

# SUGGESTIONS FOR HANDLING CHILDREN WITH ADHD

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## At Home:

### Communication

1. Establish good eye contact, give one direction at a time, and ask child to repeat it back.
2. Be direct and brief. Do not give a directive as a question.
3. Speak in a normal tone so child must listen carefully.
4. Use physical contact, such as a hand on the shoulder, to insure attention.

### Rules and Consequences

1. Emphasize praise and encouragement. Use positives before negatives. Catch the child being good. Use charts, tokens, and tangible rewards and change them often.
2. Post a few, easily understood house rules and militantly enforce them with immediate time out and no discussion.
3. "Act don't yak." Use single commands, set time limits to compliance, and follow through.
4. Strive for 100% consistency and follow through. Avoid multiple threats and warnings.
5. Make consequences immediate, frequent, and salient. Focus on short-term consequences because long-term punishment is rarely effective.
6. Anticipate problems; have a plan.

### Home School Work

1. Have a plan for predictable brief periods of homework. Expect your child to need supervision to complete work. Allow short break every 15 to 30 minutes.
2. Provide the child with a large calendar to monitor completion of larger projects.
3. Maintain awareness of any incomplete schoolwork and act before it becomes a huge problem.
4. Use a tutor for one on one instruction as needed.
5. Consider the need for special education support.

### In General

1. Maintain a calm, relaxed attitude in dealing with your child. Remain in control and model good coping skills.
2. Encourage the child to channel active behavior to appropriate venues (e.g., outdoor play, sports, etc.)
3. Be aware of possible complications such as learning disabilities, depression, and conduct problems.
4. Forgive your child daily. (Write down all of the child's misbehaviors, then crumple it up and throw it away). Don't personalize the child's problems.
5. Forgive yourself. Parents are overrated, kids are resilient, and angry words do not cause deep lifelong emotional scars. Plan to respond smarter tomorrow.
6. Remember that all of the child's behavior is not simply wilful defiance; ADHD contributes to causing misbehavior. Reduce expectations by about 30% of the child's chronological age.
7. Maintain a sense of priorities. Delight in your child's strengths and unique qualities.

### In School:

1. Reduce external distractions. Seat the child in the front of the class, away from windows, or in a quiet area. Use a study carrel for tasks requiring sustained focused attention.
2. Frequently prompt attention. Consider using a cue to remind the student to attend.
3. Present lessons vividly and theatrically. Exploit all the senses with teaching aids and hands on activities.
4. Have student repeat back instructions before going off to complete work.
5. Structure for success. Present material step-by-step and in limited work periods.
6. Specify quotas for work production and quality. Monitor work completion. Do not have the student bring all of his/her work home.
7. Assist with organization of materials, schedule, homework, etc.
8. Provide an extra set of books, pencils, and supplies, as needed.
9. Use a varying reward system. Consider a home-based reward system.
10. Maintain regular communication with the parents. Consider using a daily home-school notebook.

### **Additional Resources**

ADHD WareHouse. 1-800-233-9273. [www.addwarehouse.com](http://www.addwarehouse.com)

Barkley, R. A. (1998). Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Handbook for Diagnosis and Treatment. New York: Guilford.

Barkley, R. A. (1995). Taking Charge of ADHD: The Complete Authoritative Guide for Parents. New York: Guilford.

CH.A.D.D.      Grand Rapids chapter    616-248-2423  
                         National Office                    800-233-4050    [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

Monastra, V. J. (2004). Parenting Children with ADHD: 10 Lessons That Medicine Cannot Teach. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Parker, H. C. (1999). Put Yourself in Their Shoes: Understanding Teenagers With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Specialty Press.

Phelan, T. W. (1998). All About Attention Deficit Disorder.

Reiff, M. I. (2004) ADHD: A Complete and Authoritative Guide. American Academy of Pediatrics.

Web sites: [www.uniquely-adhd.com](http://www.uniquely-adhd.com)      [www.help4adhd.org](http://www.help4adhd.org)      [www.add.org](http://www.add.org)