

Classroom Management of ADHD

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1. Remember that the ADHD child has a neurological deficit in focusing attention, and that his poor school performance is not volitional.
2. Provide a quiet area for independent work with as few distractions as possible. Children with ADHD have difficulty ignoring sensory input, and mechanical aids such as study carrels or foam ear plugs may be periodically necessary to diminish distraction.
3. Make sure you have the child's attention before giving directions, then check the child's understanding of the direction by having him repeat it.
4. Provide ample time for completing assignments. Doubling the allotted time over the expected time may be necessary for satisfactory task completion. Breaking assignments down into small, easily finished sections may be necessary. Extra time for taking tests will frequently improve test results.
5. Do not expect neat work. Children with ADHD often have fine motor immaturity or deficiencies which make writing and other fine motor tasks difficult for them. Their impulsivity leads to frequent errors, and their short attention span leads to deteriorating quality as the tasks become longer. Papers tend to be messy with lots of erasures, crossing out, and deteriorating penmanship. Children who learn to use a computer for writing assignments will have a significant advantage over those who do not. Alternate methods of completing assignments may be necessary, such as orally instead of written.
6. Compile a list of characteristics or behaviors that the child can be legitimately praised for and praise him often.
7. Use a behavior system appropriate for the child's level of development. Use stars, tokens or check lists to monitor and reinforce behaviors such as staying on task and task completion, neatness, independence, keeping up assignment sheets, staying in seat, quiet working, ignoring distractions, etc.
8. Limit group assignments. Children with ADHD are more distracted and distracting in group settings. When a child with ADHD is involved in group work, expectations for behavior and the child's contribution to the group work need to be carefully defined and frequently monitored.
9. Maintain contact with your child's parents and physician. If a child is on medication, his physician may ask for periodic completion of questionnaires or telephone contact to monitor the medication effects. Parents need to be apprised of their child's areas of improvement as well as problem areas, especially if progress is not obvious. Daily or weekly brief progress notes are helpful to parents who are trying to monitor their child's school performance.