

**Strategies which can support children and young people with ADHD both
at home and in the classroom**

-Getting into a routine: This will help your child /pupil to get organised and can be supported by visual timetables both at home and at school. This can be supported by visual reminders about things which might be needed for the day e.g. P.E kit and times of lessons

Primary school: Add in visual aids e.g. pictures of the P.E on the timetable

Secondary school: Consider colour coding or getting your young person involved in creating the timetable so it is meaningful to them

-Be prepared: Have checklists both in class and at home to help your child / pupil remember what they need to be doing and when they needs to be doing it e.g. Monday: Hand in maths homework.

Primary school: Prompt sheets can be added to desks as a reminder of expected classroom behaviour aided by visual cues e.g. 'put your hand up to ask a question' assisted with a picture of this

Secondary school: Prompts and reminders can be incorporated into a specific section of the homework diary. Alternatively, teens may prefer to use a diary on their phone / tablet with set reminders of tasks that need to done or handed in

-Encourage your child to ask for help: This can help reduce frustrations in the class room and may support your child / pupil to stay in class – this can be reinforced by praise and rewards for completing items of work (the same can be done at home for homework)

Primary school: Visual rewards and sticker charts which are consistent at school and home may help to positively reinforce behaviour

Secondary school: Giving specific verbal praise 'I really liked your presentation because the slides were detailed and you presented it clearly' and encouragement to help with motivation. Being praised in front of other people can also be helpful in the appropriate context

-Identify areas of difficulty: Children and young people with ADHD can struggle with unstructured times such as transition points and play time. Identify parts of your child's / pupil's environment which they struggle with so that appropriate support can be implemented

Primary school: This may include coming in from break and finding it difficult to settle back into class or even remembering to eat and go for lunch

Secondary school: If your pupil is frequently late to lessons because they have become distracted whilst walking to the next class or got chatting with friends, it would be helpful to understand from their perspective what might help to reduce these distractions

-Fewer distractions: Quiet places with fewer distractions both at home and at school will be more conducive to working. This might mean your child / pupil being at the front of the class away from things which might lead to distractions such as displays or being by the window.

Primary and secondary school: This will be important for homework time too. It may be having a set study space away from the TV, iPad, phone etc. is needed. This could include going to work in a library or attending a homework club at school if required.

-Taking breaks: Taking breaks from work to walk around can help with overall concentration. At school this could be your child / pupil being given meaningful jobs to do such as handing out books so they feel like they are contributing to the class and at home these could be planned short breaks during homework (egg timers can help with this)

Primary and secondary school: The time your child or young person is able to concentrate will be individual to them. Discuss with them how long you feel is reasonable to try and focus for (5-10 minutes in younger children; possible 15-30 minutes in older children) and structure breaks in to all tasks from homework to cleaning their room. Having a stated end time you are working towards will help reduce the feeling that a task is open ended and therefore too long / challenging.

-Use of fiddle toys and stress balls: Use fiddle toys and stress balls to keep their hands busy in class and reduce fidgeting (this needs to be discussed with the child's teacher as fiddle toys are not always permitted in classrooms).

-Boost self-esteem through goals: If your child / pupil has achievable goals (both shorter and longer term) which they can reach, this will give a sense of achievement and help them feel good about themselves

Primary school: This can be reinforced with star charts / reward charts both at home and at school).

Secondary school: This can be reinforced with age appropriate rewards e.g. comics, picking a film to watch, doing an enjoyable after school activity or being able to go to a friend's house.

-Break things down: In order to support your child / pupil to complete a task, breaking information down into chunks which is completed gradually will be beneficial. Class tasks or homework tasks could be broken down and written on different post-it notes which they can throw away as they complete them or into tick lists as an example.

Use egg timers / stop watches to break down tasks into small timed chunks, this gives a visual aid to support the child or young person in knowing how long they need to engage with a task

-Encourage regular exercise: Exercise can help to relieve stress and built up energy as well as supporting a healthy lifestyle

-Try not remove physical activity as a sanction: Preventing a child or young person participating in P.E or stopping them going out to play or going to the park as a sanction for their behaviour will often lead to an increase in frustration and symptoms as children and young people with ADHD rely on having periods to expel energy.

-Use of wobble cushions: Using a wobble cushion can help children with ADHD remain seated but may take some getting used to, this can be beneficial to use at school in lessons or at home at the dining room table

Some children and young people do not like using them in class as they often come in bright colours and can draw attention, for some people they may prefer to use them at home or whilst doing homework.

-Create novel stimuli: Use of tapping on a work surface can be helpful to highlight to your pupil that they need to re-focus without being given a verbal instruction. This is something that can be discussed with the child or young person and agreed so they know what the tap means or whether it might be helpful to them

-Writing down thoughts: If your child / pupil is getting distracted by their own thoughts, providing a note pad where they can write these down and come back to outside of class could be helpful. Some children and young people can become distracted by things they have to remember and getting them to write it down onto a 'to do' list will also aid their organisational skills.

-Peer mentoring: Consider a peer mentor in class so they have someone to check in with about their work

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Primary school: Children with ADHD can sometimes find it difficult to make friends and some children have found the 'circle of friends approach helpful'

Secondary school: If the young person is not keen on a peer mentor, having a tutor to check in with or knowing the best way to ask their teacher for clarification around homework tasks can be beneficial

-Sensory needs: People with ADHD can also have sensory processing needs. It may be helpful to check in if there is anything affecting the child / young person's ability to focus e.g. being next to window is too bright, the feel of the chair is uncomfortable

-Calm spaces: Having a calm space at home and at school where a child or young person can de-escalate if required can be beneficial, especially as people with ADHD can feel overstimulated in situations where there is a lot going on or a lot of information to process.

Primary school: Having a calm cushion or a calm tent may be helpful. If not available, arranging a place that is safe to go when your pupil is distressed is an alternative. This should be a space with few distractions and you may wish to support the child to complete some breathing exercises.

Secondary school: For a teenager it may be helpful to discuss with them a plan that is appropriate if they do need to be out of the classroom for a period of time. It might be agreed that use of a specific room is ok or stepping out the class for 5 minutes may be helpful.

-Understanding their own needs: Involve your child / pupil with monitoring their distractibility, hyperactivity and impulsivity to self-awareness. This could include creating a distractibility scale and getting them to periodically indicate where they are on it. Think with them about things which they find help them feel more focussed and indicate these on the chart so they can begin to implement the strategies more autonomously over time.