

8 Strategies for Managing ADHD: A Parent's Guide

1. Empathy – Understand and have compassion for the daily challenges the child lives with – as they are no fault of his/her own. Recognize their inconsistency as evidence of the challenge they face and not due to willfulness or choice. Your child is unable to give voice to what they are living with. Simply stated: if they could do better, they would do better. Lead with grace and patience.

2. Structure – Provide the child with consistent, predictable routines. Provide your child with a clear list of expectations visually available for their review. This can include what tasks and behaviors may take place, where they may take place, and when they may take place (e.g. Create a Weekly Family White Board Calendar with expected due dates for specific expectations).

3. Memory – Provide your child needed accommodations to address the frequent memory difficulties that accompany ADHD. Use visual cues to remind the student of the task requirements. Visual reminders can include post-it notes, check-off lists, rule books, problem solving cards, and/or flow charts. Secure your child's eyes and ask them to repeat back the instructions before they start a task.

4. Time – Increase awareness of time by making time visual and available (e.g. Use Time Timers, clocks, or egg timers to signal the passage of time). Verbally remind your child of the passage of time (e.g. "We will leave, change jobs in 5 minutes"). For older students, break long-term or future assignments into smaller goals with frequent accountability checks. Use daily school planners and weekly family calendars. Encourage your student to write down what they need to do.

5. Home & School – Trust and cooperation between parents and school staff is significant. Remain humble and open to new information. Clear and regular communication provides a foundation for determining needed accommodations, student accountability, and mutual problem solving. The potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation abound. Lead with grace in working with one another.

6. Medication – Understand that medication is used to avoid the secondary consequences that will occur without treatment (e.g. just as insulin is to avoid the consequences of diabetes). Recognize that, with medication in place, it provides your child an "even playing field" and the foundation for habit development, responsible behavior, and maintaining accountability. Recognize that the goal of medication is to provide the child an equal opportunity to grow, learn, demonstrate, and build confidence in their abilities. When parents, teachers, and physicians are persistent, 9 out of 10 students obtain nearly age typical attention and self-management.

7. Externalize Rewards - Provide student with tangible rewards (points, stickers, prizes, quick praise, etc.) where and when the child is functioning. Provide rewards in the moment, at the point of performance as an external source of motivation. Tangible rewards will deliver

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external praise that may not be occurring internally.

8. **Replenish** – Take time to replenish yourself. What activities refill you? Schedule time to do them. Get outside. Get away. Exercise. Set boundaries on how much time you agree to participate in schoolwork sent home.

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