

# Management of ADHD

From a parent/carer point of view.

Teachers reading this may wish to pass this on to parents or if they are already aware, to help you understand what the parent/carer is trying to achieve.

ADHD is a disorder that cannot be cured and must be managed throughout the life span. It is therefore vital that we become informed about the disorder, understand ADHD - its related problems and treatments and try seeing the world through their eyes. We should never underestimate how uncomfortable life can be for those living with ADHD those with ADHD respond best in a well-structured, predictable environment where expectations and rules are clear and consistent, and consequences are set down ahead of time and delivered immediately.

The use of the word children is used below, although the following can equally be helpful to adults with ADD/ADHD. Also the use of the term ADHD is used and again the following are equally important for those with ADD without the Hyperactivity.

## Management at Home

It is important to remember that all children are individuals and you know your child best, but below are a few basic suggestions, which may help. Show that you believe in your child's abilities. Focus on your child's strengths and support each attempt to succeed. Many children with ADHD feel like failures and give up before they have a chance to succeed. **Make directions brief**

First, get your child's attention, and then state what to do slowly, with simple words and short sentences. Keep your voice calm and avoid sounding sarcastic or annoyed. Ask your child to repeat what you said. Reward the child immediately with physical or verbal praise. Positive expectations are statements we make to children about what is appropriate behaviour, the goal is teach your child what you want - not what you don't want. For example, telling your child that dirty clothes belong in the laundry basket is more effective than telling your child to stop leaving their clothes on the floor. Telling your child with ADHD that their feet belong on the floor is easier to understand than telling them to take their feet off the table. State what you want, not what you don't want.

## Communicate clearly with eye contact

It is important to make eye contact with your child as they are much more likely to pay attention to what you are saying if you have eye contact. Remember keep verbal communication short.

## Accept that your child will be absent minded

It may seem that you are always reminding your child about something, try not to get annoyed and say things like 'if I have to tell you one more time'. Repeat things as though you were telling them for the first time.

**Use lists and pictures** to help your child manage things at home. Sit down and prepare an achievable list together - it could be to help your child get dressed in a morning and the order that their clothes go on, or it could be chores that need to be done in the home. Let them tick off each completed task and reward them immediately on completion. Offer a routine and prepare your child for change in that routine. Your child probably won't take surprises and change well. Give them plenty of notice and talk about the change with them.

**Structure and organise time**

Children with ADHD cope much better if they have a clear programme/timetable to follow. They can be particularly difficult at weekends and school holidays. Try and plan what they are going to do and set out a timetable in advance.

**Avoid confrontations**

Learn which situations are likely to trigger off difficult behaviour and whenever possible plan to avoid these situations. This should not be seen as backing down but as being in control. Do not make the mistake of thinking your child will have learned from the way you previously avoided a confrontation, they won't.

**Pay attention to good behaviour**

It is important to acknowledge behaviour. Children with inattentive and impulsive behaviours often spend much of their day in trouble; as a result they can feel quite bad about themselves. Giving attention to good behaviours will help to make them feel better about themselves. Use extension of privileges as well as praise to give weight to good behaviour.

**You are your child's advocate**

It is important that you are informed and act for your child. No one is better equipped than you are to do this. You must communicate information about your child and ADHD to appropriate others who have contact with your child.

*For more information visit [www.adders.org](http://www.adders.org)*