



ADDITUDE

SCHOOL RESOURCE

The Ultimate **ADHD** **Toolkit** for Parents & Teachers

**Fourteen invaluable tools—checklists,
charts, worksheets, letters, parent-teacher
conversation starters, and more—to help you and
your child team up with teachers
for a successful school year.**

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Get to Know My Child

Personalize this letter of introduction and hand it to the teacher during the first month of school.

Dear [Teacher's Name],

We wanted to take this opportunity to help you get to know [Child's Name] better. He is smart, but he often struggles in school because of his ADHD and deficits in executive functions. The more you know about him, the easier your job will be and the more successful he will be in school.



First let me tell you about his strengths:

- > Creative
- > Kind and respectful
- > Eager to please adults

[Child's Name's] special interests and talents

- > Athletic; a great swimmer
- > Understands and can program and repair computers
- > Does electrical repairs around the house
- > Loves video games
- > Enjoys socializing with friends

Most of [Child's Name's] challenges are due to his diagnosed ADHD and executive function deficits:

- > Daydreaming
- > Finds it hard to get started on and finish his work
- > Forgets homework assignments
- > Forgets to turn in homework
- > Weak written expression—finds it hard to get his ideas on paper and to organize them
- > Difficulty memorizing math facts, learning foreign languages, and completing complex multi-step algebra problems
- > Slow writing and reading—as a result, he produces less written work

Previous teachers have found these strategies to be most effective. He has a Section 504 Plan, which has been helpful in recent years.

- > Select someone to gently remind him to get started
- > Tap him gently on his shoulder to get his attention
- > Give him a quiet place to take tests

Our child wants to do well in school, even though it may be hard for him at times. His [dad] and I are willing to work with you any time. Let us know if texting, email, or calling fits your schedule best. Here's our contact information: [111-111-1111; name@email.com].

We look forward to having a great school year.

Warm regards,

[Your Names(s)]

Let Me Introduce Myself

Have your child fill out this form and give it to the teacher during the first two weeks of school.

NAME: _____

I've put a check mark next to the things that work best for me in the classroom. But first, let me tell you a little about myself:

1. I love doing these things in my spare time at home:

2. I am very good at the following activities:

3. My five biggest strengths are:

4. My four biggest weaknesses are:

5. I would love to do the following when I grow up:

6. My favorite subjects are:

7. I make my best grades in these classes:

8. My most difficult subjects are:

9. I can learn best in these situations:

When:

☐ in the morning ☐ other

With:

☐ by myself ☐ working with a friend

☐ working with a tutor ☐ other

Where:

☐ at my desk ☐ on the floor

☐ at the work table in the back of the room

☐ other

Conditions:

☐ sitting at my desk ☐ sitting on the floor

☐ kneeling at my desk ☐ standing behind my desk

☐ listening to music ☐ in a quiet area

☐ wearing noise-blocking headphones

☐ away from the door and distractions

☐ walking around ☐ other

10. It helps if I have study breaks:

☐ every 20 minutes ☐ every 30 minutes

☐ after I finish a certain part of the work (one half, one third, or one section)

11. I like to...

☐ Sit at the end of a row so I won't disturb others if I stand up

☐ Stand up and walk around briefly

☐ Stand up and stretch

12. These strategies help me stay organized and complete my homework:

☐ use an assignment book

☐ write down the assignments

☐ have a friend write assignments down and give me a copy

☐ send my assignments to my phone and/or my parent's phone (**remind.com** software)

☐ have a "row captain" remind me to write down my homework and remind me to turn it in

☐ call a friend at home if I forget assignments

☐ keep an extra textbook at home

☐ ask a friend to help me review and organize my notebook

☐ dictate assignments on a recorder

☐ have someone help me plan the sequence of what I do first, second, and last

☐ estimate how long an assignment will take

☐ put finished work in one place

☐ color-code folders and book covers

☐ break long-term assignments into sections with different due dates

☐ send home a reminder of due dates for the final project via email or a note

☐ other

13. What helps me learn and remember information:

☐ write things down ☐ draw a picture

☐ use a mind map ☐ use flash cards

☐ type it into a computer ☐ listen to a recording

☐ read it out loud ☐ talk about the information

☐ make or build something ☐ use associations; mnemonics

☐ use songs or rhymes ☐ other

Explaining ADHD to Teachers

Share this infographic, created by Chris A. Zeigler Dendy and Alex Zeigler, with your teacher (artwork adapted by ADDitude magazine).

