

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): Suggestions for school staff

Assisting in the classroom

Helping children with ADHD to engage better in learning activities can be achieved by adapting classroom instruction to their need for support with self-management and organisation, as shown in the following examples.

Area of difficulty	Ways of adapting school room instruction
Initiating activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the child has understood instructions by asking him/her to look at you and repeat them. • List equipment needed for the activity at the child's workspace.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the child to make a list of steps needed to get to the goal. • Number the order of steps to be taken. • Teach problem-solving skills by considering pros and cons.
Prioritising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map goal-setting steps in graphic format.
Persisting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorten assignments and work periods; use a timer. • Provide regular and timely feedback on progress. • Seat the child near a good role model.
Organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the child with structure for project work and daily routine.
Doing complex tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set short-term goals in completing assignments. • Use a checklist and chart progress to make it more fun.
Inhibiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure class rules are clear and understood. • Praise the child when he/she follows rules. • Cue the child to note the actions of others.
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List requirements of tasks. • Prompt self-monitoring (eg "Let's look at the instructions again. What do we need to check?")
Shifting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide cues and procedures when changing activities. • Ensure practice and give positive feedback.
Regulating emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a behaviour contract with support for calming down. • Attend to effective self management with timely praise and rewards. • Prompt helpful self-talk (eg "I need to think things through before I act").





Assisting in the playground

Children with ADHD can have even more difficulty in the playground than in the classroom. Schools can help by promoting positive behaviours for all children in the playground and by providing structure and supervision at playtime.

- 1 Raise awareness in the whole school of fun and safety in the playground and involve children in creating strategies for making the time safe and full of fun.
- 2 Set up a system of positive reinforcement for acceptable playground behaviour. Give positive reinforcement for:
 - playing a game cooperatively
 - putting away play equipment
 - observing rules regarding regulated areas.
- 3 Provide some supervised playtime activities (eg group games or workshops). This can help children with ADHD to improve their social skills and reduce the school's need to deal with disruptive behaviour. In addition, an individualised plan for structuring lunch or recess time for a child with ADHD may be of benefit.

This resource is part of a range of KidsMatter Primary information sheets for families and school staff. View them all online at www.kidsmatter.edu.au



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