



SOCIETY FOR  
THE PROMOTION  
OF ADHD RESEARCH  
AND KNOWLEDGE

FAQ



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## 32. What can teachers do to help ADHD children?

### 32.1. Establishing a Supportive Learning Environment:

- a. Children with ADHD can be seated in the first few rows near the teacher's desk, surrounded by 5-6 model students who can assist the ADHD child, and whose behaviour the ADHD child can emulate.  
(The model students need not be straight A students who may be ultra-competitive, neat or intolerant. Model students here refer to fairly matured children who are tolerant and have good EQ skills)
- b. Emphasise that everyone has his own strengths and weaknesses, and that students should support and help each other e.g. neat / orderly students could help those who are disorganised / forgetful to copy down / hand up homework, brighter / more attentive ones could help others clarify teachers' instructions etc.
- c. Acknowledge the helpful attitude and positive contribution of the 5-6 model students at appropriate time e.g. during Life-skill classes.
- d. Do not place students with ADHD/ADD near air conditioners, high traffic area, doors or windows as these will distract the ADHD/ADD child

### 32.2. Reducing the Incidence of Bullying in School

- a. Be conscious that teachers are role models for the other students' attitude towards and treatment of children with learning difficulties. If the teacher disciplines the ADHD child with DIGNITY, then other children will follow suit. If she highlights the ADHD child's strengths, she will raise his social standing and reduce the probability of his being bullied.
- b. Be aware that children who are "different" are bully-magnets. To reduce victimisation, investigate complaints against the ADHD child thoroughly before taking disciplinary measures
- c. Emphasise that bullying will not be tolerated in school and remind students of the consequences if they are caught bullying others

### 32.3. Giving Instructions to Students with ADHD/ADD:

- a. Write homework and other important messages on a special corner of the board (or on a separate board) that is not erased until the message is no longer valid
- b. The ADHD child may not have heard what you had said. Emphasize key points by writing them on the board. This will catch the students attention
- c. Try to involve various senses during the lesson - e.g. use of colourful materials (sight, sound, smell, touch and even taste). Children with ADHD enjoy touching and other hands-on experiences.
- d. Keep each lesson short and inject variety to stimulate students' interests. What is useful for the ADHD child is also useful for other normal children.
- e. All children learn best through play. Lessons should be made as fun as possible using creativity and real-life examples:
  - The ADHD child finds it difficult to learn abstract things and enjoys learning with real-life examples
  - For example, teaching mathematics using money makes the child appreciate why we need to learn addition and subtraction and motivates the child to learn other abstract mathematical operations.
- f. The ADHD child (and 1/3 of all the children) is usually weak in his listening skills. Find creative ways to enhance the listening skills of children. E.g.:
  - Tape sounds of special events or situation to guess what the events or situation are
  - Multi-media teaching aids on the computer are also useful
  - Ask children to identify what they can hear in the background
  - Make wire-telephone using paper cups during science lessons,
  - Get different children to read different part of the lessons, etc.
- g. Have structure and routines for various lessons
- h. State directions clearly and simply
  - i. Minimise the clutter on your handouts
  - j. Teach students memory aides
- k. Encourage students to solve problems with minimal teacher involvement
- l. Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction.

### 32.4. Giving Assignments to Students with ADHD/ADD:

- a. Give out one task at a time; monitor frequently
- b. Make sure you are testing knowledge and not attention span
- c. Keep in mind children with ADHD/ADD are easily frustrated; Stress, pressure and fatigue can break down their self-control and lead to poor behaviour
- d. Require the use of an assignment notebook
  - Write down assignment(s) on the board or on a piece of paper that can be pasted in an assignment notebook
  - Require students to write down Assignments
  - Get parents to sign off the assignment notebook
- e. Give more time for assignment and tests. ADHD children tends to lose focus and thus need more time than others to complete their work
  - Apply for extra time for school examinations for the ADHD/ADD at least six months before the exam to ensure approval can be obtained in time
- f. Communicate assignments clearly
  - Be clear about the due date, the required pages, the format and required materials
- g. Provide a model/ structure of the required assignment or project
- h. Intervene when there is a pattern of incomplete assignments. Contact parents for supervision at home.

### 32.5. Modifying Behaviour and Enhancing Self-Esteem:

- a. Invest time & effort initially to build rapport with the ADHD child on a one-to-one basis. Once the groundwork is done, maintenance is easy – just a smile or nod to reinforce desired behaviour, and a shake of the head to signal inappropriate behaviour.
- b. Provide Supervision and Discipline
  - Remain calm, state what has gone wrong and avoid arguing with the student
  - Describe what should have been done
  - Have pre-established consequences for misbehaviour
  - Enforce classroom rules consistently
  - Make sure the discipline fits the "crime" without harshness
  - Avoid ridicule and criticism; Remember that children with ADHD/ADD have difficulty staying in control
  - Avoid publicly reminding students on medication to "take their medicine"
- c. Provide Encouragement:
  - Reward more than you punish. Try to find good behaviour to reinforce i.e. catch the ADHD child being good, then praise him
  - Be specific in your praises. (e.g. I noticed you have ... I like that.)
  - Encourage positive self-talk (e.g. You did very well remaining in your seat today. How do you feel about that?).

### 32.6. Proper Structure and Organisation:

- a. Provide structure and routine for various lessons
- b. Require students to use a 3-ring binder to organise their materials and schoolwork (as early as 3rd grade)
  - With subject dividers, blank notebook paper and plastic pouch for pens, pencils & erasers
  - Another binder for pending homework, completed homework and notes to parents
- c. Provide a place in the classroom for students to turn in their work
- d. Teach students how to keep a neat desk
- e. Build desk-cleaning time into the class schedule
- f. Encourage students to be responsible for their materials
- g. Have a class discussion in which students share their ideas about keeping organised
- h. Encourage the use of a checklist.

### 32.7. Making Examination easier for children with ADHD and other learning difficulties:

- a. Do not use micro-prints
- b. Put comprehension passage / graphic stimulus on page facing questions (leave blank pages if necessary)
- c. Sit ADHD child right in front of invigilator
- d. Break the examination into separate sections/pages. ADHD children tend to be overwhelmed by the whole examination paper and are unable to pace themselves to complete it on a timely basis. This simple procedure allows the ADHD child
  - the much-needed attention breaks
  - a visual (& kinaesthetic) indication of work progress and passage of time
  - Note: This can be done by removing the staple for the exam paper and subsequently staple the various pages together again at the end of the exam (need the help of the teacher in this area).
- e. Give the ADHD child extra time for the examination

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