Helping Children With ADHD to Thrive

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Learning to grow together

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Introduction

A high energy level and short attention span doesn't necessarily imply that your child has ADHD. There could be other reasons why your kid may have issues concentrating in school or at home. However, some children usually struggle more than their peers to pay attention and this has caused issues for them on a daily basis. If your child finds it hard to focus long enough to get work done or often tends to bounce off the walls, then it's a wise decision to be concerned about the possibility of your child having the symptoms of ADHD.

Undoubtedly, most parents are good; however, "good" may not be sufficient if your child has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). As a parent, if you genuinely desire for your child to be happy; if you truly want to create a tranquil home environment which will ensure that your child is happy and well-adjusted now, as well as in the future, then you don't need to be just a "good" parent – you need to be an extraordinary parent to a child with ADHD.

Interestingly, you don't have to despair because moving from good to extraordinary ADHD parenting is probably easier than you might imagine. What you actually need is to make certain adjustments to how you interact with your child, how you react to their behaviour and your overall parenting strategies. Before you can become an extraordinary parent of a child with ADHD, it's crucial that you fully understand how your child's ADHD symptoms can affect your entire family.

Understand that kids with ADHD often exhibit several behaviours that can significantly disrupt normal family life. For instance, they may not "hear" parental instructions, so they won't also adhere to them. They are easily distracted, disorganised and usually keep other members of the family waiting. They can forget to finish a project they started – let alone cleaning up after their projects.

As a result of these and several other behaviours, kids with ADHD face lots of challenges and the demands of monitoring them can be mentally and physically exhausting. So, it's crucial that

you master a combination of compassion and consistency to meet the challenges of raising your child with ADHD.

This content is focused mainly on providing every parent of a child with ADHD, simple lifestyle changes as well as tips and ideas to help make life better for their children, and their entire family. By learning these strategies and ideas, you will also increase the self-esteem of your child since he/she would be able to handle some of the challenges of life with as much support from their family, friends and even teachers in school.

Chapter One

ADHD & Your Child

It's often normal for children to occasionally daydream during class, forget their homework, get fidgety at the dinner table or act without even thinking. However, inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity are all signs of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It could also be regarded as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), or Predominantly Inattentive Type ADHD, if the inattentive symptoms are more prominent than hyperactive symptoms.

ADHD is a common neurodevelopmental disorder which often manifests in early childhood – usually before children get to the age of seven. It's actually one of the most common childhood disorders, which can also affect adults, though the symptoms begin in childhood. It makes it quite difficult for children to inhibit their spontaneous responses (responses that often involve speech, attentiveness and movement).

It's not always hard to identify kids who are unable to sit still, find it difficult to listen and are unable to adhere to instructions even when they are clearly presented. They usually blurt out inappropriate comments at odd times and are mostly criticised for being undisciplined, lazy and troublemakers. Well, the truth is that they are not just acting out; they may have ADHD.

The symptoms of ADHD have been identified in kids who are as young as five years old and typically, they start before twelve. It's often more common among boys than girls with varying degree of intensity; it could be severe, moderate or mild. The condition often manifests very differently depending on the individual.

Understanding what ADHD Looks Like

Generally, what comes to mind when people think of attention deficit disorder are out-of-control kids in constant motion who are always disrupting everyone around them. But it's not always like that in every situation. While some children with ADHD may be hyperactive, others also sit quietly – but their attention may be miles away. Also, some focus mainly on a task and may find it difficult to shift their attention elsewhere.

There are also those who may be mildly inattentive but generally impulsive. What determines the signs and symptoms that a child with ADHD has are the predominant characteristics. So, kids with ADHD may be:

- ✓ Hyperactive and impulsive, but can still pay attention (Predominantly Hyperactive ADHD)
- ✓ Inattentive, but not impulsive or hyperactive (Predominantly Inattentive ADHD)
- ✓ Inattentive, impulsive, hyperactive (Combined ADHD)

In most cases, people tend to overlook children with inattentive symptoms of ADHD because they are not always disruptive. But the symptoms of inattention also have various consequences – always having issues with teachers and parents for failing to adhere to directions, clashing with other children for failing to play by the rules or underperforming in school.

Understanding what ADHD Looks Like

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Positive Effects of ADHD in Children

While it's often challenging for children to live with ADHD, the disorder has nothing to do with talent or intelligence. So, children with ADHD can be equally as talented as other children. In addition, kids with ADHD usually display other positive traits which can serve as some form of comfort for parents.

- ✓ **Flexibility:** Since children with ADHD usually consider several options at once, they are not always set on one alternative early on and they are also more open to several ideas.
- ✓ **Creativity:** Kids with ADHD can actually be highly creative and imaginative. A child that daydreams and has about ten thoughts all at the same time can become a fountain of ideas, an inventive artist or even a master problem-solver. Although they can easily be distracted, they often also have the ability to notice the things that other people around have failed to see.
- ✓ **Enthusiasm and Spontaneity:** It's quite rare to experience a boring moment when you're with a child with ADHD. They are usually interested in several things and possess lively personalities. If they aren't exasperating you (sometimes even when they are), they're so much fun to be with.
- ✓ **Lots of Energy and Drive:** Whenever children with ADHD are motivated, they usually work or play hard and strive to succeed. Interestingly, it may even be hard to distract them from any task they find interesting, especially tasks that are hands-on or interactive.

Positive Effects of ADHD in Children

Flexibility

Creativity

Enthusiasm and Spontaneity

Lots of Energy and Drive

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The first step you need to take when evaluating and treating possible ADHD is to visit a medical professional. They may decide to also refer you to a clinician who specialises in such cases, typically a Consultant Psychiatrist, to carry out full assessment.

