

ADD-ADHD

Attention Deficit
(Hyperactivity) Disorder

Life with a child with ADD/ADHD can be frustrating and overwhelming. You can help your child overcome daily challenges, channel his or her energy into positive arenas, and bring greater calm to your family.

The earlier and more consistently you address your child's problems, the greater chance he or she has for success in life.

- Males are almost three times more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than females.
- The average age of ADHD diagnosis is 7 years old.
- Symptoms of ADHD typically first appear between the ages of 3 and 6.

Supporting Your Child

Parenting tip 1: Stay positive and healthy yourself.

The power of a positive attitude

Your best assets for helping your child are your positive attitude and common sense. When you are calm and focused, you are more likely to be able to connect with your child, helping him or her to be calm and focused as well.

- Keep things in perspective.
- Don't sweat the small stuff and be willing to make some compromises.
- Believe in your child.

When you take care of yourself, you're better able to take care of your child.

If you are overtired or have simply run out of patience, you risk losing sight of the structure and support you have so carefully set up for your child.

- Take care of yourself. Eat right, exercise, and find ways to reduce stress.
- Seek support. Talk to your child's doctors, therapists, and teachers. Join an organized support group for parents of children with ADD/ADHD.
- Take breaks. Friends and family can be wonderful about babysitting.

Parenting tip 2: Establish structure and stick to it.

Children with ADD/ADHD are more likely to succeed in completing tasks when the tasks occur in predictable patterns and in predictable places.

Tips to help your child stay focused and organized.

- Follow a routine.
- Use clocks and timers.

- Simplify your child's schedule.
- Create a quiet place.
- Do your best to be neat and organized.

Parenting tip 3: Set clear expectations and rules.

Children with ADD/ADHD need consistent rules they can understand and follow.

Make the rules of behavior for the family simple and clear. Write down the rules and hang them up in a place where your child can easily read them.

Don't forget praise and positive reinforcement.

A smile, positive comment, or other reward from you can improve the attention, concentration, and impulse control of your child.

Parenting tip 4: Encourage movement and sleep.

Physical activity can help your child.

Children with ADD/ADHD often have energy to burn. Organized sports and other physical activities can help them get their energy out in healthy ways and focus their attention on specific movements and skills.

Better sleep can help your child.

Help your child get better rest by trying out one or more of the following strategies:

- Decrease television time.
- Create a buffer time to lower the activity level for an hour or so before bedtime.
- Spend ten minutes cuddling with your child.
- Use lavender or other aromas in your child's room. The scent may help to calm your child.
- Use relaxation tapes as background noise for your child when falling asleep.

Parenting tip 5: Help your child eat right.

Diet is not a direct cause of attention deficit disorder, but food can and does affect your child's mental state, which in turn seems to affect behavior.

- Eating small meals more often may help your child.
- Get rid of the junk foods in your home.
- Put fatty and sugary foods off-limits when eating out.
- Turn off television shows riddled with junk-food ads.
- Give your child a daily vitamin-and-mineral supplement.

Parenting tip 6: Teach your child how to make friends.

Children with ADD/ADHD often have difficulty with simple social interactions.

- Speak gently, but honestly with your child about his or her challenges and how to make changes.
- Role-play various social scenarios with your child. Trade roles often and try to make it fun.
- Be careful to select playmates for your child with similar language and physical skills.
- Invite only one or two friends at a time at first. Watch them closely while they play.
- Have a zero tolerance policy for hitting, pushing, and yelling in your house or yard.
- Make time and space for your child to play, and reward good play behaviors often.

Kids with ADD/ADHD: Using Rewards and Consequences

Rewards	Consequence
Reward your child with privileges, praise, or activities, rather than with food or toys.	Consequences should be spelled out in advance and occur immediately after your child has misbehaved.
Change rewards frequently. Kids with ADD/ADHD get bored if the reward is always the same.	Try time-outs and the removal of privileges as consequences for misbehavior.
Make a chart with points or stars awarded for good behavior, so your child has a visual reminder of his or her successes.	Remove your child from situations and environments that trigger inappropriate behavior.
Immediate rewards work better than the promise of a future reward, but small rewards leading to a big one can also work.	When your child misbehaves, ask what he or she could have done instead. Then have your child demonstrate it.
Always follow through with a reward.	Always follow through with a consequence.



Before you can successfully parent a child with ADD/ADHD, it's essential to understand the impact of your child's symptoms on the family as a whole.

Children with ADD/ADHD exhibit a slew of behaviors that can disrupt family life:

- They often don't "hear" parental instructions, so they don't obey them.
- They're disorganized and easily distracted, keeping other family members waiting.
- They start projects and forget to finish them—let alone clean up after them.
- Children with impulsivity issues often interrupt conversations and demand attention at inappropriate times.
- They might speak before they think, saying tactless or embarrassing things.
- It's often difficult to get them to bed and to sleep.
- Hyperactive children may tear around the house or even do things that put them in physical danger.



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www.healthline.com/health/adhd/facts.