The Tip of the Iceberg:

The Obvious ADHD Behaviors

Hyperactivity

- > Can't sit still
- > Fidgets
- > Talks a lot
- > Runs or climbs a lot
- > Always on the go

Impulsivity

- > Lacks self control
- > Difficulty awaiting turn
- > Blurts out
- > Interrupts
- > Intrudes

- > Talks back
- > Loses temper

Inattention

- > Disorganized
- > Doesn't follow through

- > Doesn't pay attention
- > Is forgetful
- > Doesn't seem to listen
- > Loses things
- > Late homework

THE ADHD ICEBERG

Only 1/8 of an iceberg is visible. Most of it is hidden beneath the surface.

Hidden Beneath the Surface:

The Not-So-Obvious Behaviors (2/3 have at least one other condition)

Neurotransmitter Deficits Impact Behavior

- > Insufficient levels of neurotransmitters, dopamine and norepinephrine, results in reduced brain activity.

Weak Executive Functioning

- > Working memory and recall
- > Getting started, effort
- > Internalizing language
- > Controlling emotions
- > Problem solving

Impaired Sense of Time

- > Doesn't judge passage of time accurately
- > Loses track of time
- > Often late
- > Forgets long-term

- projects or is late
- > Difficulty planning for future
- > Impatient
- > Hates waiting
- > Time creeps
- > Avoids doing homework

Sleep Disturbance (56%)

- > Impacts memory
- > Doesn't get restful sleep
- > Can't fall asleep
- > Can't wake up
- > Late for school
- > Irritable
- > Morning battles

3-Year Delayed Brain Maturation

- > Less mature
- > Less responsible
- > 18-year-old acts like 15

Not Learning Easily from Rewards and Punishment

- > Repeats misbehavior
- > May be difficult to discipline

- > Less likely to follow rules
- > Difficulty managing his own behavior
- > Doesn't study past behavior
- > Acts without sense of hindsight
- > Must have immediate rewards
- > Long-term rewards don't work
- > Doesn't examine his own behavior
- > Difficulty changing his behavior

Co-Existing Conditions

- > Anxiety (34%)
- > Depression (29%)

- > Bipolar (12%)
- > Tourette Syndrome (11%)
- > Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (4%)
- > Oppositional Defiant Disorder (54-67%)

Serious Learning Problems

- > Specific Learning Disability (25-50%)
- > Poor working memory
- > Can't memorize easily
- > Forgets teacher and parent requests
- > Slow math calculation
- > Spelling problems
- > Poor written expression
- > Difficulty writing essays
- > Slow retrieval of information

- > Poor listening and reading comprehension
- > Difficulty describing the world in words
- > Disorganization
- > Slow cognitive processing speed
- > Poor handwriting
- > Inattention
- > Impulsive learning style

Low Frustration Tolerance

- > Difficulty controlling emotions
- > Short fuse
- > Emotionally reactive
- > Loses temper easily
- > May give up more easily
- > Doesn't stick with things
- > Speaks or acts before thinking
- > Difficulty seeing others' perspective
- > May be self-centered

ADHD is often more complex than most people realize! Like icebergs, many problems related to ADHD are not visible. ADHD may be mild, moderate, or severe, is likely to coexist with other conditions, and may be a disability for some students.

Explaining ADHD to Classmates

Give this handout to parents of your child's classmates to help them better understand ADHD.

ADHD AFFECTS ABOUT ONE IN 10 CHILDREN NATION-wide, so, chances are, your child will come across many classmates with ADHD throughout his school years. He might have questions—why a classmate takes medicine even though he isn't sick, why he is always

getting out of his seat, or why he needs to play with a fidget toy. The questions and answers below will help you and your child understand a child with ADHD's behaviors and actions better and accept him as someone who is doing his best to meet the challenges of the disorder.

