

Child and Family Centre

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HOME MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH ADD

1. Be firm. Establish clear ground rules when the child is young and keep these rules (with whatever needed amendments) on into adolescence. As the child improves in judgment, give him more leeway.
2. Do not flood the child with petty time-consuming decisions: for example what dress to wear, what shirt, etc. If he dawdles and shows indecision, then make these decisions for him.
3. Whenever possible, do consider his opinion in some larger matters; For example, to go or not to go to Jimmy's birthday party, to go fishing with a friend, etc. If there is no real reason to deny the child, then allow him the option of "yes" or "no". However, many ADD youngsters will need time to picture the situation and think it through before deciding.
4. Do not haggle or negotiate or wheedle about small things: an extra TV program; whether or not a helping of a new food is accepted; etc. A decision, even if it's in error, is better than haggling. Have faith in yourself.
5. Give the child chores by all means: setting the table for supper; helping serve at table; clearing the dishes; making the bed; Boys as well as girls should do these chores. Parents must share their duties and chores with their ADD child for the child's good. Such activities build self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Select one or tow chores and be prepared for the fact that it will take your time, effort, goodwill and many calm reminders to get these chores done. Withholding a desired privilege for a short time may be necessary if the child fails to do the chore assigned.
6. Be prepared to accept the absent mindedness of most ADD children. These youngsters need to be reminded again and again but without the irritation" I've told you a million times." Try to avoid the normal and usual escalation of irritation when directions or reminders need to be given over and over. When you have to repeat a direction say it each time as though it were the first time. These children are not being willful and stubborn when they can't remember; at this point in time, they just can't keep the many things we expect them to remember at the forefront of consciousness.

7. Be alert to the ADD youngsters absentmindedness in regard to care of tools and other implements, toys, etc. Note where you see him lay the kitchen shears, saw, hammer, etc. Check later and if the object is still there give a calm reminder to put it away properly.

8. Short lists of tasks are excellent to help a child remember. A list is impersonal and reduces irritations: the child will gain satisfaction as he checks off tasks completed.

9. Many ADD youngsters seem to “never hear” or to ignore parents’ directions and commands. Often these children do not process multiple requests quickly or accurately. Therefore, it helps if parents first make sure they have the child’s attention before making a request. After they’ve stated their wish in simple, clear, one concept commands, the child should be asked to repeat what was said. Speaking at a slower rate of speed to the child often is helpful too.

10. Since many children with ADD are disorganized, they may sometimes have difficulty relating an event in proper sequence. Family members often need to quietly ask “who, what, where, and when” questions to get the necessary information. Again, a calm, uncritical and non-irritable manner should be the rule.

11. A common characteristic of many ADD children is their difficulty in waiting their turn e.g. in playing a game or when participating in a conversation. Some interruptions when adults are talking may be allowed, for the youngster is impulsive. However, having permitted some infractions of good manners, parents should correct the child sharply if he persists in interrupting; send him from the table or discipline him in a similar fashion if he should continue with this behavior.

12. Do not permit the ADD child to be unduly loud and noisy in a public place. Do something about it quickly, then and there, even if it is embarrassing for all concerned. Saying “Just wait till I get you home” will not help the child and will only make parents feel frustrated.

13. Routings are helpful for all children and seem to be particularly needed by the ADD child: a regular time for meals, homework, TV, getting up and going to bed. Each family member should find the schedule that suits it best.

14. In the majority of instances, parents should not try to tutor their own child. It is helpful to a youngster who has problems in reading to have someone in the family read material aloud for content purposes. But to “teach” a child spelling or reading words, or to drill him on the concepts of mathematics, is usually unsuccessful. More is lost because of the strained relationships which of ten result than is gained in improved skills.

15. Punishment should be:

- a. Designed to fit the child and to vary with the offense. The cardinal rule is to “punish behavior and not the child”
Generally, physical punishment should be avoided because other forms of discipline (short periods of isolation or withholding privileged activities) focus more on the behavior of the child and less on the child’s self-concept.
Realistically, however, some physical punishment is likely, and care should be taken to be sure that it is not too severe or prolonged.
- b. Punishment should follow immediately after the offense so that the association between the undesirable behavior and the punishment which follows such actions will be strengthened.
- c. Punishment should be of a short duration. It must clear the air; the parent should not continue to accuse and grumble, but the child may be allowed to grumble a bit.

16. Help other members of the family recognize and understand the ADD youngsters’ differences. This child can’t help being impulsive, loud, forgetful, clumsy, etc. The siblings’ patience with their brother or sister who has these problems will be of great assistance to him.

17. Parents themselves need to come to terms with their child’s deficits and strengths. The child with ADD has a handicap with which he will often need help for many years. Goals should be those that challenge but do not extend beyond his capabilities. If parents can accept their child’s assets and liabilities, the child can then begin to accept himself.