

# Tips for Parents Of Children with ADHD

## Getting Started

- ❖ **Keep it simple.** Don't ask your child to do too many things at once.
- ❖ **Help your child focus.** Reduce distractions in your child's environment when you're talking to them or they are doing tasks. Focus on one thing at a time. For example, having the house be quiet (no TV or radio in the background) when trying to do homework, reading, or listening to direction. This will make it easier for them to pay attention.
- ❖ **Keep things structured.** Having a routine helps – a set time for getting up, getting to school on time, playtime, schoolwork, meals, and bedtime. You may need to experiment with schedules or change the routine. If your child has too much energy to sit still, have some active playtime before trying to do a quiet activity. See what works best for your child.
- ❖ **Start small.** If good behavior lasts only 10 to 15 minutes, limit activities and social gatherings to that time frame. Plan to leave before problem behavior starts. As your child makes progress or adjusts to medication, you will be able to gradually increase the time. Find ways to be successful.
- ❖ **Use a timer.** Children with ADHD have trouble keeping track of time. This will help them with the beginning and ending of an activity. You can also help your child create a list of things to do. This way they can check things off the list when they're finished.
- ❖ **Focus on what's positive.** Children with ADHD usually get attention when they're doing something wrong. Try giving your child attention when they're doing something right instead! Say "Great job!" when they clean up their clothes. Give them a high-five when they've stayed focused on their homework or a task for a period of time.
- ❖ **Prepare for family visits.** Any change is hard and even fun family gatherings can be stressful. Prepare your child: "Grandma is coming for a visit." Extended family will need coaching so that well meaning "help" does not result in extra criticism. Help your child by providing structured activities and limiting the time.
- ❖ **One friend at a time.** Developing friends can be hard. Try asking a teacher or school counselor to help put you in contact with a family, but be patient. It may take several tries before identifying a well-matched playmate. With one friend at a time, you can keep tabs on the visits and intervene before problems arise.
- ❖ **Find friends/families with similar issues.** Other parents of children with ADHD will be more understanding. They will identify with the special needs that you and your child are facing.
- ❖ **Work with the school.** ADHD will affect how your child learns. He or she may also have a learning disability or be gifted. Whatever the situation, certainly your role as a parent is important. Parents need to know that their child's needs in the classroom are being met. Some teachers are specially trained to modify the classroom to meet the needs of children with ADHD. Some teachers do not have this skill and you may need to ask the school for special help.