What is ADHD?

ADHD causes the brain to work super fast. Sometimes it feels like a train going down a hill without brakes. Children with ADHD can't always stop their brain long enough to focus on something. ADHD can make a child's body feel like it has to keep moving. Sometimes people with ADHD act before thinking.

What causes ADHD?

ADHD is a neurobiological condition that children are born with. It is not caused by poor parenting, poor nutrition, or lack of discipline. It isn't a disease, and children with ADHD aren't sick, bad, or flawed.

Why do children take medication if they aren't sick?

Medication for ADHD is like eyeglasses for people who don't see well. It isn't to treat an illness, but it does help their brains slow down. It might make their bodies stop feeling like they need to constantly move. ADHD medication doesn't take ADHD away, just as glasses don't improve your eyesight; they simply correct your vision while you are wearing them.

Does ADHD mean there is something wrong with you?

No. ADHD means your brain works differently. Everyone has things they are good at and things they aren't so good at. Some people are good at art and some people are not. Some people are good at sports while others might be good at math. People with ADHD aren't so good at paying attention, remembering things, organization, sitting still, or thinking before they act. When you have ADHD, it doesn't mean you can't do these things, but it does mean you have to work harder to do them.

What are people with ADHD good at?

People with ADHD may be very creative, good at problem-solving, enthusiastic, or have high energy levels, and can be successful at a lot of different jobs when they grow up. There are many politicians, doctors, lawyers, and businesspeople who have ADHD.

Does ADHD mean you are not very smart?

People with ADHD are like everyone else. The condition doesn't have anything to do with intelligence. Many successful people have had it—people believe that Walt Disney and Albert Einstein had ADHD.

Classmate to Classmate

Kids will be kids, and your child might be tempted to ask a classmate with ADHD about his behaviors and actions. Here are some responses your child might hear if he or she does:

WHAT IS ADHD?

It means I can't pay attention for very long and my body doesn't want to stay still.

WHY DO YOU GET TO SIT IN THE FRONT ROW EVERY DAY?

It is easier for me to pay attention when something is right in front of me. When I sit at the back of the classroom, there are lots of things for me to look at and I pay attention to everything or I day-dream. When I sit in the front, I pay more attention to the teacher because there are fewer things for me to look at.

WHY DO YOU GET TO PLAY WITH SMALL TOYS AT YOUR DESK?

My body has a hard time staying still. When I have something my hands can play with, I can keep my body still, and my brain focuses better.

WHY DO YOU GO TO A DIFFERENT ROOM TO TAKE TESTS?

When I am taking tests in the classroom, I tend to look around and get distracted. Going to a different room helps me concentrate.

WHY DO YOU INTERRUPT THE TEACHER SOME OF THE TIME?

Sometimes I do things without thinking. Like when you suddenly want to do something, but you can't stop yourself. My ADHD sometimes makes it hard for me to stop myself. Or think of it this way: When you are riding a bike, you have to put the brakes on to slow down. Sometimes I have a hard time putting on the brakes in my head. I blurt things out or do something without thinking because I didn't use my brain brakes and slow down to think about it first.

7 Conversation Starters

An adversarial parent-teacher relationship benefits no one. The key to collaboration is clear communication—without any blame or hostility. Use these sentence starters to begin developing a healthy rapport with your child's new teachers.

