

# Strategies for ADHD Symptoms

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## Inattention

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- **Use a timer** – Set a timer for 15 minutes or less to help them focus. Say “try to get as many Math problems done as you can in 3 minutes. On your mark, get set, go!” (not a good idea for children who are very nervous).
- **Make any task into a game** – To clean up a bedroom or play area, do a “5 minute pick up”. Ask the child to pick up anything out of place and sort things into piles. After 5 minutes, return items to areas where they belong.
- **Break large tasks into small parts.**
- **Give countdowns when it’s time to stop a fun activity** – Say “you have 5 more minutes to play your game. In a few minutes, say “you have 2 more minutes to play.” Helps to avoid meltdowns.

## Organization

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- **Use color coding to organize** – For example, items that have to do with Math are blue (dividers, book cover, folders etc.), English is red and so on.
- **Use clear plastic containers.**
- **Use open containers** – With no lids, items can be easily dropped in.
- **Group like things together.**
- **Put storage where they’ll use it** – if they usually undress at the end of the bed, put the hamper at the end of the bed.
- **Make routines.**

## Hyperactivity/Impulsivity

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- **Involve child in structured activities** – Individual activities may be best i.e. gymnastics, karate, cross country, wrestling, swimming, piano lessons, painting, etc.
- **Quiet activities before bed** – Avoid TV and computer which may be too stimulating. Encourage reading, quiet music, drawing to wind down.
- **Play games at home that require calm behavior** – Pick up sticks, Concentration, Jenga, Operation, Mother May I?, Simon Says, Card games, etc.

## School

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- **Keep them on track** – Help your child in setting up their assignment notebook (see organization for ideas).
- **Parents must assist with setting up school binder** – monitor daily.
- **Monitor grades** – Teach older children to “average” their grades. Missing assignments do make a difference.
- **Develop a partnership with the teacher** – Ask for a 504 plan or testing if learning is a problem.
- **Organize belongings at night** – Lay out clothes, put their back pack by the door, sign permission slips, etc. Mornings can be chaotic.
- **Call the homework hotline** or find a study buddy to call.

## Teens and ADHD

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**Remember, the teen brain is different than a child’s brain.** Teens are making their way into the world and need to be treated differently than children. Be flexible with them and work with the teen in creating their schedule and boundaries. One example would be creating a contract that outlines expectations the teen agrees to follow. You and your teen sign the contract.

Source:

*Teenagers with ADD: A Parent’s Guide*, Chris A. Zeigler Dendy, Woodbine House, 1995.:

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/adhd-behavioral-interventions-for-the-home/>