Presently, there isn't a cure for ADHD, however, the focus of this book is to help you with various ways to manage the symptoms using the right support team and treatment. The treatment of the symptoms may involve the use of certain safe medications to reduce the symptoms and cognitive behavioural therapy, which helps to provide information on coping and adjustment skills. Successful management may also importantly involve liaising with school to help with some accommodations and an individual educational plan (IEP) for your child.

Parents can make a significant impact on their child's life as well as self-esteem by providing early management of the symptoms. You need to understand that with the combination of medication and self-management techniques covered in this book, you can teach your child how to cultivate the life skills that is required to foster a positive self-image, build healthy relationships and thrive in school. This will in turn serve your child well into adulthood.

Chapter Two

How ADHD Symptoms Affects Children in School

In this section, we shall take a look at the impact of ADHD on school performance. Bear in mind that symptoms may differ; every single kid with ADHD is unique and may not necessarily experience all these challenges.

1. **Language Deficits**

Such challenges include slow processing of information. So, children with ADHD may find it hard to read, write, will respond slowly, and may also recall facts slowly. Among the three language-processing problems which are common among kids with ADHD include:

- ✓ **Written language -** They may be slow in reading and writing and this causes them to spend more time in completing their work. They tend to produce less written work and find it hard to organize essays. They may also find it hard to transfer their ideas from their head onto paper. The answers of their written test or essay may be brief and this also applies to their responses to discussion questions.
- ✓ **Listening and reading comprehension -** Children with ADHD may become confused with lengthy verbal directions. They may find it hard to take notes and may not pick out homework assignments from their teacher's lecture. Also, they may find it hard to recall what they read and will need to reread their material.
- ✓ **Spoken language (oral expression) -** They may talk less when responding to questions especially when they are expected to think, give concise and organised answers. Sometimes, they may completely avoid responding to questions in class or provide rambling answers.

2. **Inattention and Poor Concentration**

Actually, inattention in children with ADHD doesn't imply that they can't pay attention. They don't have any issues in focusing and staying on a task or a topic that they enjoy or are interested in. However, they quickly tune out when the task is repetitive or boring. Another common issue is staying on track; they find it difficult to focus on a task; so, they bounce from one task to the other without completing any one. In some cases, they skip procedures and for them to stay focused, then they need a calm and quiet environment. Other things that children with ADHD may experience include:

- ✓ They may find it hard to listen in class.
- ✓ It's possible for them to daydream and end up missing lecture content or homework.
- ✓ They may fail to pay attention to detail and end up making careless mistakes in work.
- ✓ Also, because of their inattention, they may fail to notice errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, capitalization as well as changes in signs (+-) in mathematics.
- ✓ They find it hard to stay on task and complete school work. In fact, some kids may move from one uncompleted task to another.
- ✓ Children with ADHD may lack the awareness of time and grades; they may not even be aware that they are passing or failing in class.

3. **Hyperactivity Signs and Symptoms of ADHD**

It's crucial to know that hyperactivity is the most obvious sign of ADHD. Although children are naturally active, children with hyperactive symptoms of ADHD are always moving. Also, they may attempt to do many things at the same time; bouncing around from one task or activity to the other. Even when you compel them to sit still (which is often hard for them), you may find out that they may be tapping their foot, drumming with their fingers or shaking their legs. Among the symptoms of hyperactivity in children include:

- ✓ Talking excessively
- ✓ Having difficulty sitting still, relaxing or playing quietly

- ✓ They may have a quick temper
- ✓ Moving around constantly and always running or climbing inappropriately

4. Impulsive Signs and Symptoms of ADHD

The impulsivity of children with ADHD can result in problems with self-control. The reason is that they typically censor and inhibit themselves less than the way other children do. You may often find them interrupting conversations, asking irrelevant questions in class, invading other people's space asking overly personal questions and making tactless observations.

For children with ADHD, adhering to instructions such as "just wait for a while," and "be patient" is usually much more difficult than for other children. Sometimes, kids with impulsive signs and symptoms of ADHD appear to be moody and can also overreact emotionally. This may cause other people to see them as sensitive, needy and disrespectful. Other symptoms of impulsivity in children include:

- ✓ Intruding on other people's games or conversations.
- ✓ Acting without thinking.
- ✓ Having the inability to control powerful emotions which leads to angry outbursts or temper tantrums.
- ✓ Rather than taking time to solve problems, they either guess or blurt out answers in class without even waiting to be called on or listening to the entire question.
- ✓ Interrupting other people and saying the wrong thing at the wrong time.

The Effect of ADHD on Sleep

While focusing on how attention deficit hyperactivity disorder can affect your child's activities during the day, it's sometimes easy to forget its impact at night. But, how does the symptoms of ADHD affect your child's sleep? Presently, researchers are still examining the links between ADHD and sleep. Although they haven't fully understood the causes of sleep issues in children with ADHD, they already have some understanding of the relationship between ADHD and poor sleep.

Generally, it's common for children and even adults with ADHD to have issues falling asleep, staying asleep and also waking up in the morning. You may be noting the following things if your child with ADHD is having sleep issues:

- ✓ Your child may find it difficult to settle down at night.
- ✓ All through the night, your child may be restless and this can either disrupt sleep or awaken your child.
- ✓ Even after your child goes to bed, he/she may find it hard to stop thinking about things while attempting to sleep.

There are certain tendencies among children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder which can prevent them from having a good night sleep such as:

- ✓ They may have issues with self-regulation and this prevents them from shifting from their active mode to a wind-down mode in preparation to sleep at the end of the day.
- ✓ Children with ADHD also tend to put off some of their tasks like their homework until the last minute. Consequently, this leads to a more hectic evening at home which affects sleeping time.
- ✓ Many children with ADHD have anxiety issues and such anxious feelings usually emerge at night when there are fewer activities to distract them. Consequently, this makes it challenging for them to fall asleep or stay asleep.
- ✓ Children with ADHD are usually more prone to bedwetting, sleep disorders like restless leg syndrome and nightmares.

- ✓ Teens with ADHD may actually notice that they feel more productive during night time hours that are often quiet. They can easily slip into the habit of frequently staying up late.

These are some of the night-time challenges that usually create issues during the day and can result in sleepiness in the morning and also difficulties in getting started and being alert during the day. This in turn leads to irritability and more inattentiveness. It's a cycle that's difficult to break, however, there are some tips to help you stop it and even prevent it from happening in the first place. Some of the tips include:

- ✓ **Start by observing your child's sleep schedule and routines -** The starting point is to observe your child; does your child have problems settling into sleep at night and look tired during the day? Take note of your child's pattern of getting to sleep, sleeping and awakening patterns.
- ✓ **Create bedtime routines for your child -** You need to start the process early in the evening. Creating a bedtime routine can take some time, however, it's crucial that you establish one because it will give your child a healthy sleep cycle.
- ✓ Ensure that your child is exposed to natural daylight and daytime noises just to establish regular cues.
- ✓ **No caffeine in the evening -** Your child should not take anything caffeine and this includes foods which contain caffeine like chocolate.
- ✓ **Maintain a consistent bedtime routine -** Once you've established a bedtime routine for your child, ensure that the routine follows a particular order every night. A good example would be taking a shower, putting on the pyjamas, selecting the clothes to wear, packing a backpack for the next day and reading a book before sleeping.
- ✓ **Consider providing a white noise creator/generator for your child -** For some kids that are affected by sounds in the neighbourhood or at home, using a white noise creator or frequency generator is extremely helpful. There are various good apps and devices readily available which provide this quieter and calmer atmosphere.

- ✓ **Limit stimulating activities before bedtime -** It's crucial to limit your child's stimulating activities before bedtime, especially screen time. Part of the limits you should set include limits on how late your kid is allowed to use the laptop, tablet or smartphone. This rule should be applied to all your children to prevent your child with ADHD from feeling like they are being unfairly treated. While limiting stimulating activities, you can replace them with calming activities such as listening to soft music, and reading. Make sure that your home is quiet when bedtime approaches.
- ✓ **Spend some quality time -** (at least ten minutes) cuddling with your kid to create a sense of love and safety while helping them to calm down.
- ✓ **Assist your child to plan and prioritize homework -** Ensure that your child takes care of the most important tasks first. Help your child with organisational strategies by making use of a checklist for studying and homework. This can help your child stay on top of his work. This will in turn help your child finish her/his homework before bedtime. We shall look at various ways to help your child with school work in another section.
- ✓ **Deal with chronic anxiety -** You can ask your child whether she/he is worrying about things especially when they struggle to sleep and stay asleep. It's possible that your child may be thinking about the things that either happened during the day or the things that might happen at home or school. It’s possible for you to help your child deal with worries if you can encourage your child to describe her worries. It may be advisable to see your doctor, a child psychologist or a counsellor, if these problems persist.

Good sleep is crucial for all kids, however, when they're already having attention issues, then their challenges get compounded because of lack of sleep. So, you need to observe your children and note how they function during the day as well as how they sleep at night.

ADHD Sleep Diary

Keep a record of your child's sleep partern each night with this simple Sleep diary below. Most of the questions in the table can be answered before and during bedtime. You'll know the answers to the remaining question next thing in the morning. Complete the sleep diary every evening and morning. It will only take a couple of minutes.

Child's Name:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Summary
What time did you and your child started your bedtime routine?								
What time did he/she go to bed?								
What time did he/she sleep?								
What time did he/she wake up the next day?								
How many hours of sleep did he/she have?								
What things did they do before they have gone to bed? Read? Watch television? Toys or video games? Homework?								
Did he/she wake up during the night?								
Did bedtime go well as planned? (Yes or No)								
In a scale of 1 - 10, how energetic is your child the next day? (10 = Full of energy, 1 = No energy)								
How did you successfully get them to sleep?								
What kept them from getting to sleep?								

Chapter Three

Parenting Strategies, Tips & Ideas for Children with ADHD

The way a child with ADHD is raised can differ significantly from traditional childrearing. Most of the normal rule-making as well as household routines may turn out to be impossible – this depends on the severity and type of your child's symptoms. This explains why you need to make use of different approaches. While it may be quite frustrating to cope with some of the behaviours of a child because of the symptoms of ADHD, you don't have to despair.

There are various tips, strategies and ideas that can help make life easier for you and your child. First, as a parent having a child with ADHD, you need to accept the fact that kids with ADHD possess a brain that's functionally different from that of other children.

Children with ADHD can definitely understand the actions that are acceptable and those that are not, but their disorder often causes them to be more prone to impulsive behaviour. So, if truly you want to enhance the development of your child with ADHD, then you will optimally need to make changes to your own behaviour and as much as possible, in order to learn to manage your child's behaviour.

The first step in your child's treatment may likely be psychological and parenting techniques. The focus of this section is to provide you with strategies, tips and ideas to help you manage the symptoms of ADHD in your child. This will usually help to drastically reduce their symptoms and also assist your child in overcoming self-doubt and building good solid self-esteem.

The Principles of Behaviour Management Therapy

Basically, behaviour management therapy comprises two principles. One of such principles is positive reinforcement (encouraging and rewarding good behaviour). The other one is to withdraw the rewards by following inappropriate behaviour with the right consequences – this leads to the elimination of bad behaviour.

