

## Top Tips for Managing ADHD

### Help Your Child Stay On Task

Get your child's attention before giving them important information and ask them to repeat instructions so you can check they've heard you and understood. Make sure your instructions are brief and to the point and give no more than one instruction at a time.

If your child gets distracted while following instructions, say "what is your task?" This will prompt your child to return to task.

### Establish a Routine

Make a timetable for mornings, after-school, and evenings and hang it where it can be seen – the fridge, your child's desk or school diary.

Children with ADHD find it difficult to transition from one task to the next, so give advanced warnings of task changes (e.g. TV ends in 5-minutes, and then we will start homework"), or changes in routine.

### Homework

Create a distraction free homework space and schedule regular breaks during homework time; as a general guide young children might cope with 15-min homework blocks with 5-min breaks, and adolescents 30-min homework blocks with 15-min breaks. Where possible, make homework hands on. Use coloured blocks or counters for math and letter magnets for spelling. Using a variety of teaching aides will help to sustain your child's attention.

Help your child sit for longer periods by breaking tasks down into smaller chunks and alternating subjects. For example, answer 3 math questions, then focus on an essay introduction (or 5 spelling words), then come back to 2 more math questions.

### Support Your Child at School

If your child is struggling at school organise a psychometric and educational assessment. This assessment will provide you with information about how your child learns, and what factors might be interfering with learning.

Set up an appointment with your child's teacher or year coordinator to discuss what strategies can be put in place to support your child at school. Organise a follow-up meeting at a later date for a review.

### Manage Behaviour

Set no more than 1-2 behaviour goals at a time. Draw a flowchart outlining what reward will be given if these goals are achieved and what consequence will follow if goals are not achieved. Remember, rewards and consequences will only be effective *if they're meaningful*.

Behaviour plans for children with ADHD are more effective when: there's a visual reminder of behaviour goals, there's frequent feedback about behaviour, rewards and consequences are given *immediately*, and when rewards are re-negotiated on a weekly basis.

## ADHD

ADHD is usually first diagnosed in childhood, but can also be diagnosed in adolescence or adulthood. There are 3 groups of symptoms:

### Inattention

- Careless mistakes in school work
- Resistance at homework time
- Trouble following instructions
- Easily side-tracked from tasks
- Jump from one activity to the next
- Forgetfulness
- Poor organizational skills
- Procrastination
- Chronic lateness

### Hyperactivity

- Frequent fidgeting
- An inability to stay seated
- Non-stop talking

### Impulsivity

- Impatience
- Trouble waiting turns in games and conversations
- Grabbing or touching objects against instructions

**If you're concerned your child might have ADHD speak to your GP about a referral to a child clinical psychologist for an assessment.**

**If your child does have ADHD, a clinical psychologist can provide you with strategies for managing impulsive and hyperactive behaviour, and skills to increase your child's attention.**