

ADHD Strategies

Techniques to manage behaviour which may work with other children might not work well for an ADHD child. The best results come from:

Clear communication

Simple instructions

Descriptive verbal praise

Having a small number of important rules

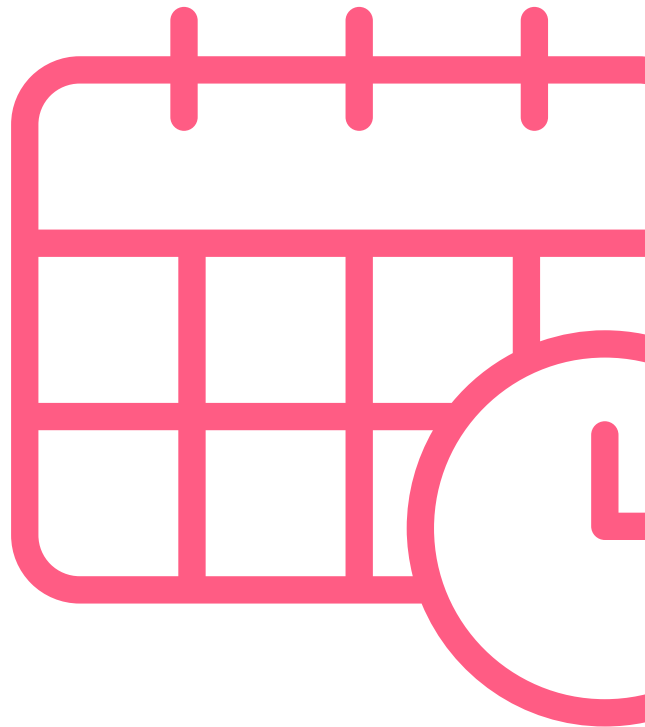
Structure and Organisation

Having a routine is essential. Children with ADHD may well find changes to routine very anxiety provoking.

Creating “stages” throughout the day will provide structure for your child. Sit down and work out a mutually agreed routine, let them feel part of the solution. Discuss your expectations as well as theirs.

Be creative, and think outside the box. People with ADHD are visual learners – write it, post it, draw it, review it.

Colour-coded calendars can be paired with matching colour-coded storage and household organisation. Make use of technology – clocks and timers can be helpful for a time-blind ADHD child. Calendars and reminders on smartphones as well as home AI assistants and apps can be valuable tools.



Communication

Six steps of more effective communication...

- Make sure you are in the same room as your child
- Make sure your child is not distracted or doing something else
- Make sure your child is listening
- Use short sentences with no more than one or two requests at a time
- Make sure your child has understood you (ask for feedback)
- Check in frequently

‘Do’ commands

‘Do’ commands are a positive way to change unwanted behaviour. Rather than saying “Don’t put your feet on the table”, instead say:

“Two feet on the floor, thank you”.

Telling your child what you want to see reduces demand, avoids rejection sensitivity, and helps direct your child’s behaviour.

Descriptive verbal praise

Descriptive praise will help your child develop self-esteem and let them know what it is they have done well. It is the best tool to encourage positive behaviour.

Validate, Acknowledge, Normalise (VAN)

Validating an emotion can help your child understand and deal with their emotions. Validating doesn't mean that you agree with the other person or that you think their emotional response is warranted. Rather, you demonstrate that you understand what they are feeling without trying to talk them out of it or shame them for it.

Validate

"I can see that what happened at the park has really upset you."

Acknowledge

"That must make you feel really left out."

Normalise

"I would feel exactly the same way if my friend didn't want to play with me."

Top tips



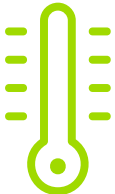
Daily quality time

Spend 5 minutes with younger children, 15 minutes with teens. Let the child choose an activity they enjoy. Actively listen and let them lead the conversation. Validate their choices and interests, focus on giving positive attention to good behaviour while ignoring minor misbehaviour. Avoid directing the activity or criticising.



Stress bucket

Draw a bucket, at the top write a list of stress filling up the bucket. Then, draw taps on the bottom, and list activities that can help empty the bucket. This can help understand and deal with stress before it becomes overwhelming.



Feelings scales

Use an image of a thermometer and ask your child to rate where the emotion is on the scale. This can help a child to put names to feelings and rate their intensity and understand when their emotions are getting out of control.



Sensory strategies

Using sensory strategies can help during emotional dysregulation. There are many options, such as weighted items; fidget toys and many more. You could also ask your child to tell you 5 things they can see, 4 things they can feel, 3 things they can hear, 2 things they can smell and 1 thing they can taste.

House rules

Keep it simple – choose only a few behaviours at any one time and be very clear with expectations. Sit down together and make it an activity.

Remember to take your child's opinions into consideration. Review regularly, and display them where they can be seen!

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