

PATIENT TOOLS



ADHD

Why Am I Having So Much Trouble With School?



It is very common to have difficulties in school if you have ADHD.

Common Reasons You Might Have a Hard Time With Schoolwork if You Have ADHD

- It may be hard to pay attention even if you are smart and you are trying hard.
- You might have trouble organizing things, so you forget assignments—or even if you do them, you might forget to hand them in.
- It may be hard for you to always stay in control, so you may get into trouble more than others.
- You might have a learning disability in addition to your ADHD—this can make understanding the material and using information that you hear or see more difficult.
- Even if you can do the schoolwork, it may take you longer than others.
- You may have trouble remembering everything.
- You may have trouble making or keeping friends or dating.

What You Can Do

- Cut yourself some slack—it may be hard to get organized, stay on task, complete assignments, and learn material compared with your friends without ADHD.
- Work as a partner with your parents and teacher(s) to make a plan, and try your best to stick to it.
- Share your school website with your parents so they can log on to retrieve homework assignments and classroom policies and procedures (be patient if they need some help with the computer; it's very likely this is something you do better than they do).
- Set up a homework routine that you do every day. Commit to spending a certain amount of time on schoolwork every day even if you do not have homework. You can always read or study. If you left everything at school, find a book or information online that is related to something you are studying in class and learning. Committing to this every day can make a big difference over time.
- Ask for help if you are feeling down, depressed, anxious, or overwhelmed. You should not have to deal with those feelings on your own.

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Your Support Team Can Help You!

Your doctor can

- Adjust or change your medication.
- Offer a listening ear for you to talk about problems you may be having at school.
- Help decide what things should be included in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for you.

Your parents can

- Send a letter to school at the start of the year to help your teacher(s) learn about what works for you and how they can help you do your best.
- Send a copy of your education plan, if you have one (Section 504 plan or IEP), to the teacher(s) to make plans for what you need.
- Ask your teacher(s) to fill out a parent contact sheet that includes information such as name, email address, phone number, best times to contact your teachers, how homework is assigned, procedures for turning in homework, and other classroom policies.

Your teacher(s) can

- Fill out your follow-up rating scales (and fax them to your doctor's office) to help your doctor determine whether you need to have your medications changed or adjusted.

Your friends can

- Respect your need to keep all your medicine for yourself.
- Help you pay attention when you are driving (eg, limit distractions, understand you drive best if you have only one passenger).
- Remind you about assignments and share notes (not tests) if you miss some pieces.
- Say no to bullying.

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The recommendations in this resource do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate. Original resource included as part of *Caring for Children With ADHD: A Practical Resource Toolkit for Clinicians*, 3rd Edition.

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