You need to teach your child to know that all actions have consequences and one way to do that is by setting rules and straightforward outcomes for adhering to the rules. You should ensure that these principles are followed in all aspects of a child's life – in the classroom, the social arena and at home. Consistency is the key to this strategy.

Be Clear on Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

The purpose of behavioural modification is to enable your child to consider the consequences of their actions and learn to control the impulse to act on it. However, this requires patience, energy, strength, affection and empathy on the part of parents. As a parent having a child with ADHD, you need to first be clear on which behaviours you will and won't tolerate. It's very important that you stick to these guidelines once you've made them.

For instance, punishing some behaviours of your child one day and then allowing such behaviours at other times can be very confusing to a developing child. You must ensure consistency in following up acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. You can set behaviour boundaries such as; the refusal to get up in the morning, unwillingness to turn off the TV when asked to do so or physical outbursts should always be unacceptable – all the time.

It may be difficult for your child to internalise and enact your guidelines. So, you need to make the rules clear and simple for them and always reward your child for following the rules. You can achieve this by using a points system. For instance, you can give your child some points for good behaviours, which can be converted to rewards like a new game, toy or pocket money. Go ahead and write down your house rules and place them where your child can easily see them.

Your child will find it easier to understand your rules through repetitive and positive reinforcement.

Avoid Allowing Your Child to Take Control

Always bear in mind that you are the parent here and ultimately, you are the one to establish rules for acceptable behaviour in your house. You need to be patient and nurturing and shouldn't allow yourself to be bullied or intimidated by the behaviours of your child.

You shouldn't be overwhelmed! Don't forget that the behaviour of your child is probably as a result of their ADHD. Although on the outside, ADHD may not be visible, it still remains a challenging condition and needs to be treated as such. Always remember that your child can't "snap out of it" or just be normal when you start to feel frustrated or angry.

Some Communication Strategies for Parents of Kids with ADHD

One of the essential aspects of taking care of a child with ADHD is communication, especially those that have sensory challenges. The tips below can enhance the communication of parents with their children.

- ✓ **Observe when your kid is hearing and paying attention to you -** For most people, making eye contact is a sign that they are being heard, but the mind of a child with ADHD is operating at a fast pace. So, it may not be possible for them to make eye contact with you but that doesn't imply that they are not listening. In fact, children with ADHD may be fidgeting with objects while paying attention, so as a parent, you need to pay attention to your child's cues.
- ✓ **Provide short and simple directions for your child -** It's easy for kids to be overwhelmed while learning, so you need to provide step-by-step instructions for them whenever you're teaching them. You don't have to lay out all the steps at once; just provide one or two simple steps before moving on to the next step.
- ✓ **Establish communication strategies -** When communicating with your child, you need to come up with creative ways to do that. For instance, you can make use of visual or audio cues to help indicate the things you want your child to do. When it's bedtime, you can show your child a picture of a bed or provide your child with a stuffed animal which comforts them to sleep with, or you can play some lullabies that they like or you can read to be them a passage from a favourite book.
- ✓ **Make use of visual aids -** Generally, kids with ADHD often respond to visual aids, so rather than merely informing your child that it's bedtime, you can get creative. Create a poster that has a series of pictures which demonstrates the steps.
- ✓ **Be soft and calm when Talking -** As earlier mentioned, you don't need to be under pressure; you might actually stimulate your child when you become agitated. Unfortunately, this is the opposite of what you want to accomplish especially if your child is already upset. You need to speak quietly to your child and as much as possible, stay calm even when they are throwing tantrums. Step away from the flying objects and

engage in a quiet activity that your child may find interesting. Your calm state will definitely influence your child.

Communication Strategies for Parents of Kids with ADHD

Observe when your kid is hearing and paying attention to you.

Provide short and simple directions for your child.

Establish communication strategies.

Make use of visual aids.

Be soft and calm when talking.

One of the essential aspects of taking care of a child with ADHD is communication, especially those that have sensory challenges. The tips below can enhance the communication of parents with their children.

Great Parenting Tips and Strategies for Coping with ADHD

The tips and ideas below can significantly increase your success rate when it comes to caring for a child with ADHD.

1. Make Room for Flexibility

While defining the rules at home, it's crucial that you consistently discourage destructive behaviours and reward the good ones. However, you don't have to be too strict with your child. Always bear in mind that children with ADHD may find it harder to adapt to change like other children. One of the traits you need is patience; you have to learn to allow your child to make mistakes while learning. Certain symptom driven behaviours of your child that are not in any way detrimental to anyone or your child can be accepted as part of your child's personality. Discouraging your child's quirky behaviours simply because you feel they are unusual can be harmful to their fragile developing self-esteem.

2. Learn to Handle Aggression

One of the most common problems that children with ADHD have is aggressive outbursts. One effective way to calm both yourself and your overactive child is by using the "Time-out" approach. In case your child acts out in public, then you need to immediately remove your child in a calm and decisive manner. Your child also needs to understand what "time-out" means.

You should make your child understand that it's a time to cool off and ponder on the negative behaviours displayed. However, you also have to ignore mildly disruptive behaviours so that they can serve as a way for your child to release some pent-up energy. But all abusive, intentionally disruptive and destructive behaviours that are against the rules you already established should have direct, negative consequences for your child.

3. Establish Structure

Create a routine for your child and make sure you stick to it on a daily basis. You can create rituals around playtime, bedtime, homework and meals. In addition, you can provide essential

structure for your child by creating simple daily tasks that can easily be completed. These can be recorded on a simple activity planner and ticked off when completed, or reviewed and the reasons explored if not completed. If necessary, the task can be rescheduled. No one is perfect!

Consider placing clocks in various locations and have a big one in your child's bedroom. Also allow enough time for the things your child needs to do such as getting set in the morning or homework. Make use of a timer for homework as well as transitional times like getting set for bed, and finishing up play.

