

Strategies for Effective Teaching and Learning

Accommodations to Help Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Children and youth with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often have serious problems in school. Inattention, impulsiveness, hyperactivity, disorganization, and other difficulties can lead to unfinished assignments, careless errors, and behavior that is disruptive to oneself and others. Through the implementation of relatively simple and straightforward accommodations to the classroom environment or teaching style, teachers can adapt to the strengths and weaknesses of students with ADHD. Small changes in how a teacher approaches the student with ADHD or in what the teacher expects can turn a losing year into a winning one for the child. Examples of accommodations that teachers can make to adapt to the needs of students with ADHD are grouped below according to areas of difficulty.

Inattention

- Seat student in quiet area.
- Require fewer correct responses for grade.
- Seat student near good role model.
- Reduce amount of homework.
- Seat student near “study buddy.”
- Instruct student in self-monitoring using cueing.
- Increase distance between desks.
- Pair written instructions with oral instructions.
- Allow extra time to complete assigned work.
- Provide peer assistance in note taking.
- Shorten assignments or work periods to coincide with span of attention; use timer.
- Give clear, concise instructions.
- Break long assignments into smaller parts so student can see end of work.
- Seek to involve student in lesson presentation.
- Assist student in setting short-term goals.
- Cue student to stay on task (i.e., private signal).
- Give assignments one at a time to avoid work overload.

Impulsiveness

- Ignore minor inappropriate behavior.
- Acknowledge positive behavior of nearby students.

- Increase immediacy of rewards and consequences.
- Seat student near role model or near teacher.
- Use time-out procedure for misbehavior.
- Set up behavior contract.
- Supervise closely during transition times.
- Instruct student in self-monitoring of behavior (i.e., hand raising, calling out).
- Use “prudent” reprimands for misbehavior (i.e., avoid lecturing or criticism).
- Call on only when hand is raised in appropriate manner.
- Attend to positive behavior with compliments, etc.
- Praise when hand raised to answer question.

Motor Activity

- Allow student to stand at times while working.
- Supervise closely during transition times.
- Provide opportunity for “seat breaks” (run errands, etc.).
- Remind student to check over work product if performance is rushed and careless.
- Provide short breaks between assignments.
- Give extra time to complete tasks (especially for students with slow motor tempo).

Academic Skills

- If reading is weak: Provide additional reading time; use “previewing” strategies; select text with less on a page; shorten amount of required reading; avoid oral reading.
- If written language is weak: Accept nonwritten forms for reports (i.e., displays, oral reports); accept use of typewriter, word processor, tape recorder; do not assign large quantity of written work; test with multiple-choice or fill-in questions.
- If oral expression is weak: Accept all oral responses; substitute a display for an oral report; encourage student to tell about new ideas or experiences; pick topics easy for student to talk about.
- If math is weak: Allow use of calculator; use graph paper to space numbers; provide additional math time; provide immediate corrective feedback and instruction via modeling of the correct computational procedure.