Helping Your Child Succeed in School With ADHD

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Teaching Children With ADHD

If you are the parent of a child with ADHD, you understand better than anyone the difficulties your child may have staying on track with day-to-day activities and his/her emotions and behavior. These difficulties can make the traditional school setting very difficult. So how can you help your child succeed academically?

Stay Involved

If you have any choice, it's ideal if your child's teacher has experience teaching children with ADHD. Ask your child's teacher for weekly updates via email and regular meetings in person. Explain how important this feedback is for you and also for your child's doctor, who may adjust treatments based on this feedback.

Ask the teacher about their approach to helping children learn new skills, and see if there are any techniques you could use at home. It is important that your child hears the same directions from both of you, to avoid confusion and frustration.

Be persistent if you notice unresolved or partially resolved issues. Look for solutions and if necessary, involve other people,such as a school counselor, psychologist or child advocate.

Another avenue to consider is that if your child's ADHD is significantly interfering with their ability to learn at school, he or she may be eligible for special accommodations in school, or special education services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act guarantees the right to a free and appropriate education for children with disabilities, and children with ADHD may be covered by this law if their symptoms have a significant, negative impact on their educational performance.

Rules and Routines

Clear rules and routines can help children with ADHD decrease their level of anxiety and hyperactivity, allowing them to focus better on tasks at hand, including study and homework. And by building up a successful track record, following rules can also boost confidence.

Rules should be simple and easy to follow, for example, “Do not play when studying.”

Routines are often easily implemented. For instance, the child should know that at a specific time and for a specific period of time he will have to study. Plan homework, meals and other regular activities at the same time every day, and mark them down in a calendar.

Provide Support

Children with ADHD are often easily distracted and have trouble planning and organizing their obligatory

activities. As a parent you will need to take additional time and effort to provide support to help them with this. If they have a long-term project for school, for instance, you could break it down into smaller and more manageable pieces.

Avoid Distractions

The study room should be neat and organized. Turn off the TV and remove all other distractions. If you have any pets, do not allow them in the room while your child is studying. Ask your child to perform one task or activity at a time, and avoid multitasking.

Memory is also enhanced when children follow by example. After reading to your child, ask them to read it back to you and explain what they just read. This is a common technique used by teachers in schools.

Give Positive Feedback

When your child completes a task make sure to praise them and tell them how proud you are of their achievements. Positive feedback will boost their confidence levels, and will encourage your child to repeat that task. Other rewards such as a new toy or game can also be considered.

Above all, children – with or without ADHD – have to have fun and to be around people who listen to them and care for them. Focus on the positives of ADHD like creativity and energy, and create an interesting, fun, enjoyable environment at home. Ask your child to talk to you and tell you what they feel, and let them know how much you care for them.