



## HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD DIAGNOSED WITH ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common disorders in children. There are over six million children in the United States who experience ADHD: common behaviors are difficulty paying attention, concentrating, and completing tasks.

ADHD is manageable with the right treatment and support.

Let this guide offer you tips to better understand the behaviors related to ADHD. This is not a substitute for professional help, but we hope it helps you best support your child at home.

- 1. Set up daily routines together.** Routines can be helpful for children with ADHD. For younger children, try posting a schedule for important daily activities like getting ready for school in the morning. Steps might include getting dressed, eating breakfast, and helping your child pack their school bag and putting it by the door. For teens, encourage them to create checklists for important daily tasks like completing homework. Steps might include helping your teen to read assignments, prepare items (paper, pen, books), and set aside enough time to work on assignments.
- 2. Make transitions more predictable.** For many children with ADHD, it can be challenging to change focus between different activities. Help to make transitions like dinner or bedtime easier by setting an alarm 10 minutes in advance and a giving five-minute reminder before the 10 minutes are up. When it's time to make the transition, announce it in a positive way.
- 3. Support positive self-esteem.** Many children with ADHD may feel bad about themselves because they work so hard to do well, but others less familiar with ADHD often misunderstand the behaviors related to the disorder. Children with ADHD can benefit from encouragement. To support your child's self-esteem, use praise freely but sincerely when they succeed in a task or transition.
- 4. Minimize distractions.** Help your child or teen to minimize distractions when they are working on a task, so they can focus better. Encourage them to keep desks or play spaces tidy. If they have an assignment to work on, try to give them a space that is uncluttered and quiet. Even things like noise from a TV, traffic going by, or other people around them can make completing a task harder.

- 5. Promote exercise as a family.** Children with ADHD may have a lot of energy. Daily exercise can help them to feel calmer and more focused. Think of creative ways to fit exercise into the day – walking to school, if possible, playing a sport, or even having a space at home for dancing or basketball hoops.
  
- 6. Make sleep a priority for your child.** Falling asleep, in particular, can be hard for children with ADHD. But without enough sleep, focusing and managing impulses is even harder. Here are some healthy sleep habits to help you child with falling asleep:
  - Encourage regular bedtimes and waking times.
  - Allow time for reading before bed.
  - Play music or relaxation apps for a calming effect.
  - Eliminate screen time before bed and try to keep screens out of the bedroom.
  - Reduce caffeine during the day from foods like soda or chocolate.
  
- 7. Plan ahead.** Many children with ADHD struggle to manage their emotions when upset by a situation. Think about ways to plan ahead. Try talking about stressful situations that might come up before an event, or think about ways to get to a quiet place, if needed, so your child can have a safe space to take a break.
  
- 8. Take care of yourself.** It can be overwhelming to support a child with ADHD. You are a great parent for learning how to help. Remember, all parents need a break. It's important to find time to take care of yourself. Use the activities and supports that will help you to recharge your batteries.
  
- 9. You are not alone.** Just as your child is not alone in this, neither are you. Look for a [support group in your area](#) to connect with other parents/caregivers who are experiencing similar situations with their children.

ADHD is treatable. It helps to stay open and honest about emotions within your family. Stay connected to your child's primary care doctor and make sure your child feels comfortable being open with them, too.

Need more information on ADHD in children, including signs and symptoms?  
<http://bit.ly/PTEACH-Family>

Interested in learning more about the different treatment methods for ADHD?  
<http://bitly.com/OMH-ADHD>

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