

Difficulty Focusing/Excess Energy (ADHD type behaviors)

There are many ways that parents can help their child if their child has difficulty in focusing and has a lot of excess energy.

1. Provide a consistent daily routine. Have a routine for getting ready for school in the morning, afterschool time-homework and playtime, and also a bedtime routine.
2. Teach your child organizational skills that he/she can use at school and at home. Ex. School planners and calendars, colored folders. Identify where your child can put their backpack each night so they can find it quickly in the morning.
3. Give one direction at a time. However, start practicing with them by giving them 2 step directions and working your way up to 3 and 4 steps. Make it fun and game like so your child will want to practice.
4. Use a visual checklist for things like morning routines, if needed. It could help your morning go a lot smoother.
5. Provide healthy meals and snacks. Limit things like caffeine and sugar.
6. Make sure your child is getting enough sleep. Sleep is one of the most important reasons children have difficulty in focusing because they are lacking enough sleep.
7. Make sure that your child has lots of outdoor playtime.
8. Limit TV time and video games. Especially monitor, and restrict, both for aggression and violence.
9. Play board games with your child where they have to practice using their listening skills.
10. Use positive reinforcement immediately when you see appropriate behavior to reinforce that good behavior, and do so frequently.
11. Also consequence when needed. Be consistent. If you say you are going to consequence then you must follow through or your child will keep pushing the limits.
12. Save the lectures. Use minimal words when consequenceing misbehavior as children quit listening after a few words.
13. Insist on eye contact when talking to your child.
14. Children with these types of behaviors tend to have difficulty in playing team sports. Find some individual activities they can do such as Tae Kwan Do, Tennis, Swimming, etc.

15. Children with these types of behaviors also have difficulty in getting along with others. Encourage play dates and monitor your child's interactions. This can be a great teaching moment on social skills.
16. If you do not see significant improvement you may want to consult with your child's doctor for the possibility of further interventions.

Books for Parents

*1-2-3 Magic, Effective Discipline for Children 2-12

by Thomas W Phelan PhD

*Parenting with Love and Logic, Teaching Children Responsibility

by Foster Cline, MD and Jim Fay

*How to Behave So Your Children Will Too!

By Sal Severe, PhD

*Helping the Child Who Doesn't fit in

by Stephen Nowicki Jr. PhD, and Marshall P Duke PhD.

Websites:

ADDitudeMag.com