



How do you Help a Child with A.D.D?

Look closely. Trust your understanding of children.

You already know how to help them.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH A.D.D. CHILDREN

1. KEEP IN MIND

- These children have:
 - problems with attention span and distractibility
 - possible problems with impulse control
 - a *high activity* level (in many cases)
 - great *difficulty in following rules* and directions and following through on tasks, even play

2. TO DEVELOP LISTENING AND ATTENDING SKILLS:

- *Repeat directions.* Then check the child to see if she/he got the directions – have the child repeat the directions to you.
- *Use multi-sensory approaches.* Give both auditory and visual directions (i.e. use gesture with voice or write in on the chalkboard and say it again.)
- *Don't pace or move too much when teaching.* Have a “listening spot” – place where the child can expect you to be when she/he is to listen.
- *Give effective commands to the child:*
 - Make sure that you mean what you say. Do not give a command which you are not willing to back up. The consequences for doing or not doing something should be immediate – whether a reward or punishment.
 - Do not present the command as question or as a favor.

- Do not give too many commands at one time. It is best to give only one command at a time.
- Make sure the child is paying attention when the command is given. Make eye contact. If necessary gently turn his/her face toward you.
- Once you have given a command, ask the child to repeat it back to you step by step.
- *Read or tell jokes to motivate listening.* Make good use of voice and gesture.
- *Define the child's space.* Use carpet square to sit on, specific chair or table, a tray to work or play upon, etc.
- *Frequently hold conversations with the child.* This helps the child's memory and self-concept.
- Allow the child to play and work with peers. The child will learn by example what he/she missed orally.

3. USE SPECIAL SEATING

- *Seat child close to teacher, near an aisle, away from distractions (window, door, etc.)*
- *Give the child a special place to sit.* A study corral may be helpful.

4. GIVE THE CHILD AS MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS POSSIBLE

- *Use a hands-on learning approach*
- *Give child many opportunities to stretch, get up and move around.*
- *Provide a good movement program – at least 30 minutes/day of vigorous exercise is good.*
- *Tolerate normal rough housing as long as no one is hurt.*

5. PROVIDE STRUCTURE AND A DAILY ROUTINE FOR THE CHILD

- *Make the child aware of his/her schedule*
- *Establish a daily routine for the child (home and school)*
- *Prepare the child for transitions and loosely structured times.* (Field trips, fire drills, assemblies are all difficult times for these children)

- *Give the child daily feedback – and the family.*
- *Make all rules very clear and the consequences for not following the rules very clear. BE CONSISTENT*

6. GIVE REWARDS AND POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- *Rewards and feedback should be frequent*
- Rewards and feedback should be not only for *achievement* but for *effort, improvement, and compliance*
- Feedback can be:
 - Verbal
 - Privileges (free time, special activity...)
 - Tangible (stickers, tokens, points...)
- Since the ADD child has great difficulty following rules, *pay particular attention to ANY efforts the child makes at compliance.* Give IMMEDIATE feedback “I like when you do as I ask.”
- *Praise child when has completed a task or followed a rule without being told to.* This will help rules to be internalized.
- If appropriate, you may want to *reward* classmates for ignoring this child’s disruptive behavior or giving positive attention for positive behavior.

7. DISCIPLINE CONSISTENTLY

- *Discipline should follow immediately* after child fails to comply. Be consistent
- about how many warnings you will give a child before you take action.
- *Reprimand the child quietly and privately* to avoid ridicule, embarrassment and constantly being singled-out.
- *Don’t shout*
- Discipline can be:
 - *Verbal.* Focus on the unacceptable behavior rather than the child’s personality.
 - *Loss of privilege*

- *“Time out”* Isolation from other students/classroom activities (1-2 minutes every year of the child’s age). View as a time for the child to center himself rather than a “punishment”.

8. SHOW INTEREST IN AND AFFECTION FOR THE CHILD

- This is *particularly* important *after you have disciplined or punished the child*.
- Find the *child’s talent(s)* and way(s) that he/she is likeable. Try to emphasize those qualities as much as possible.
- Familiarize yourself with the *child’s interests*. Try to give reading materials, activities and toys that reflect those interests.

9. BE FLEXIBLE

- Don’t be too fussy over child’s coloring, cutting, drawing, puzzles and small manipulative play. *Many ADD children have fine motor problems*.

10. TRY TO GET EXTRA HELP FOR THE CHILD

- Have the child work with teacher’s aide or parent volunteer. Try to have someone available to help the child through the day or through rough spots during the day.

11. LEARN ABOUT ADD/ADHD

12. FREQUENTLY COMMUNICATE THE CHILD’S PROGRESS TO THE PARENTS

- Be sure to *report the positive as well as the negative*. Encourage the parents to reinforce good behavior at home as is done at school.
- Try to let parents know about any problem as soon as possible (ideally on the same day it arises).
- If necessary, help educate the parents about ADD/ADHD.
- Recognize the *knowledge the parents have regarding the child*.
- *Work with them*.