

Recognizing ADHD

In the Classroom



Inattention

- Easily distracted
- Tunes out of lessons
- Daydreams



Disorganization/Forgetfulness

- Forgets to take books home
- Forgets to do or turn in assignments
- Loses homework and materials
- Messy desk, backpack, or work space



Restlessness

- Fidgeting
- Playing with nearby objects
- Trouble waiting or taking turns
- Difficulty staying seated or sitting still



Poor Work Habits

- Difficulty starting or finishing work
- Incomplete, missing, or late assignments
- Trouble following rules and instructions
- Easily frustrated



Impulsivity

- Talks excessively, blurts out, or interrupts
- May disrupt class
- Trouble following rules
- Careless errors

Strategies and Tips

TO HELP STUDENTS
WITH ADHD SUCCEED

ORGANIZATION	
Use an assignment notebook or app.	Many students with ADHD need help remembering and tracking assignments.
Provide several ways to get assignments.	Students with ADHD often forget to bring assignments to and from home. Provide other ways to access assignments, such as email attachments or an online portal.
Teach and practice organizational skills.	Students must be taught skills and strategies on a level that matches their developmental age.
Notify parents of important due dates.	Everyone in a student's life has a role to play. Regular communication is essential.
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	
Avoid seating student near distractions.	Use single desks instead of tables. Avoid doorways or windows that view busy areas.
Teach and reward good listening.	Be specific about expectations, such as staying seated or not interrupting.
Use procedures and routines.	Practice, monitor, and re-teach routines. Keep reviewing until routines become habits.
Allow some fidget objects.	Fidget tools can help some children focus. Try several types to find the best fit.
Give at least 3x more positive feedback than negative feedback.	Students may be extra sensitive to negative messages. Positive feedback is more powerful in changing behavior. Be specific, so they know which behaviors to repeat.
INFORMATION DELIVERY	
Use written instructions and graphics in lessons and assignments.	Students understand and remember information better when ideas, words, and concepts are associated with pictures, diagrams, charts, and maps.
Use multisensory instruction.	Use song, movement, and color to emphasize lessons and aid memory.
Give instructions one at a time.	Students may have memory problems and may only be able to remember one step at a time. Repeating directions helps keep instructions in memory longer.
Break large projects into small tasks with deadlines for each step.	Students with ADHD have difficulty breaking down large projects into smaller tasks, leading to projects that are incomplete or rushed through at the last minute.
STUDENT WORK	
Develop prompts, cues, and redirections to task.	Work with the student to create a private signal to help them stay on task.
Use task cards to reinforce directions.	Offer task cards to any student who finds them helpful or give everyone task cards to avoid stigmatizing the student(s) with ADHD.
Seat student near instructors or responsible peers.	Teachers can help focus attention to tasks and clarify directions. Seeing others at work can provide a "body double" and help students stay motivated and on task.
Match assignments to student's abilities.	Some performance expectations are a struggle, such as cursive writing or reading independently. Adjust assignments to showcase strengths and minimize difficulties.
Shorten assignments.	Assigning students every other math problem or a shorter spelling list will compensate for the longer length of time it takes them to complete work.
Reduce mandatory handwriting.	Typing or dictating can help students whose motor skills may not be fully developed.