WHAT YOU SHOULD SAY	WHY YOU SHOULD SAY IT
“Thank you for...”	Starting a meeting by thanking the teacher sets a positive tone. Think about a time your child told you the teacher helped him or was supportive. Let the teacher know that you appreciate her efforts. If you can't think of a reason to thank the teacher, start with, “Thank you for talking with me today.”
“I am concerned about...”	Frame your concerns around you rather than your child or the teacher. “I am concerned that Matt is falling behind in math,” sounds better than, “Matt isn't doing well in math,” or “You should be doing more to help Matt with his math.” Using “I am concerned...” opens up a conversation about how you can work together to improve areas in which your child is struggling.
“Do you have any suggestions about...”	You know your child best; however, the teacher might have some ideas on how you can help your son or daughter in class. The teacher has the opportunity to observe your child at school. Asking for suggestions lets the teacher know that you respect her opinion.
“What do you see as my child's strengths?”	Conversations with teachers sometimes devolve into negative talks, especially if your child is struggling or misbehaving in school. Focus on your child's positive aspects to release tension and allow both of you to look at the situation from a different perspective.
“I've noticed that my child responds to...”	Share your perspective with teachers and give them information that could be helpful. Wording this as your point of view allows you to give input without being accusatory or making the teacher feel defensive.
“His IEP provides for _____. How do you implement that in the classroom?”	By using this wording, you are saying that you assume the teacher is following the IEP, instead of accusing her of not following it.
“What can I do to help?”	Whether you are asking how you can support your child's learning at home or how you can volunteer at school, the teacher will appreciate your wanting to be involved in your child's education.

Parent-Teacher Worksheet

Capture the details of the meeting with this handy and comprehensive form.

MEETING WITH THE TEACHER TO DISCUSS YOUR child's challenges is the first step in putting your child on the road to success in the classroom. Bring a copy of this worksheet to the meeting and fill it

out with the teacher. This will help ensure that you are both on the same page in terms of which challenges need to be tackled and which steps each of you can take to help your child succeed academically and behaviorally.

DATE: _____ **TEACHER NAME:** _____

GRADE: _____ **SUBJECT:** (necessary for older children) _____

PARENT: _____

STRENGTHS:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asks for help when needed | <input type="checkbox"/> Does well on tests | <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful to students and teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comes to class prepared | <input type="checkbox"/> Gets along with others | <input type="checkbox"/> Listens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completes homework | <input type="checkbox"/> Has positive attitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Participates in class |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solves problems creatively | <input type="checkbox"/> Puts forth effort | |

COMMENTS: _____

CONCERNS:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is often not prepared | <input type="checkbox"/> Fails to hand in homework | <input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't finish classwork |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disrupts class | <input type="checkbox"/> Does poorly on tests | <input type="checkbox"/> Is disrespectful to other students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty paying attention | <input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty following directions | <input type="checkbox"/> Is disrespectful to teachers |

COMMENTS: _____

SPECIFIC ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES: _____

STEPS FOR TEACHER: _____

STEPS FOR PARENT: _____

The Daily Report Card

Adapt this form (or print as is) and ask the teacher to use it on a daily basis to monitor progress.

THE DAILY REPORT CARD TARGETS PROBLEM BEHAVIORS in the classroom. The goals should be tailored to each child's individual needs. (For more details on setting up a DRC, click the link under "How to Establish a Daily Report Card" at ccf.fiu.edu/about/resources/index.html.) The main areas to focus on are

academic productivity, following classroom rules, peer relationships, and teacher relationships. Every day the teacher marks down how well the child meets his/her goals for the day, and the parent gives a reward at home for positive DRC performance. This tool encourages home-school communication on a daily basis.

Daily Report Card

	SPECIAL	LANGUAGE ARTS	MATH	READING	SS/SCIENCE	SPECIAL
1. Completes assignments with at least 80% accuracy	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹
2. Follows teacher directions with 2 or fewer reminders	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹
3. Is respectful to peers with 2 or fewer reminders	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹

TO EARN REWARD: _____ has to earn 14 of 18 ☺s
 (Child's name)

TOTAL ☺ EARNED: _____

TEACHER SIGNATURE: _____

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

COMMENTS: _____

Weekly Monitoring Report

Print this form and ask the teacher to use it to track the effectiveness of your child's treatment plan.

