How to Thrive with ADHD From Kindergarten to College

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ADHD School Tips

To succeed in school, all children need a parental guide to provide instruction and instill discipline and wisdom. If you plan on being someone's guide, you may have realized by now that children with ADHD require even more effort to guide than the average child.

According to a study published in the *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 32.2% of students with ADHD drop out of high school, compared to 15% of students with no disorder.

As a parent of a child with ADHD, you should prepare for a hard yet rewarding journey if you haven't already. This article will help you understand the basics of how to be a guide for a child with ADHD so they can thrive in school, win scholarships, and achieve their dreams.

Problems Children with ADHD Have in Elementary School and Strategies You Can Use to Solve Them

Beginning as early as kindergarten, a child with ADHD can start to have problems. Typically the problems are learning or behavior related. A child might start having a tough time learning compared to the rest of the class. Or the child might begin misbehaving, disrupting their peers.

Usually, these problems are easy to spot by a teacher, who will usually notify you. In any case, when a child with ADHD starts misbehaving or experiencing learning difficulties, it's best to nip the problem in the bud. Otherwise, the problems will persist through high school and even into adulthood, causing lifelong suffering.

First things first, you'll want to meet with your child's teacher. It's best to tell a teacher before the school year starts that your child has ADHD. You want to make sure the teacher understands the unique needs of a child with ADHD. All to often, children with ADHD are left behind or literally "put in the corner" because teachers don't know or don't care that a child has ADHD.

After talking to your child's teacher, it's time to use strategy on the homefront. At home, you want to make sure your child has a routine. You don't need to structure their entire day. However, it would be good to make sure they have a morning and nighttime routine that involves hygiene, eating, and specific activities.

For example, in the morning, you can tell your child to brush their teeth, eat breakfast, and dress for school. At night, it's the same thing, except now they get dressed for bedtime instead of school.

Middle School and High School: When ADHD Becomes a Force

ADHD doesn't have to define your child. And if you took the right steps while they were in elementary school, they should be doing just fine. Yet it's during these years that children often "slip through the cracks," so to speak.

Now that your child is older, they're able to hide things from you. To make matters worse, their teachers, especially if they go to big public schools for middle and high school, will not care as much about them as their elementary school teachers did.

At this stage, it's mostly up to you to make sure your child stays in their school books and out of trouble. You can be a deciding factor in whether your child uses their ADHD for good or evil.

You can do this by:

- Helping your child create to-do lists
- Continuing or re-establishing a home routine
- Getting your child to join a sports team
- Closely monitor your child's grades

To-do lists are great for the homework assignments your child will have to do. A sports team is excellent for instilling discipline and getting essential exercise.

College/University: The Secret ADHD Training Ground for the Transition to Adulthood

Even if your child has been doing good all the way through high school, they can still flunk out of college. If your child wants to go to college, it's important to consider whether the institution offers assistance programs for those with ADHD.

College is great for someone with ADHD because it is the perfect training ground for their transition to adulthood. It has far fewer safety nets and support systems than home sweet home.

It's almost like going from the shallow end of a pool to the deep end of that same pool before going to the ocean. So if your child can survive four years of college, they probably will be able to thrive as independent adults too.

Problems unique to college/university students with ADHD include:

- If they were using to-do lists, they stop using them
- Inability to study for long periods of time
- If they were taking medications, they stop taking them
- Being afraid of appearing different from their peers
- Sharing or even selling their prescription medication

Right off the bat, one of the best ways to prevent any of the above problems is to make sure your child takes advantage of accommodations the college is willing to provide, if any. These accommodations can include setting up an academic plan, tutoring, coaching, counseling, therapy, and extra time on tests.

If your child's college is not willing to provide any accommodations, your best option is to hire an ADHD coach for them or have them transfer to a college willing to provide accommodations. ADHD is becoming more recognized, so most colleges now provide accommodations.

It might be better for your child to transfer to another institution if you can't get them accommodations or an ADHD coach. Another option is for your child to come back home and attend community college for two years before going off to a four-year institution.

As for any problems with medication, make sure your child knows how to take medication properly. Otherwise, they may try to use their ADHD medication to study all night, which can cause heart problems.

Finally, let your child know in advance that many college students try to buy ADHD meds illegally because they believe it will help them study better. Sadly, the use of ADHD meds as a "study booster" has been proven to be a myth, but many still believe it anyway. In reality, only people with ADHD benefit from ADHD medication.

Good luck, and don’t ever let your child use ADHD as an excuse! Quitters never win, and winners never quit, regardless of ADHD.