

## **Home schooling an ADHD Child**

Give yourself and your child grace on the difficult days. It's okay to take a break from home schooling when your child's symptoms make it more difficult to home school.

Some days your child's symptoms may be worse due to the weather, diet, illness, emotional struggles, etc. On those days provide him or her with comfort and reassurance, take things slowly, or take a sick day from school and try again the next day.

Don't be afraid to modify your lesson plans, customizing them for your child's unique needs.

Remember, keep relationship at the forefront of your interactions with your child and the rest (yes, even learning) will fall into place.

## **Practical Tips for Home schooling an ADHD Child**

### **Give Your Child Choices**

Whenever possible let your ADHD child make choices about his or her education. This empowers them to be an active participant in their own learning. For example

- What time to start home schooling
- Where in the house to home school
- Which subject to tackle first

### **Write a Daily Schedule**

To help an ADHD child stay on track with home schooling and the rest of his responsibilities each day is to create a daily schedule and post it to the fridge.

### **Don't Try to Replicate School at Home**

Embraced the freedom of home schooling, which allows a family so much more time to learn together outside of a busy-work-filled school day. Use this flexibility to help your ADHD child meet their learning potential.

### **Start the school day with activities that require the most mental energy.**

Get them over the hump early.

### **Experiment with the use of a timer**

20 minutes and then a break or difficult subjects are only worked on for a set period of time. Try a sand timer if the clicking noise is distracting.

### **Work One on One with Your Child**

If possible try to home school your ADHD child on a one-on-one instead of home schooling in a group setting with siblings. This help everyone manage constant interruptions and distractions.

### **Consider using a reward system.**

This is especially helpful for establishing good habits with younger kids. Keep a chart with stickers and set up clear boundaries for what is expected and what the reward will be.

### **Watch the food intake.**

Limit simple carbs and drink a lot of water. Dietary measures may not be a 'cure' for attention issues but they absolutely help!

### **Keep It Moving**

Set a goal of spending no more than twenty minutes per subject. This keeps the home school sessions moving along without much a chance for your child to become bored with any of the subjects.

### **Keep it Short and Simple**

When teaching an ADHD child. They can often only listen to your words for about three minutes before their minds drifts off. Keep them engaged by making lessons short and simple with plenty of opportunity for them to repeat back what you have said. Keeping lessons short and simple results in the child being more engaged, less distracted, and retaining more knowledge.

### **Don't Give More Than Two Instructions at a Time**

- When giving your ADHD child instructions for a home schooling assignment give no more than two instructions to be completed at once. This means you'll need to be more present, available, and hands-on.
- Teach older kids to write lists or speak their lists into a recording device to replay later.
- Gain your child's full attention before giving directions.
- Avoid chain commands

### **Let Your Child Move**

Let your ADHD child engage in some type of movement when they're learning. It can really help your child to focus on the task at hand when they're allowed to move their body. Use multi-sensory methods – let them move! Get stretchy toys or stress balls for children to play with when they are feeling fidgety but need to sit still. Sometimes the movements might be small fidgets, other times your child may need big muscle movement or rhythmic movement to stay engaged with the lesson.

- A swivelling desk chair often helps, as they can swivel and rock and thus pay better attention to the lesson.
- Consider having kids sit on an oversized exercise ball instead of a chair.
- Let them act out their vocabulary words.
- Put in stretch breaks during a lesson. Taking a 'brain break' when they are feeling sluggish will refresh and re-energize them.

- Provide for exercise. Exercise helps work off excess energy, it helps focus attention, it stimulates certain hormones and neurochemicals that are beneficial, and it is fun.

### **Prepare to Redirect Back Constantly**

Best tip for dealing with the amount of redirection you'll do while home schooling your ADHD child is to expect it, handle it without drama, and don't get sucked into the distractions yourself.

### **Follow Their Interests**

Even though we home school some subjects (language arts and math, for example) in the traditional way, you can use interest-led learning, for other subjects (such as history, science). Use music, art projects, online and YouTube resources for interest-led learning. One way around this common ADHD home schooling obstacle is to follow your child's interests on as many subjects as possible. Go with your child's natural interests for as many subjects as possible and keep the spark alive.

### **Keep work spaces clutter free and Limit distractions.**

Limit excessive noise (TV off) distracting visual stimuli, clutter, etc. For some children with ADHD listening to "white noise" or soft background music can help concentration and focus

### **Use praise.**

- Offer praise wherever possible, and make it a point to highlight one (or more) things your child is doing RIGHT each day in other words... catch your child being good and point it out. Praise motivates children with ADHD to behave and frequent feedback is important.
- Make your praise specific

### **Ignore the small stuff.**

You may want your child to be on their best behaviour during the home schooling... this isn't necessarily a realistic expectation, especially if you have a child with developmental challenges and delays like ADHD, autism, and sensory processing disorder. Remember giving attention, even when it's negative, encourages those behaviours to continue. Ignoring mild misbehaviours teaches your child that negative behaviour won't get them desired results. Ignore whining, complaining, loud noises and attempts to interrupt you. Focus on the abilities of your child and go from there. Stop sweating the small, inconsequential stuff, and focus on the big things instead.

### **Use Time-Out When Necessary**

Time-out can be a good way to help kids with ADHD calm their bodies and their brains. Use time out (child to go to a quiet spot to calm down) when they become overstimulated or frustrated.

**Take special care to prepare for transitions well in advance.**

Announce what is going to happen, then make repeat announcements as the time approaches.

**Loosen up. Act silly.**

Let yourself be playful, have fun, be unconventional, be flamboyant. Introduce novelty into the day. Children with ADD love novelty. They respond to it with enthusiasm. It helps keep attention – the child's attention and yours as well. An ADHD child is full of life -- they love to play. And above all they hate being bored. So much of home schooling involves the more boring stuff like structure, schedules, lists, and rules, you want to show them that those things do not have to go hand in hand with being a boring person. Every once in a while, if you can let yourself be a little bit silly, that will help a lot.

**Watch out for overstimulation.**

Child with ADHD can boil over. You need to be able to reduce the heat in a hurry. The best way of dealing with chaos is to prevent it in the first place so put in "quite" time into your daily routine.

**Remain calm.**

When it comes to teaching a child with ADHD, staying calm won't always be easy, but it's extremely important that you remain in control of your emotions. When you feel yourself becoming frustrated, refrain from reacting, count to 10, and breathe. Remember that your child isn't deliberately GIVING you a hard time, but is HAVING a hard time and doesn't know how to cope. Be a positive role model and teach your child appropriate ways to deal with frustration.

A wise person once said, 'if a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn'