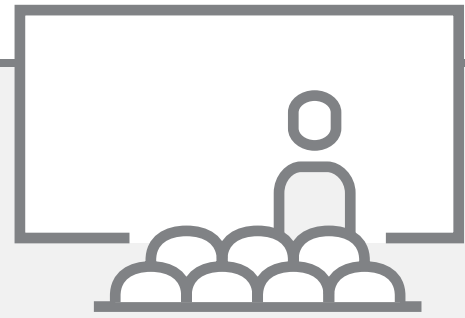


How to Teach Children with ADHD:

Classroom Challenges and Solutions



Common Learning Challenges

1. Hyperactivity or Impulsivity

- Give opportunities for movement like sharpening pencils, delivering office notes, or using a discrete fidget.
- Allow the child to sit on an exercise ball or to stand once his or her work is complete.
- Ignore transgressions like blurting out and agree on a gesture (finger to lips) or attach to his desk another visual cue to remind the student.

2. Written Expression: Difficulty writing essays or reports and organizing ideas

- Dictate ideas to a scribe.
- Provide a graphic organizer with key components of an essay.
- Use speech-recognition software (i.e. Dragon Naturally Speaking).

3. Reading Comprehension: Difficulty remembering what was read and identifying key points, plus feeling overwhelmed by long reading assignments

- “Read to the clip:” put a colored paper clip at the end of the required reading section to divide long reading assignments into shorter segments.
- Teach a student to identify key points in each paragraph by noting the primary noun and verb in the first sentence.
- List key points for each paragraph on sticky notes and place them beside the text.

4. Math Computation

- Use engaging software like “Times Tables the Fun Way.”
- Provide a multiplication grid.
- Allow the use of calculators.
- For homework help, mathway.com and khanacademy.org offer step-by-step instructions for algebra and other subjects.

Executive Skills Challenges

1. Organization

- Teach organizational strategies and carve out time for students to organize their bags and desks.
- Have students work in pairs to organize assignments, tests, worksheets, and notebooks weekly.
- Use color-coded folders: red for unfinished work and green for completed assignments.

2. Getting Started

- Give a predetermined visual cue to remind a student to start. Make eye contact and pull on your ear, for example.
- Have a nearby student (of the child’s choice) tap him on the arm to remind him to refocus.
- Schedule a brief “brain break” before starting work; explain that activity increases blood flow to the brain so students can think better after a round of “Dance Party,” “Freeze Dance,” or “6 Spots.”

3. Completing and Returning Assignments

- Use the free mobile app, remind.com, to notify parents and the student of assignments and tests. Post assignments on your school web page.
- Train students to enter their assignments in a digital calendar and to use their phones to take photographs of assignments.
- Appoint “row captains” to collect homework and check that assignments are written down.

4. Working Memory and Memorization

- Memorization: Use mnemonics. For example: HOMES to remember the Great Lakes— Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.
- Working memory: Reduce demands on working memory through use of prompts, using a graphic organizer that lists key parts of an essay, circulate copies of lecture notes.

CHRIS A. ZEIGLER DENDY, M.S., is an educator, school psychologist, and mental health professional with 40 years of experience. She is the author of *Teenagers with ADD & ADHD: A Guide for Parents and Teaching Teens with ADD, ADHD, & Executive Function Deficits*.