

PARENTING GUIDELINES ADHD

What you need to know to help your child learn how to manage his own behavior

- Know the causes of ADHD behavior
- Distinguish behaviors triggered by the ADHD and those that are willful disobedience – identify the bottom line rules for your child and be willing to negotiate on other issues
- If what you have been doing isn't working, change the technique until something does work
- Create an atmosphere that expects good results, but allows time for those results
- Structure! Structure! Structure! Structure! Structure!
- Always affirm your child's feelings ('Yes, I'm sure you do feel like that is unfair'). At a later time, 15 minutes, an hour, the next morning, discuss the ramifications of any inappropriate behavior

Possible techniques

- The Up Bowl and the Down Bowl (placing a token or pebble or bean in Up Bowl each time for doing what the child has been told and one in the Down Bowl when the compliance has not occurred in a reasonable manner; at the end of the day, reward if there are more in the Up than Down Bowl)
- The Chooser Can Win (give the child 2 choices when compliance is not after the first request – be sure you can live with either choice – one of which is to comply. This gives the child the chance to make the correct choice thus internalizing an appropriate decision. If the other choice is made, such as to leave the room or go to his/her room, that choice must be done.)
- Response Loss (at the start of the day, place tokens or nickels in a jar; if behavior is appropriate the tokens or nickels stay there. At the end of the day any that are left go toward a weekly allowance. ADHD children are more likely to try to keep what they have than earn something.)
- Task List (create a list identifying what tasks you want your child to complete on a given day; allow a place beside the list for the child to check them off when successfully completed)
- Do It Over (when a child does something inappropriately, have him repeat the correct behavior multiple times in a row)
- Time Out (be sure that the place for the time out is BORING)
- That'll Do It (list the consequences that will be the result for specific misbehaviors)
- Grounding (this is a method of not permitting a child to do certain things like watch TV, play video games or with friends as a consequence for misbehavior. In addition create a list of chores – none of which are regular tasks for the child – that can be done to earn time off of the 'grounding' period; be sure to identify how much time is earned off for each chore on the list)
- No Yeah..buts (allow your child to select on a regular basis, weekly or daily, in which he/she receives only encouragement from you for appropriate behaviors – no lectures or commands)

Another thought: Children with ADHD need structure and consistency. They need to know changes in any routine, including visitors or visits away from home, appointments, in advance.

Written by Bonnie Kiser, MS, Marriage and Family Therapist

BOOKS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH ADHD

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