only confuse the ADHD child.
5. Provide a variety of activities each day which do not require focused attention or quiet behavior. Rotate activities requiring concentration with those the child enjoys, and do not require much concentration, frequently.
6. When training new behaviors or working on old misbehaviors, choose one or two that are the most important, and concentrate on them. Don't try to change too many behaviors at one time. A psychologist or behavior specialist may be needed to help choose the types of behavior to work on and to develop a specific plan.
7. When making demands of your child, choose those that you can stick with and enforce from day to day. Many parents fall into the trap of enforcing demands strongly for a short period, then wearing out and not enforcing demands for a period. It is better for the child to have one or two demands that you can regularly enforce than eight or ten demands that you are inconsistent about.
8. Allow 6 to 8 weeks of concentrated effort for each new behavior that you are trying to modify, or to evaluate the effectiveness of a new behavior plan. It is important for all adults working with the child to be working together and doing the same type of thing.
9. Take care of your own mental fitness. Caring for a child with ADHD is emotionally strenuous and many parents of ADHD children suffer from symptoms of emotional stress with fatigue, anxiety or depression. As a minimum, look for ways to give yourself a periodic break from childcare activities and do something you enjoy. In families where the stress level is very high, parents may profit from personal counseling with a trained therapist.

10. Get to know other families with children with similar difficulties. This is a very valuable source of emotional support and may also provide helpful information about local programs, physicians, and behavior management hints. Information regarding local groups may be obtained from your doctor or from the national office of CHADD.

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11. If your child takes medication for ADHD, make sure that it is given regularly. You will need separate plans for dealing with behaviors during the time the medication is effective and after it is worn off. Some children go through a behavior rebound when medication wears off, and need an opportunity for lots of physical activity and few demands during the late afternoon.