

8 Discipline Strategies for Kids With ADHD

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When you have a child with ADHD, you may need a different approach to discipline. A few simple changes to your parenting strategies could give your child the tools they need to manage their behavior more effectively.

Kids with ADHD may have trouble sitting still, completing tasks, managing impulses, and following directions. These discipline strategies can be instrumental in helping a child with challenging behaviors to follow the rules.

¹ Provide Positive Attention



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Just 15 minutes of positive attention is one of the simplest, yet most effective, ways to reduce behavior problems.

2 Give Effective Instructions

Kids with short attention spans need extra help following directions. Quite often, they don't hear the instructions in the first place. To [make your instructions more effective](#), start by gaining your child's full attention. Turn off the television, establish eye contact, and place a hand on your child's shoulder before making a request.

Avoid chain commands like, "Put on your socks, clean your room, and then take out the trash." A child with ADHD is likely to put on their socks, and then on the way to their room, find something else to do rather than clean it. Give one instruction at a time.

Stay away from broad tasks like "clean your room." Instead, provide a checklist or assign one task a time, such as making the bed, putting dirty clothes in the hamper, replacing books on the shelf, and so on.

Ask your child to repeat back to you what they heard to make sure they fully understand.

3 Praise Your Child's Effort

Catch your child being good and point it out. [Praise motivates](#) children with ADHD to behave, and frequent feedback is important.

Make your praise specific. Instead of saying, "Nice job," say, "Great job putting your dish in the sink right when I asked you to." Praise your child for following directions, playing quietly, and sitting still and you'll encourage them to keep it up.

4 Use Time-Out When Necessary

Time-out can be a good way to help kids with ADHD calm their bodies and their brains. Time-out doesn't have to be a harsh punishment. Instead, it can be a great life skill that is useful in many situations.

Teach your child to go to a quiet spot to calm down when they are overstimulated or frustrated. Create a comfortable area and calmly guide them there, not as punishment, but as a way to soothe themselves. Eventually, your child will learn to go to this place on their own before they get into trouble.

5 Ignore Mild Misbehaviors

Kids with ADHD often exhibit attention-seeking behavior. Giving them attention, even when it's negative, encourages those behaviors to continue.

Ignoring mild misbehaviors teaches them that obnoxious behavior won't get them desired results. Ignore whining, complaining, loud noises, and attempts to interrupt you. Eventually, your child will stop.

Related: [How to Avoid Power Struggles With Children](#)

6 Allow for Natural Consequences

When disciplining a child with ADHD, pick your battles wisely. You don't want your child to feel as though they can't do anything right or that they are constantly getting into trouble. Allowing some behaviors to slide can help both of you.

Sometimes, allowing for natural consequences makes more sense than trying to convince a child to make a better choice. For example, if your child refuses to take a break from playing to eat lunch, simply put the food away.

The natural consequence is that they will likely be hungry later and will have to wait until dinner to eat. Tomorrow, they will be more motivated to eat lunch when it is served.

7 Establish a Reward System

Reward systems can be a great way to help kids with ADHD stay on track. But children with ADHD often get bored with traditional reward systems that require them to wait too long to earn

a reward. Consider establishing a [token economy system](#) that helps your child earn tokens throughout the day.

Establish a few target token-earning behaviors, such as staying at the table during a meal, using gentle touches with a pet, or putting toys away after using them. Then, allow tokens to be exchanged for bigger rewards, like electronics time or a chance to play a favorite game together.

8 Work With Your Child's Teacher

When parents work together with a child's teacher, it increases the chances that a child will be successful in school. Some children need modifications to their schoolwork, such as being allowed extra time on tests, to be successful.

[Behavior modifications](#) may be necessary as well. Forcing a child with ADHD to stay in for recess may worsen behavior problems. So it's important to work together to create a [behavior management plan](#) that will support your child's efforts to manage their symptoms.

A behavior management plan that carries between home and school can be helpful.

Article Sources

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