4. Make the Tasks Interesting

Interestingly, children with ADHD are likely to be less distracted when doing a complex task. However, when they engage in a task that's not so challenging, that's when they often get distracted. Well, the opposite of distractibility is hyperfocus – a situation where children are so focused to the point of not being aware of other things happening in their surroundings. Although hyperfocus can enable a child to complete crucial tasks, it's often challenging for them as well. For instance, many jobs and hobbies require a high degree of focus. So, if you discover that your child enjoys challenging activities and is capable of focusing while engaging in such tasks, then it's worth encouraging them to continue. Hyper focus, when appropriately and constructively employed, can be seen as a strength of ADHD symptomatology.

5. Encourage Exercise

Generally, physical activities help us to burn excess energy in healthy ways. This makes exercise even more beneficial for your child with ADHD who is full of energy. Also, exercise helps children to focus their attention on specific movements which may in turn lower impulsivity. Another benefit of exercise is that it can help to decrease the risk of depression and anxiety, improves concentration, sleep patterns, and also stimulates the brain healthily. Did you know that many professional athletes have ADHD?

As a parent, you can encourage physical activity by teaching your child to ride a bike, providing active toys like skipping ropes, balls or enrolling your child in a regular team sport. It is easier

for children to develop physically active habits if their parents or guardians are encouraging and even role models in this area. Parents can help children with ADHD to expend excess energy and even cultivate healthy habits by taking them on family hikes, outdoor activities.

6. Breakdown their Tasks

Some tasks can feel quite complex and off-putting for some people with ADHD. You can help them in handling complex tasks by breaking down their tasks into achievable goals. Apart from simplifying the picture, breaking down tasks can also help to regulate the emotions associated with failing and succeeding in a task. For instance, if you ask your child to clean up their room, breaking down the task into smaller ones like putting the toys back into storage, making their bed and several other steps can be make the task manageable and not over-whelming.

7. As much as Possible Explain Instead of Commanding

Caregivers or parents should provide reasons for the requests they are making especially where it's age appropriate for their child. As much as you can, learn to keep it simple and be ready to be asked to elaborate. When you explain the reason why you want your child with ADHD to perform a task, it will help to alleviate confusion and worry in your child.

In addition, when you explain why you want your child to perform a task, it's a sign of respect and helping to build a healthy sense of self-respect is especially important if your child feels different to others. Try to use a clear language and be positive when explaining things to them.

8. Don't use Negative Language

You can significantly build your child's confidence through positive feedback. Sometimes, children with ADHD may feel that they are always doing something wrong or even disliked. When you also reinforce this by using negative language, it can actually be hurtful. This may even aggravate the disruptive behaviours.

Since it's almost impossible to be positive all the time, parents need to seek an outlet to express their worries and concerns. This might mean talking to a therapist, a partner or friend. Also,

there are several online and perhaps local parent support groups where parents with ADHD children discuss and share their challenges with other parents experiencing similar challenges. Parent support groups can provide enormous support, wisdom and perspective for your family situation.

9. Never Allow ADHD to be in Charge

Although you need to make some allowances, always bear in mind that ADHD isn't an excuse for poor behaviour. Parents as well as children need boundaries and it's even vital for your child to learn that there will certainly be consequences for their inappropriate actions. Make sure that these consequences are appropriate and consistent. Parents may unconsciously encourage unruly behaviour in their child when they fail to follow through on consequences.

10. Parents Should Try to not be Overwhelmed

As much as possible, try not to be overwhelmed. When parents become highly stressed, it affects their wellbeing and, in most cases, it's less effective in supporting their children with ADHD. You can ask for support when you discover that your workload and obligations are becoming overwhelming. You can get support from friends, local ADHD groups, and even family members. Taking off just one task from your weekly activities can significantly reduce stress.

11. Make use of Wait Time

Wait time shares some similarities with thinking out loud. By introducing wait time, you will help your child to cultivate the habit of waiting for a few seconds before acting or speaking anytime they have a thought. This short time will help them consider whether their actions are appropriate or not. Although this will require a lot of practice, just know that it's worth it and can significantly benefit their social life.

12. Minimize Distractions

Is your child easily distracted? Well, keeping your home uncluttered is one simple way to reduce distractions. Also, depending on the preferences of your child, you can consider turning

down or off the television or removing other electronic devices and toys. Getting your child to work on tasks without the lure of games or TV is crucial; put them away whenever they are performing a task or doing their homework in their bedroom.

13. Create Structure for your Child

Establish a routine for your child and make sure you stick to it daily. This could be established rituals around bedtime, meals, homework and also playtime. Parents can easily provide essential structure by encouraging simple daily tasks like having their children lay out their clothes for the next day.

Create a quiet and special space for your child to do homework, read and spend some time away from the daily chaos of life. As earlier mentioned, endeavour to declutter your home and make it neat and organized. This helps your child to know where everything is supposed to be and eliminates distractions.

14. Believe in Your Child

It's most unlikely that your child doesn't understand and often feel the level of stress that their condition can cause. So, you need to be positive and encouraging; as much as possible, praise your child's good behaviour to help them know when they did something right. So, have confidence in your child. Remain very positive about their future and don't forget that children with ADHD have many positive qualities and strengths that also make them exceptional.

15. Take Breaks

It's practically impossible to be supportive 100 percent of the time. So, you may become frustrated or overwhelmed with your child and even yourself. Apart from asking for help which we earlier mentioned, you can also consider taking breaks. It's essential for parents to schedule alone time to release some of the pressure. Go to the gym, go for a walk or taking a relaxing bath.

