

Fifty Tips for Classroom Management of ADD

1. Make sure you are really dealing with ADD. Ask questions and ask that hearing and vision be tested and rule out other medical problems.
2. Build your support. You will likely have two or three children in your class with ADD and that can be exhausting. Make sure there is a knowledgeable person with whom you can consult. Make sure parents are working with you.
3. Know your limits and ask for help.
4. Ask the child what will help. Children are often intuitive and know how they learn best.
5. These children need special help in finding enjoyment in the classroom, mastery instead of failure and frustration, excitement instead of boredom or fear.
6. ADD kids need structure. They need external structure. Make lists.
7. Post rules. Have them in full view.
8. Repeat directions. Write, speak, repeat...people with ADD need to hear things more than once.
9. Make frequent eye contact. You can "bring back" an ADD child with this.
10. Seat the ADD child near you.
11. Set limits, boundaries. Don't be punitive, just consistent, predictable, prompt and fair.
12. Have schedule on blackboard for the day. Give warning if you are going to change it. Announce transitions.
13. Try to help the kids make their own schedules for after school in an effort to avoid one of the hallmarks of ADD: procrastination.
14. Eliminate or reduce frequency of timed tests. There is no great educational value to timed tests, and they definitely do not allow many children with ADD to show what they know.
15. Allow for escape valve outlets such as leaving class for a moment. If this can be built into the rules of the classroom, it will allow the child to leave the room rather than "lose it", and in so doing begin to learn important tools of self-observation and self-modulation.
16. Go for quality rather than quantity of homework. Children with ADD often need a reduced load. As long as they are learning the concepts, they should be allowed this. They will put in the same amount of study time, just not get buried under more than they can handle.
17. Monitor progress often. Children with ADD benefit greatly from frequent feedback. It helps keep them on track, lets them know what is expected of them and if they are meeting their goals, and can be very encouraging.
18. Break down large tasks into small tasks. Large tasks quickly overwhelm ADD kids and they will recoil with "I'll NEVER -be-able-to-do-that.". Make sure work is do-able to avoid overwhelm.
19. Let yourself be playful, have fun, be unconventional, be flamboyant. Be a little bit silly every once in a while.
20. Still again, watch out for over stimulation. Like a pot on fire, ADD can boil over. You need to be able to educe the heat in a hurry.

21. Seek out and underscore success as much as possible. They love encouragement and grow from it. Often the most devastating aspect of ADD is not the ADD itself, but the secondary damage done to self-esteem.
22. Memory is often a problem with these kids. Teach them little tricks like mnemonics, flashcards, etc.
23. Use outlines. Teach outlining. Teach underlining.
24. Announce what you are going to say before you say it. Say it. Then say what you have said. Since many ADD children learn better visually than by voice, if you can write what you're going to say as well as say it, that can be most helpful.
25. Simplify instructions. Simplify choices. Simplify scheduling. The simpler the verbal message the more likely it will be comprehended.
26. Ask questions that promote self-observation. "Do you know what you just did?" or "How do you think you might have said that differently?" or "Why do you think that other girl looked sad when you said what you said?" But ask in a tone that doesn't shame.
27. Make expectations explicit.
28. A point system is a possibility as part of behavioral modification for specific period of times to start new tasks or keep them on track.
29. Many ADD kids haven't learned how to interact socially. They may need some coaching for example, say "Before you tell your story, ask to hear the other person's first", or, "Look at the other person when he's talking".
30. Teach test-taking skills.
31. Make a game out of things.
32. Separate pairs and trios, or whole clusters of students that don't do well together. You may have to try many arrangements.
33. Pay attention to connectedness. These kids need to feel engaged.
34. Give responsibility when possible back to the child.
35. Try a home-to-school-to-home notebook. This can really help with the day-to-day parent-teacher communication and avoid the crisis meetings. It also helps with the frequency feedback these kids need.
36. Try to use daily progress reports.
37. Encourage and structure self-reporting and self-monitoring.
38. Unstructured time can be over-stimulating, prepare ahead for it.
39. Praise, stroke, approve, encourage, nourish.
40. Encourage older kids to write notes to themselves to remind them of their questions.
41. Handwriting is difficult for many of these children. Consider developing alternatives. Learn how to use a keyboard. Consider giving tests orally.
42. Be like the conductor of a symphony. Get the orchestra's attention before beginning (You may use silence or tapping of a baton, to do this). Keep the class "in time", pointing to different parts of the room as you need their help.
43. When possible, arrange for students to have a study buddy.
44. Explain and normalize the treatment the child receives to avoid stigma.
45. Meet with parents often. Avoid patterns of just meeting around problems or crises.

46. Encourage reading aloud at home. Read aloud in class as much as possible. Use story telling. Help the child build the skill of staying on one topic.
47. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
48. Exercise. One of the best treatments for ADD in both children and adults is exercise. Make sure the exercise is fun so the child will continue to do it for the rest of her/his life.
49. With older children stress preparation prior to coming into class. Talk about what you will teach and how you prepared for it.
50. Always be on the lookout for sparkling moments. These kids are far more talented and gifted than they often seem. They tend to be full of creativity, play, spontaneity, and good cheer. They tend to bounce back and be resilient. They usually have a "special something" that enhances whatever setting they're in.

adapted from Driven to Distraction, Edward m. hallowell, M.D. and John J. Ratey, M.S.D. Pantheon New York.

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