

# Coping with ADHD

1. Let your child know that you love him or her no matter what. Your child is special, and both of you will make mistakes as you grow together.
2. Your child's problems are *not* your fault. ADHD is not caused by bad parenting or something you did.
3. Learn all you can about ADHD. Read articles, talk to professionals or other parents, and attend conferences and workshops.
4. You know your child better than anyone, and what you've learned can help others. Share things that have worked at home with your child's teachers and therapists.
5. You are your child's advocate. Your child has a right to education, under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act. Also, your child may be covered by the Disability Discrimination Act. Learn about these laws and others that offer protection and guarantees to your child.
6. Show that you believe in your child's abilities. Focus on your child's strengths, and endorse each attempt to succeed. Many children with ADHD feel like failures and give up before they have a chance to succeed.
7. Be consistent. Establish basic rules when your child is young and keep those rules into the teenage years.
8. Offer a routine in your home because your child won't take surprises and changes well. As much as possible, arrange for things like going to bed, eating a snack and eating dinner to happen at the same time every day.
9. Prepare your child for any change in the routine. Give the child plenty of notice about the change and talk about what will be happening. For example: 'We're going to the supermarket together. You will sit in the trolley. I need you to hold the list. If you do a good job, you can pick out your own fruit'.

10. Use lists to help your child manage chores at home. Sit down with the child and make a list of things that have to be done right away. Remember that your child isn't good at planning or remembering things for very long. If your child can't read yet use simple drawings or symbols to stand for the jobs. Have the child cross each task off the list when it is completed. Let your child know that there will be a reward for completing the list.
11. Build self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Your child should have chores to do the same as any other child. Children with ADHD don't do well when they have to do the same thing 'over and over'. So, you can make a 'job jar' full of 'chore cards' where you write down jobs that need to be done. That way, your child can pick one of the cards. Younger children can help by dusting, folding laundry or feeding a pet. Older children might have jobs ranging from household repairs to meal preparation.
12. Your child might get 'stuck on' talking about one thing. When this happens offer a diversion to redirect the child's attention.
13. Children with ADHD have a difficult time keeping their thoughts in order. If your child starts to ramble when telling you about something, use the four questions: What? Where? When? Why?
14. Keep directions short and sweet. Some active children will be able to follow only one simple direction at a time.
15. Give your child lots of well-marked storage space to organize belongings. Plastic boxes are a good choice, especially if you can get different colours. On the outside put a picture of what's to go inside - for example, a blue box with a picture of shoes on the front, and a yellow box with a picture of socks.
16. Place drawers, shelves and hooks where the child can see and reach them. Then your child can learn to do more things without help.
17. Talk to professionals about good ways to handle your child's behaviour.
18. Work together with other important people in the child's life to provide a positive and united front.