

Homework Help for the Attention Deficit Child

by: Jeannine Virtue Does the homework battle so typical with your hyperactive or A.D.D. child have you at the end of your rope? Relax. We have some tried-and-try ADHD information that should get your A.D.D. child on the right homework path. The hyperactive or A.D.D. child especially needs consistency, a work place free of distractions, solid encouragement and praise - along with established consequences if the positive homework tips fail. Establish a Set Homework Routine: Because the A.D.D. child functions best in a consistent environment, homework should be done in the same place, at the same time and for a set amount of time every day. Work with your child to develop that routine. Some Attention Deficit and hyperactive children work best immediately after school while others need an hour or two to settle down before jumping back into studies. To help the A.D.D. child better focus, the work area should be free of distractions, such as televisions, video games, music and other people. The kitchen table might not be the best place if there is too much activity in that room. The bedroom can offer distractions if the television or stereo have a way of "turning themselves on" when you are not there to monitor. Mandatory Homework Time: We are strong proponents of establishing an allotted amount of homework time on school days. This set amount of time gives consistency to the hyperactive or A.D.D. child and discourages rushing through homework. Talk with your child's teachers about the average recommended homework time for the child's grade level. In general, elementary school children should spend about 30 minutes each night on homework. Middle school and high school students should spend about one hour on homework. If the child does not have homework that evening or they finish before the allotted time, the child can read until their mandatory homework time is over. "Chunking" and Scheduled Breaks: The hyperactive and A.D.D. child often experiences difficulty with long-range tasks. "Chunking" homework for the hyperactive or A.D.D. child helps break the homework task into smaller, more manageable pieces. You can break a 20-problem math assignment into four chunks of five problems each, with a small break in between chunks. If using the mandatory homework time schedule, set a kitchen timer to ring every five to 15 minutes, depending on the child's attention span. At every break, give your hyperactive or A.D.D. child a few minutes to move around or grab a snack to refocus their attention. Rewards/Consequences: As with any parenting issue, rewarding good behavior and disciplining poor behavior motivates kids toward good behavior. The A.D.D. child needs all the rewards they can get, along with firm and consistent consequences. A "homework contract" is an effective motivator for the A.D.D. and an especially valuable tool to encourage the A.D.D. child to accept responsibility for their work. The homework contract clearly states that when the homework is completed, the child will earn a reward. The contract also clearly outlines consequences for not completing homework. You can offer daily modest rewards like earning time to play Gameboy, the right to choose a favorite dinner or a modest treat or special privilege. Or, you can develop a point system for larger weekly rewards. You can give out one point for every night of completed homework for the child to cash in for a trip to the zoo after earning five points, for instance. Effective consequences for not completing homework are losing phone, computer, stereo and television privileges for the evening. To add a little more discomfort to the situation, have the child stay inside for the evening without friends. It is important that you remain calm, firm and consistent on nights when Attention Deficit Disorder child decides to get into a power struggle over homework. It may take a couple consequence days before the child realizes that completing homework makes for a better night than not doing homework. It is also important that you reward for effort and not just grades for the A.D.D. child. The goal is to develop a solid homework habit. With a homework habit established, better grades will automatically follow. Don't forget to offer the intangible rewards of smiles and praise when your child puts the effort into completing his homework. A "way to go" goes a long way in positive reinforcement for Attention Deficit Disorder children. Additional Homework ADHD Information: Using an assignment book for the A.D.D. child helps parents keep track of the child's daily and weekly homework. If the teacher does not use an assignment book, develop a system with the teacher so you know the child's homework assignments. If the A.D.D. child insist on heavy parental homework help, require that the child attempt problems at least twice before asking for homework help. They may need homework help, but make sure he puts a genuine effort into solving the problem first. Attention Deficit and hyperactive children may not be able to receive "A"s on every homework and school assignment. Instead of getting hung up on the traditional grading scale, give you're A.D.D. child an "A" for effort.

About the Author

Jeannine Virtue is a freelance journalist and mother of an Attention Deficit Disorder son. To learn more about natural and effective alternatives to Ritalin and other ADHD medications, visit <http://www.add-adhd-help-center.com>.
jvirtue@add-adhd-help-center.com

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