If you want to hire a babysitter, then make sure you explain all the rules and structures you've already put in place to ensure consistency. It's almost impossible for you to help your impulsive child when you're even aggravated and children easily mirror the behaviours, they notice around them. So, it's crucial that parents stay composed and controlled even in cases of an outburst because it will also help their children to do the same. Before responding, take some time to breathe, relax and then collect your thoughts before you try to pacify your child. Always bear in mind that the calmer you are, the calmer your child will become.

16. Helping your Child to Eat Right

Although diet isn't a direct cause of attention deficit disorder, the kind of food your child eats can and does affect the mental state of your child. This will in turn affect their behaviour, which explains why parents need to monitor what, when, and how much food their children with ADHD eat since it can significantly decrease the symptoms of ADHD.

Generally, all kids benefit from fresh foods as well as regular meal times. They all need to stay away from junk foods and this is very essential for children with ADHD whose distractedness and impulsiveness can cause them to miss meals, overeat and eat in a disorderly manner.

So, parents should:

- ✓ Have regular structured meal times with fresh ingredients.
- ✓ Provide their children with ADHD a daily vitamin as well as mineral supplement.
- ✓ Eliminate junk, fatty and sugary foods as much as possible.

17. Improving Social Skills of your Child with ADHD

Remember, kids with ADHD may find it hard to engage in social interactions; they may talk too much, come off as aggressive or "too intense," find it hard to read social cues and may interrupt frequently. As a result of this relative emotional immaturity, they may stand out among kids their age and will potentially become targets for unfriendly teasing.

It's often difficult for kids with ADHD to learn social skills as well as social rules. However, parents can help their children become better listeners who can read people's faces, body languages and smoothly interact in groups by adopting these tips below:

- ✓ You should ensure that the playmates you choose for your child, when possible, are those with similar language and skills.
- ✓ Gently and honestly speak to your child regarding their challenges and ways to make positive changes.
- ✓ At first, only invite one or two friends at a time. Observe them as they play and put in place a zero-tolerance policy for yelling, pushing and hitting.
- ✓ Try to role-play several social scenarios with your kid; try making it fun by trading roles frequently.
- ✓ Create time as well as space for your kid to play and always reward your child for good play behaviours like taking turns, kindness and patience.

Great Parenting Tips and Strategies for Coping with ADHD

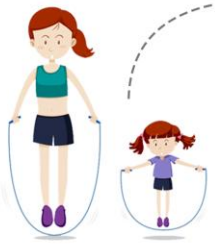
The tips and ideas below can significantly increase your success rate when it comes to caring for a child with ADHD.

1. Make Room For Flexibility

2. Learn to Handle Aggression

3. Establish Structure

4. Make the Tasks Interesting



5. Encourage Exercise

6. Breakdown Their Tasks

7. As much as Possible Explain Instead of Commanding

8. Don't use Negative Language

9. Never Allow ADHD to be in Charge

10. Parents Should Try to not be Overwhelmed

11. Make use of Wait Time

12. Minimize Distractions

13. Create Structure for your Child

14. Believe in Your Child

15. Take Breaks

16. Helping your Child to Eat Right

17. Improve Social Skills of your Child with ADHD

Learn more about **ADHD**: connect@adhdcentre.co.uk / www.adhdcentre.co.uk

Things Parents should Avoid when Dealing with an ADHD Child

While focusing on the things you need to do to help your child with ADHD, there are some things parents need to avoid to get the best results.

Setting Unrealistic Expectations

You have to be willing to make some compromises with your child. For instance, if your child successfully accomplishes two out of three chores which you earlier assigned, then consider being flexible with the uncompleted task. Understand that this is a learning process and even the smallest steps are vital.

Avoid Allowing Your Child to Take Control

Always bear in mind that you are the parent here and ultimately, you are the one to establish rules for acceptable behaviour in your house. You need to be patient and nurturing and shouldn't allow yourself to be bullied or intimidated by the behaviours of your child.

You shouldn't be overwhelmed! Don't forget that the behaviour of your child is probably as a result of their ADHD. Although on the outside, ADHD may not be visible, it still remains a challenging condition and needs to be treated as such. Always remember that your child can't "snap out of it" or just be normal when you start to feel frustrated or angry.

Chapter Four

Study Tips and Techniques for Children with ADHD

Undoubtedly, children will at some point experience challenges with their homework. However, for kids with ADHD, such issues often exceed just a few assignments. As earlier mentioned, children with ADHD, have issues with patience, organizing and focusing. Such issues usually make it difficult for students to perform optimally both inside and outside the classroom. Kids with ADHD usually rush through their homework; they can be quite hasty and this typically results in lots of mistakes.

They may even lose their homework and find it difficult to organize their thoughts and tasks which prevents them from planning ahead. Well, you don't have to despair; the challenges that your child may be experiencing right now in their studies can be overcome by leveraging practiced habits as well as appropriate study skills for students with ADHD. In this chapter, we shall be going through some homework tips which will help your child to focus properly and achieve success in school.

1. **Start by Creating a Homework-Only Space**

The starting point is to establish a homework-only space for your child because kids with ADHD can easily get distracted by their surroundings. Search for the ideal location in your home where your child can study with fewer distractions. This location can serve as a quiet study space away from noise and movement; a place where children can easily clear their minds and focus on their studies.

2. **Establish a Consistent Schedule/Structure**

This point can never be overemphasised; children with ADHD needs to have a consistent routine. It ensures that they start their homework and remain focused. So, parents need to establish a time each day for their children to sit down and read or finish their homework.

Actually, it's an excellent habit to encourage your child to focus on homework shortly after your child gets home from school. Also, don't forget to provide your child with a drink to refresh and a healthy snack to re-energize. For some kids, a little exercise and outside play works best for them and once you discover that your child requires time to expend extra energy and refocus, then all you have to do is to structure it right in just before commencing homework.

