

Home learning with ADHD

Top Tips for families

- Try to keep a daily routine to support mealtimes, bedtime and sleep. This is good for your mental health, and for your child's. Don't be surprised when it doesn't go quite as planned...and don't punish yourself for that!
- Create a schedule for each day, ensure that quiet 'work' times (if you are going to try and do some) are broken up with fun movement or game based activities. All children enjoy knowing what is planned for their day and at school they would often access a visual timetable - with your child, create a simple hand-drawn series of images on a strip of paper to represent home learning milestones eg; breakfast, exercise with Mum, reading, stretches, maths quiz, wheelbarrow races, water & fruit etc
- Get outside and get some exercise every day...as long as you obey social distancing rules, a child or young person who needs additional exercise or time outside is allowed to do this:
<https://www.bindmans.com/news/government-guidance-changed-to-permit-people-with-specific-health-needs-to-exercise-outside-more-than-once-a-day-and-to-travel-to-different-places-so-long-as-social-distancing-is-maintained>
- Do the learning outside: bug collecting, bark rubbings, treasure hunts...this may well work better for many children than sitting still at a desk. Work with your child's teacher on good ideas for active learning.
- Art, music, cooking, sport, model making and experiments with household items and generally practical activity based learning is likely to be more engaging than worksheets and text books.
- Make sure your child has time to choose activities that they enjoy and find absorbing. Base any learning you plan on these interests if possible. Share these interests with your child's teacher so they can make suggestions for learning activities.

- Make sure your plans include fun and socialising with friends, try using online games with known friends (avoid letting children make 'friends' with new people online as this is a safeguarding risk). Join in, you might be rubbish but it will be a way of being together, keeping your relationship positive and keeping your child safe online.
- If your child normally benefits from a sensory diet at school, try to get a copy of all the activities and do what you can regularly at home. These activities are designed to help your child get into a good state to learn.
- If your child takes medication, plan your day to make best use of the time when it is working.
- If you want to try and do some 'work'
 - Try to create a quiet space with as few distractions (from things to look at, listen to, touch or smell) as possible for more focussed 'work' times; facing a plain wall can be really helpful. Only have the things you need for the task on the table or in that area
 - Chunk big tasks into smaller steps and include breaks to reduce distractions.
 - Agree achievable targets for the week/day or session with your child if they are old enough. Make a list and tick them off together, celebrating each success, but avoid being rigid about it.
 - If your child is engaged by computers there are lots of online learning opportunities available for free. Your school can send you a list of websites and help you work out which ones are right for your child.
 - If working from a sheet or page of questions/text, fold or cover subsequent questions to reduce feelings of overload.
 - Start with what your child is interested in and work from there. If they like reading sports magazines but not their reading/school books...then it's fine to read magazines together!

- Keep focussed work times short. Ensure that the work time is a bit shorter than your child's ability to tolerate it...in this way you build in success...even if it's only a minute or two. Some children respond well to a timer that they can see (others may be distracted and spend a lot of time watching it). It is better to have a short learning activity that works than a longer stressful one.
- If you feel overwhelmed by the work that has been sent to you by the school, do tell your child's teacher and work with them to agree what is reasonable to do each week. Ask the teacher to call once a week and check in with your child on what they have learned. This might improve your child's motivation to learn!
- If your child is older they might benefit from working online with peers. Ask your child's school if they could suggest (and help you to set up) a good virtual study group for your child to join. The school could also set a joint task for them to complete.
- If you are finding it difficult to manage your child's behaviour at home, do contact the school for a discussion and advice or raise it when the school contacts you for a regular check-in.
- You may like to watch this video with advice from Max Davie a paediatrician who has ADHD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrBGawusraY>
- www.Witherslackgroup.co.uk has a number of helpful webinars and videos by Amanda Kirkby on issues such as anxiety.