

Child and Family Centre

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What can teachers do to help children with ADD/ADHD?

Children with attention problems can show some improvement in their functioning with behavioural interventions. One very important thing to keep in mind is that it will take increased adult involvement in the child's life on a daily basis to show some improvement. This handout contains some information on basic strategies that can be useful.

Keep a disability perspective (children with ADHD often appear lazy and take a lot of teacher time).

Preferential seating.

Interact on positive level as frequent as possible (immediate, frequent, consistent feedback about behaviour and performance).

Anticipate problem situations and be proactive in communicating expectations for behaviour and work production.

Assist with organisation (posted list).

Daily check-in with another person besides classroom teacher.

Adjust work to the child's rate, capacity and level.

Reduce homework.

Daily/weekly note with behavioural expectations listed.

Keep in close contact with parents.

Reward/reinforcers (sticker charts or access to privilege)

Here is a description and some specific examples of what you could do that might be most effective and least time consuming:

Establish behaviour and work production expectations in written or picture form (write down several of the expectations and review with the child) You can make a list of statements or use the attached "Teacher rating" form. You could also have these expectations posted in the classroom and just point to and prompt the child to look at them.

Examples of behaviours to improve:

"Listen to directions"

"Don't rush"

"Respect others"(don't disturb)

"Get started quickly"

“Wait my turn to talk”

“Finish Work”

“Keep track of my things”

“Stay seated”

“Check my work”

“Quiet hands and feet”

Once you have established the expected behaviours, write them on the “Teacher rating” form. You can also use the self “My rating” form as well (completed by the child).

The attached forms should be used daily if possible. If you could manage twice a day it would be even better. The form can be sent home and parents review and can provide reinforcement and access to privileges based on the child’s performance.

Teach the child some self statements that they can review before/after carrying out a task. Sit with the child 1 on 1 in a quiet place and provide them with self statements that they can say to themselves when starting something, maintaining attention and finishing tasks. (Think of what you might say to yourself when you are trying to get something done?). Note that with younger children a list with pictures or photos can be used instead of or in addition to written statements. Example:

USING SELF TALK TO GET THINGS DONE

Sometimes it’s difficult to get started on a task or assignment in school or at home and you just don’t know where to begin. Using self-talk to get you started and finish things can sometimes be very helpful. After you get started it may also help to use a timer. Give yourself an adequate amount of time to finish, but check the time often while you are working.

Here are some things you can say to yourself.

“What do I need to do here?”

“How much time do I have?”

“I can do this”

“I just need to relax and get started”

“How am I doing so far?”

“How much more do I need to do before I finish?”

“Check my work/correct errors”

“Did I try my best?”

”Yes, I’m finished!”

Once you have established the self statements, laminate the list and put it in a place where the child or you can regularly refer to it. Prompt the child to use the list on a regular basis.

In most cases teachers have tried some or maybe even all of the above interventions in some form. It is important to try and keep some type of structured intervention going for 4-6 weeks. Using the attached forms can be helpful in documenting that you have been trying to help the child with their difficulties when you meet with parents.

Many times behavioural interventions such as those outlined above do not result in sustained and significant progress in the child’s overall functioning despite a teacher’s best efforts. Don’t be discouraged if these strategies do not have the desired effect. There are always other treatment options, but it is always preferable to try behavioural interventions first.

If a child is on medication as a treatment please do not ask the child if they have taken their medication when you see behaviour problems? Teachers should assist parents and Doctors in monitoring and this is best done by reporting how the child is doing in terms of their behaviour and production of work.

MY RATING

NAME _____ DATE _____

Please rate each of the following:

_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3

1 = Excellent

2 = OK

3 = Needs Improvement

Parent/teacher comments:

Teacher Initials

Parent Initials

TEACHERS RATING

NAME _____ DATE _____

Please rate each of the following:

_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3

1 = Excellent

2 = OK

3 = Needs Improvement

Parent/teacher comments:

Teacher Initials

Parent Initials

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

NAME _____ DATE _____

Please rate each of the following:

_____			
_____			
_____			
_____			
_____			

Parent/teacher comments:

Teacher Initials

Parent Initials