While some children do better in quiet places, others will need a little background music to help them concentrate. Ensure that your kid's homework routine is stress-free and highly predictable. Once homework is completed, ensure that completed homework is safely placed in the homework folder, by your child, and that they return all appropriate items to their bag.

3. **Study in Spurts**

It's important for kids with ADHD to take breaks because ADHD can make it quite difficult to focus. One strategy that can help is to study in short spurts, so provide your child with regular breaks from homework and make room for a snack or a walk. This will help refresh and reset your child's mind. In addition, it will offer your child the chance to expend extra energy and enhance his/her concentration once they return.

4. **Get Organized**

Create checklists, schedules for homework and assignments – organize school supplies. You need to help your child prepare for school the next day and ensure that all your child's homework has been completed. You can even go the extra mile by making organization fun for your child. You can do this by providing your child with coloured folders, cool labels and special stickers, and pencils.

5. **Observe how your Child Learns**

Understanding how your child learns is crucial; whether it's auditory, visual or kinaesthetic. It's advisable that parents should try to modify their children's studying habits to fit their learning style with talking out loud, music, walking, graphs, and visuals. Understand that every child

learns differently, so helping your child to study in ways that works for your child can significantly improve their understanding and retention.

6. **Get Your Child's Teacher Involved**

It's not always easy for parents to know what's happening with their children at school, but as a parent, you can get informed simply by talking to your child's teacher. You can ask your child's teacher to send you regular updates on homework and other reports concerning your child. If possible, try to meet with your child's teacher occasionally for progress reports. When you know what's happening with your child in school, it will enable you as well as your child's teacher to make the required changes that will ensure that your kid learns effectively.

7. **Always Show Support**

Constantly encourage your child to put in his/her best into their work. It's perfectly okay to help when your child asks for help even though they should be encouraged to eventually try to complete their work independently. Helping your children to look at challenges positively will keep them motivated and will show that you're interested in their improvement.

8. **Know when to Quit**

Generally, kids with ADHD can become easily overwhelmed and frustrated. So, while it’s good to encourage your child to keep going as long as they can, it's important that you shouldn't push your child too much. Once you discover that your child has reached a limit, then stop for the night. Send your child's teacher a note to explain why homework wasn't completed.

9. **Provide Praise and Positive Feedback**

Learn to congratulate and reward your child after completing their homework. Praising your children does not only have to be when they have completed their homework; you can also praise their efforts even when the homework wasn't completed and encourage them to achieve a new goal the next day.

10. Try Moving Around

It's usually challenging for children with ADHD to sit in one place for a long period. So, allowing your child to stand up and move around can significantly help to maintain focus. You can even turn studying into a physical activity; for instance, asking your child to count out steps when practicing math problems like subtraction and addition. Parents are also advised to provide their children with something they can fidget with as they study; stress balls are an excellent item for children with ADHD.

Chapter Five

Leveraging Technology

Useful Apps for Kids with ADHD

Let's look at some of the apps and tools that can support and help children with ADHD.

1. **Put it away -** For parents whose kid's mess up their room, they can use an augmented reality by installing a free iOS app known as "Put It Away." Most of the games on the app are easy; kids will find several items lying everywhere around the room on the screen of the phone. Their main goal is to get rid of the mess by putting things in their rightful places and getting the virtual room organized. With this app, your kids can learn how to clean their bedroom and home and also understand their suitable places for various household items such as DVD player, bookshelf, TV, and several others.

2. **Monster Physics -** This is an interesting and fun-to-play game which will help teach your child real laws of physics. The gameplay isn't difficult, so when kids are unable to complete a mission, they will be able to learn from the mistakes they've made and also start all over again. Another way to look at this game is to regard it as a simplified version of minecraft where you need to build things. It's an app that parents of kids with ADHD should also try out.

3. **Toca Nature –** Toca Nature is a sandbox game which requires the player to design and also decorate their world. Parents can also play with their child to help them develop their creativity and foster their attention to detail. In this game, there are no

tasks, quests or goals; players are free to make theirs. This kind of game will help to significantly calm down your active child and it's a breath-taking game.

4. **Choremonster -** This is another game that helps kids to keep their room tidy and

organised. You can challenge your kids to keep their rooms clean by using the Choremoster app. To achieve this, parents need to join the game and also execute the tasks together. When your kids finish a task, they are entitled to points and any one with the biggest score at the end of the game wins. You shouldn't forget to reward your children when they win and don't win too often if you're the competitive type; give your children the chance to win too.

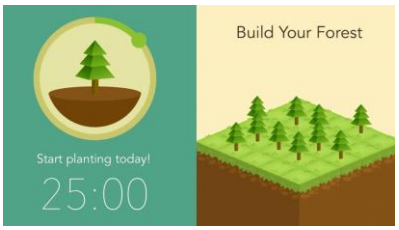
5. **Bugs and Buttons 2 -** This app can be found both on Android and iOS app store and it deals with one of the most problematic issues of children with ADHD which is their lack of attention. Apart from helping with attention, the game is very entertaining and can practically take your kid's breath away. Bugs and Button requires that children remain attentive to details before they can pass and move on to the next level of the game. The game provides children a captivating experience which can help them develop concentration and attention. It has 18 games that are designed to entertain, inspire and teach your children. Also, the games contain 3D life-like instructions such as fluttering, scurrying and slithering bugs. There are colourful buttons which bounce and shuffle just to grab the attention of your child. This app incorporates patterns, shapes, letters and several others into all the 18 games which provides your child with a rich experience while having a fun-learning experience.

