

Tips to Manage **ADHD** For Youth

TOOLKIT



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Tips to Manage **ADHD** For Youth - Toolkit

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, better known as

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects around 11% of children.

Symptoms can be tough to distinguish from an average child.

However, a child that is considered **ADHD presenting** could have six or more symptoms between the **ADHD predominantly inattentive presentation** and **ADHD predominantly hyperactive-impulsive presentation**.

These symptoms generally revolve around a child's ability to focus on activities and impulsive behavior that can, in some cases, be considered disruptive. ADHD is a disorder that can affect a child's mental and emotional health. Below we will discuss tips on how you can manage ADHD for your children and help them lead healthy and normal functioning lives.



Limit Screen Time



Establishing Healthy Habits



Routines, Routines, Routines



Organization is Key



Exercise Daily



Set Aside Quality Time to Spend With Your Child



Set Clear Rewards and Consequences



Help your Child Develop a Close Friendship

Limit Screen Time

Believe it or not, electronics can dominate not just a child's day, but also an adult's. Research has routinely shown that children who use electronics tend to be unhappier kids overall, which can have a tendency to exacerbate ADHD in a child. Children aged two to five should not have more than one hour of electronics time in a given day. **For children aged six and above, this time should be limited to roughly two hours of electronics per day.** While it can be a difficult rule to abide by, especially for parents that work from home and have to care for their children, limiting screen time is even more essential for children with ADHD.



Establishing Healthy Habits



For some children this could mean taking the medications prescribed by physicians. For others it will mean eating healthy meals and getting enough physical activity. **All children, and adults for that matter, should establish a healthy habit of eating meals that provide adequate nutrition,** and getting enough sleep as well. Healthy habits may feel difficult to implement at first, but that is where the next tip comes into play.

Routines, Routines, Routines

There are very few tips more critical to a child's development with ADHD than having a daily routine to follow. For example, have a whiteboard or calendar with everyday tasks that need to be completed, like eating breakfast, cleaning up their room, and before/after school responsibilities. It's also a good idea to have designated times and locations of the home for your child to complete their tasks such as their chores and homework every day. You will also want to make sure to check on them several times an hour to ensure they are on the correct task at the right time.

While routines are important, it's also important to set aside time for mental breaks from homework and "required" tasks so your child doesn't get overwhelmed. To help your children along, you can develop a daily checklist as well. This can help them not only to stay organized, but to give them mini-successes, or wins, throughout the day which can boost their mental health over time.



Organization is Key



A disorganized area with lots of clutter can sometimes result in too many distractions for a young child with ADHD. Set up your house in an organized fashion and have your child help set it up so you can teach them that everything has its place. Including them can make it easier for them to find things more easily. Having a place for everything can also help you and them avoid frustrating outbursts if they can't find something. Furthermore, organizing your space sets an excellent example to your child about keeping their designated area neat and tidy.

Exercise Daily

We touched on this briefly in the healthy habits tip, but daily exercise is beneficial for a number of reasons. It is even more beneficial with a young child that has ADHD as they are often referred to as individuals that have endless energy to burn. There are almost too many benefits to count when your child gets to exercise daily. For example, you may immediately see a decrease in anxiety and depression while also helping concentration and brain growth. Another big benefit is better sleep for your child. Children with ADHD need quality sleep - this helps reduce many of the symptoms associated with ADHD.

Picking an organized sport for your child to play is an excellent way to accomplish the goal of daily exercise. It's also worth noting that choosing a sport with non-stop action, like basketball or hockey, is better suited than a sport with more downtime, like baseball or softball, where they might get bored. Another benefit of this type of exercise is the positive reassurance your child can receive which is also vital to their emotional health.



Set Aside Quality Time to Spend With Your Child



Several times a week, it's imperative to develop a routine that allows you and your child to bond. For maximum benefit, there should be no distractions from electronics. Having a parent sit with their child and communicate some of the positives and negatives of the week, for example, opens an avenue of trust between you and your child.

This type of bonding is crucial for a child with ADHD because it lets them know it's okay to express their emotions, especially frustration or anger, without acting out aggressively. This type of bonding is critical to their mental and emotional health because they won't be sitting on negative thoughts or emotions for too long.

Set Clear Rewards and Consequences

Children with ADHD don't do well with the unknown. Organization, transparency, and communication are imperative to avoid confusion of how to behave and interact with others. Discussing what is to be expected of them, both in school and at home regarding behavior, chores, and activities, helps set a precedent. **If your child knows what is expected of them, they can accomplish those tasks and be rewarded, which further boosts their emotional health.**



Help your Child Develop a Close Friendship



Bonding between caregivers and their children is essential, but having a child develop a friendship with a peer is also crucial. **Bonding with a peer is vital if your child has ADHD, because it helps them build confidence,** see an example of behavior from another child, and be introduced to independence. Be aware that the younger your child is, the more involved you may have to be to accomplish this. Set up a playdate with a neighbor, cousin, or classmate at school.



Conclusion and Next Steps

Raising a child with ADHD does not come without its challenges.

However, it is worth noting that an ADHD diagnosis should not stop anyone in your household from living a happy, healthy, and productive life! It may take time to shift your day-to-day schedule and parenting techniques to your new reality, but the benefits are easily attainable with a positive attitude and a little effort.

Getting organized and researching the best way to help your child positively can help the learning curve and cut down on days of frustration.

Try to always approach each situation with a calm, optimistic outlook and help set the best example for your child to overcome this obstacle.

It may not always be easy, but being there for your children, and helping them adapt along the way is worth it.

About Dr. Hammond

Dr. Nekeshia Hammond is an author, international speaker, psychologist, and an expert in children's mental health. She is the founder of Hammond Psychology & Associates, and the former President of the Florida Psychological Association.

Dr. Hammond speaks to various groups to help increase public education about mental health issues. She has been featured on ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, as well as various magazines and radio shows throughout the globe. She is the host of Mental Health Moment with Dr. Hammond and author of the books **ADHD Explained: What Every Parent Needs to Know** and **The Practical Guide to Raising Emotionally Healthy Children**.



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