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## FOR TEACHERS

# Teaching Strategies for Students with ADHD: Ideas to Help Every Child Shine

Your child's teacher is your partner in a fair and equitable education, but does she have the ADHD tools she needs? The following ADHD teaching strategies will help all students — but especially those with ADD — learn to the best of their ability in any classroom.

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Parents: Is your child's teacher doing everything possible to support learning? Teachers often dictate the success or failure of a child's education — particularly if that child has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD or ADD).

Next to parents, teachers are the most influential people in a student's life. The [best teacher](#) will develop ADHD strategies to show students that they are capable and worthwhile.

Here are some strategies for [teaching children with ADHD](#) that work to establish a supportive, structured classroom that will encourage learning, enforce discipline, and boost self-esteem.

## Strategies for Students with ADHD

- **Assign work that suits the student's skill level.** Students with ADHD will avoid classwork that is too difficult or too long.
- **Offer choices.** Children with ADHD who are given choices for completing an activity produce more work, are more compliant, and act less negative. Establish, for instance, a list of 15 activity choices for practicing spelling words like writing words on flash cards, using them in a sentence, or air-writing words.

*[Get This Download: [How to Teach Children with ADHD — Classroom Challenges & Solutions](#)]*

- **Provide visual reminders.** Students with ADHD respond well to visual cues and examples. For instance, demonstrate a skill like essay writing on an overhead projector or on the board. When children get to their independent work, leave key points about a topic visible on the board. Post important concepts the children will use again and again on brightly colored poster board around the room.
- **Increase active class participation.** Group strategies include asking students to write their answers on dry-erase white boards and showing them to the teacher, asking students to answer questions in unison (choral response), having students give a thumbs up or down if the answer to the question is yes or no — a level palm, if they don't know the answer. Paired learning is also effective. Have students work through a problem in a group and discuss for maximized understanding.

- **Encourage hands-on learning.** Create learning opportunities where children experience things first-hand. Have students write and act out a play, record an assignment on videotape or take apart and put together a model of a miniature eyeball when studying the human body.

## Establish Rules & Routines for ADHD Students

- **Post classroom rules for student with and without ADHD.** With input from students, establish short, simple [classroom rules](#). State them in positive terms that convey what you want students to do.
  - For example, instead of saying: “No loud talking when you come into class,” say, “When you come into class, check the assignment on the board and start working quietly.” Or, “Sit down first and then you may talk quietly with your neighbor until I start teaching.”

*[Click to Download: 10 Teaching Strategies that Help Students with ADHD]*

- **Establish classroom routines.** This will help students with ADHD stay on task. Routines for all students can include: homework always being written on the board, “row captains” checking to see that assignments are written and that completed work is picked up, etc. Students with ADHD can check in with the classroom aide at the end of the day to make sure they understand the homework assignment and what’s required of them.
- **Give appropriate supervision to ADHD students.** Children with [ADHD](#) require more supervision than their peers because of their delayed maturity, forgetfulness, distractibility, and disorganization. Help these students by pairing them with classmates who can remind them of homework and classwork, using student partners to team up on a project, and involving classroom aides as much as you can during and after class.

## Offer Accommodations for ADHD in the Classroom

Some students with ADHD may need [school accommodations](#) to address [academic challenges](#). Make sure they get them. Some accommodations can be as easy as monitoring the student’s work and developing a plan to help him not fall behind and even accepting the occasional late assignment — this can give the student confidence and get her back on track.

Other common ADHD accommodations include:

- Extended time on tests
- Shortened assignments
- Instruction in note-taking or designating a class notetaker
- Segmented assignments for long-term projects (with separate due dates and grades).

The Attention Deficit Disorder Association ([ADDA](#)) makes the following recommendations for accommodations:

- **Reduce potential distractions.** Always seat students who have problems with focus near the source of instruction and/or stand near student when giving instructions in order to help the student by reducing barriers and distractions between him and the lesson. Always seat this student in a low-distraction work area in the classroom.
- **Use positive peer models.** Encourage the student to sit near positive role models to ease the distractions from other students with challenging or diverting behaviors.
- **Prepare for transitions.** Remind the student about what is coming next (next class, recess, time for a different book, etc.). For special events like field trips or other activities, be sure to give plenty of advance

notice and reminders. Help the student in preparing for the end of the day and going home, supervise the student's book bag for necessary items needed for homework.

- **Allow for movement.** Allow the student to move around or fidget, preferably by creating reasons for the movement. Provide opportunities for physical action — do an errand, wash the blackboard, get a drink of water, go to the bathroom, etc. If this is not practical, then permit the student to play with small objects kept in their desks that can be manipulated quietly, such as a soft squeeze ball, if it isn't too distracting.
- **Let the children play.** Recess can actually promote focus in children with ADHD so don't use it as a time to make-up missed schoolwork or as punishment as you might for other students.

## Focus on the Positive

- **Establish a positive relationship with students who have ADHD.** Greet them by name as they enter the classroom or when calling on them in class. Create a class bulletin board for posting students' academic and extracurricular interests, photographs, artwork, and/or accomplishments.
- **Provide frequent, positive feedback.** Students with ADHD respond best to feedback that is immediate. Use positive praise, such as "You're doing a great job" or "Now you've got it." If a student's answer is incorrect, say, "Let's talk this through" or "Does that sound right to you?"
- **Ask questions rather than reprimand.** If the student misbehaves, in class, ask, "Is that a good choice or a bad choice?" The student will get the message that his behavior is inappropriate.

## Partner with Parents

For best results, teachers must partner with the parents to ensure that their child is ready to learn in the classroom. Here are some guidelines to share with the parents of your students with ADHD:

- Communicate regularly with the teacher about problems.
- See that your child's [ADHD medication](#) is working effectively at school and during homework sessions.
- Help your child organize papers for evening homework and prepare for the next school day.
- Watch your child put completed homework in the proper folder.
- Monitor completion of work in the classes that he is in danger of failing.
- Save all completed homework until the semester is over.
- Talk with the teacher about using a daily or weekly report, if needed.

*[Your Free Download: [The Teacher's Guide to Better Assignments for Students with ADHD](#)]*



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