6. **Endless Reader -** If you're searching for an app that can help your child to stay focused on learning sight words and also their context and usage with adorable Endless monsters, then

Endless readers is one app you need to consider. It's a highly rated app that was created by a team of passionate artists and engineers that are focused on providing the best education and entertainment apps for children.

7. **Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame** - Your child will definitely love this app if he/she loves Sesame Street. The app helps to teach kids various skills such as self-control, task perseverance, problem-solving and planning. With this app, your child will also be able to get their Sesame Street monster friends to help them calm down and deal with everyday issues. In addition, your child will be able to enjoy animation and playful interactions while being exposed to vital emotional vocabulary, personal encouragements, and breathing techniques.

8. **Forest Plot -** Apps like forest plot, in which you grow your tree while focussing, is a fun way to cultivate a more realistic sense of passing time. One of the things that kids with ADHD struggle with is the concept of time. Generally, they find it hard to grasp how long a certain amount of time really is or how much time has passed.



Chapter Six

Accommodations for Children with ADHD

Kids with ADHD usually benefit from ADHD accommodations established by parents and teachers. These classroom accommodations are made after a careful examination of the ADHD symptoms and are intended to help support and improve the identified problems that children may be having in school. Parents can talk to teachers about the possible accommodations that can be made for their children. Among the possible accommodations include:

1. **Desk Placement**

As earlier mentioned, children with ADHD gets distracted easily, so placing their desk in front of the classroom away from the window, or door to the hallway will be helpful. Also, placing their desk close to the teacher's desk can help the child to remain focused.

Teachers should make eye contact with them and redirect them as necessary if they get distracted or disruptive. Another thing that works well for students with ADHD is to keep their desks separated instead of placing them together to reduce possible distraction from other class mates.

2. **Create Opportunities for Children with ADHD to Move Around**

One of the accommodations that children with ADHD can get in school is having the opportunity to move around. So, teachers can send them on an errand when they discover that they are restless or agitated. For example, a teacher can ask the student to deliver a correspondence to another teacher.

This enables the child with ADHD to walk back and forth or even stand in the classroom instead of sitting in a place. In addition, it will help to alleviate restlessness or anxiety. Teachers can provide frequent breaks and permit the students to step outside to compose themselves.

3. **Create a Consistent and Predictable Routine**

It's crucial for children with ADHD to know what to expect and also what is expected of them. So, one accommodation that teachers can make for children with ADHD is to have bulletin board in the classroom which will help to clearly define appropriate classroom behaviour. Teachers should review this bulletin board frequently with students to ensure that they comply with the rules.

Assignments should also be written on the board and clearly provide a specific timeframe for students to read them and if necessary, write them down. ADHD students really need routine, and one of the things that teachers can do to help them prepare for when the bell rings is to inform them five minutes before lunch bell, gym time, library, etc.

4. **Establish Special ways to Communicate with Children with ADHD**

One of the things that ADHD children long for is attention; in fact, they are so hungry for attention that they may even seek it inappropriately. So, it may be helpful for teachers to create a smart strategy of letting students with ADHD know when their behaviour is getting out of hand.

For instance, teachers can come up with a secret word or code which they can use in letting the students with ADHD know when they are speaking out of turn or acting inappropriately. Teachers can stand close to the desk of the student when presenting lessons and make use of a pre-arranged hand sign to communicate when necessary.

5. **Moods/Socialization**

If your child with ADHD is unsure about appropriate social behaviours, then teachers could try to set up social-behaviour goals and also follow up with a reward program. Also, teachers can encourage cooperative learning tasks to help children with ADHD work well with other classmates. It’s possible for teachers to encourage social interactions with classmates and even

plan teacher-directed group activities if they can see that a child with ADHD appears lonely or withdrawn.

6. Allow them to "Buddy Up" with a Peer

One of the most effective tools that teachers can use is peer coaching. Children with ADHD can be paired up with a classmate who is a strong role model and partner in the areas in which there are difficulties. With time management, the student can take cues from classmates. In fact, if your child with ADHD is paired with another student who is organized, well-behaved, quiet and compliant, he may end up developing some of those skills simply by observing his partner. If your child works on assignments as partners, he can learn how to plan, prioritise and complete assignments and projects.

Sometimes, it may seem like kids with ADHD can't control their actions; they may easily become distracted and this often leads to frustration, poor grades and disappointment for parents and their children. However, it is possible for children with ADHD to succeed in their studies provided that parents use the right strategies like the ones just discussed.

These tips can help parents and teachers to manage children with ADHD, to enable them to overcome their academic challenges and significantly improve their skills of time management, concentration and organization. Furthermore, this will help to increase your child's self-esteem and confidence. Always bear in mind that these changes won't happen overnight; give your child sometime to adjust to new habits and routines. As soon as your child begins to understand how to study, then your child will be on their way to learning more effectively.

Final Thoughts

It's important to bear in mind that whether your child's symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity are as a result of ADHD or not, such symptoms can lead to several problems if they are not properly treated. Kids who find it difficult to focus and control themselves may frequently get into trouble, struggle in school and may find it hard to make friends or get along with others.

Over time, these frustrations and difficulties might result in a sense of low self-esteem and stress for your child. By providing proper treatment for your child, you can make a huge difference in your child's symptoms. Also, with the right support, it's possible for your child to get back on track for success in most aspects of life. So, if your child struggling with some symptoms that appear to be ADHD, then the best thing you should do right now is to seek professional help.

It's possible to treat your child's symptoms of hyperactivity, inattention and impulsivity without even having a diagnosis of the ADHD disorder. Some of the things that you can begin with include employing some of the tips and techniques already mentioned above in a consistent way, creating a better diet as well as exercise plan and making changes to your home environment to drastically reduce distractions.

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