

# THE CENTER FOR SPEECH EXCELLENCE

## **Home Management Suggestions for Children with Attention Deficit Disorders (A.D.D.)**

### **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 - and be consistent.

### **2. Do not flood the child with petty, time-consuming decisions.**

For example, what to wear. 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 a birthday party, to go fishing with a friend, etc. If there is no real reason to deny a child, then allow him the option of choosing for himself. However, many A.D.D. children will need time to picture the situation and think it through before deciding.

### **4. Do not haggle or negotiate about small things.**

An extra TV program; whether or not a helping of a new food is accepted, etc. A decision, even if it is in error, is better than haggling. Have faith in yourself. In making decisions, remember structure is important. Sometimes the use of a reward system is helpful in this type of situation.

### **5. Give the child chores.**

For example, setting the table. Boys and girls should both be involved. Parents must share their duties and chores with children for the child's good. Such activities build self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Select one or two chores and be prepared for the fact that it will take your time, effort, patience and many calm reminders to get the chores done. Withholding a desired privilege for a short time may be necessary if the child fails to do the chore he is assigned.

### **6. Be prepared to accept the absent-mindedness of most A.D.D. children.**

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LD children need to be reminded again and again, but without the irritating "I've told you a million times." Try to avoid escalation of irritation when directions or reminders need to be

repeated. 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. They just can't keep what we expect in the forefront of their consciousness.

**7. Be alert to the A.D.D. child's absent-mindedness in regard to care of tools and other implements, toys, etc.**

Note where you see him lay objects as balls, skates, etc. Check later, if the object is still there and 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 A.D.D. children 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. It may be helpful after stating a wish in simple, clear, one-concept commands to have the child repeat what was said. Speaking at a slower rate of speed is often helpful.

**10. Since many children with A.D.D. are disorganized, they many have difficulty relating an event in proper sequence.**

One may often need to quietly ask "who, what, where and when" questions. Again, a calm, uncritical and non-irritable manner should be used.

**11. A common characteristic of many A.D.D. children is their difficulty in waiting their turn.**

For example, in game playing or when participating in a conversation. Some interruptions when adults are talking may be allowed, for the child is impulsive. However, having permitted some infractions of good manners, parents should correct the child if he persistently interrupts. Send him from the table or discipline him in a similar fashion if he should continue with this behavior.

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**12. Do not permit the A.D.D. child to be unduly loud in public places.**

Do something about the noise level 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. Routines are helpful for all children and seem to be particularly needed by the A.D.D. child.**

Setting up and following through on regular times for meals, homework, TV, getting up and going to bed are helpful. Each family should find a schedule that suits them best.

**14. In the majority of instances, parents should not try to tutor their own child.**

It is helpful to a child 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 concepts of mathematics, is usually unsuccessful. More is lost because of the strained relationship 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 behavior of the child and less on the child's self-concept. If physical punishment is used, care should be taken to be sure 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 the action will be strengthened.

C. Punishment should be of **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 A.D.D. child's difference.**

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.**

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The child with A.D.D. has a handicap with which he will often need help for many years. Goals should be those that challenge but do not extend far beyond his capabilities. If parents can accept their child's assets and liabilities, the child can then begin to accept himself.

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