CHILD'S NAME: _____ Date: _____

TEACHER: _____ Class: _____

TEACHER: Please circle the number that best applies to each item below based on your observations of this child during the past week.		0 = Not at all 2 = Pretty Much 1 = A Little 3 = Very Much			
QUESTION		SCALE			
1. Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat		0	1	2	3
2. Difficulty remaining seated		0	1	2	3
3. Difficulty waiting turn		0	1	2	3
4. Talks excessively		0	1	2	3
5. Interrupts others		0	1	2	3
6. Always "on the go"		0	1	2	3
7. Easily distracted		0	1	2	3
8. Fails to complete assigned tasks		0	1	2	3
9. Trouble paying attention		0	1	2	3
10. Careless/messy work		0	1	2	3
11. Does not seem to listen when spoken to		0	1	2	3
12. Difficulty following directions		0	1	2	3
NOTE: For the following three items, higher scores indicate better functioning by the child.					
13. Follows class rules		0	1	2	3
14. Gets along with peers		0	1	2	3
15. Seems happy and in good mood		0	1	2	3

11 Tips for Redirecting Focus

Your students with ADHD are drifting away. One is daydreaming; another is whispering to a neighbor. Your first instinct might be to call out their names. Don't. Children with ADHD often feel out of place and disliked. Singling them out can embarrass them and drive their thoughts further from your lesson. Instead, try these strategies...

1	Walk around the class while teaching. Randomly tap on students' desks with the eraser end of a pencil, so as not to draw attention to the tapping. Make sure to tap on the desk of the student with ADHD. By randomly tapping on several desks, you don't draw attention only to the student with ADHD.
2	Provide or allow the child to use a rubber ball or another fidget device that doesn't make noise. Many children with ADHD find it easier to focus if their hands are busy.
3	Gently touch the student's shoulder.
4	Use the student's name in your lesson —name a character after him, or use her name in a sentence.
5	Send the student on an errand. If you don't have any errands to do, write on a piece of paper, "Please smile and say thank you to John and send him back to class." Staple it together and ask him to take it to the school office, library, or nurse.
6	Start a discussion about the lesson to make it more interactive. Look for points in your lesson to ask questions that will prompt discussion or opinion sharing. It is easy for a child with ADHD to drift off or become distracted when only the teacher is talking. Bringing more people into the lesson creates variety and interest.
7	Establish eye contact with the student, and speak while looking at him.
8	Ask the entire class to stand up. Say, "We have been sitting for a while. Please stand up right next to your desk." Have the students jump up and down, touch their toes, raise their arms, and stretch before sitting down again.
9	Use a secret signal —touching your ear or saying a particular phrase—to attract the student's attention.
10	Walk around the classroom and pause at the student's desk.
11	Stand close to the student's desk.

ADHD-Friendly Lesson Plans

- > Incorporate the student's interests into the lesson—use sports metaphors or references to music.
- > Start by giving a summary of the lesson, and summarize it again at the end.
- > Engage the students' senses during class.

- For example, have them feel swaths of muslin or wool to better understand clothing worn during the 18th century.
- > Make lessons interactive by using pictures or flash cards.
 - > Add movement to lessons when possible.

- For example, you might ask your students to touch their toes while reciting math facts, or to walk around the room while spelling words.
- > Ring a cowbell to signal the start of a new lesson or topic.

Executive Function Worksheet

Find your child's EF challenges and check off the interventions that have been effective (or you think may be effective). Talk them over with his teacher(s).

PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES RELATED TO ADHD & EFD

Getting started and finishing classwork

- ☐ Use reminders: visual (Post-it note, timer) or aural (alarm, adult prompt).
- ☐ Give a private signal as a reminder; pull your ear.
- ☐ Student selects nearby student to tap his arm as a reminder.

Remembering, completing, and submitting assignments

- ☐ Use **remind.com** software to notify student and parent of assignments.
- ☐ Appoint "row captains" to check to see that homework assignments are written down and later submitted.
- ☐ Let student take a picture of the posted assignment on his cell phone.

Losing homework

- ☐ Notify parents of missing assignments.
- ☐ Parents should keep all finished papers, review with child, and submit missing work.

Following directions

- ☐ State directions clearly: Step 1, do all odd problems. Step 2,....
- ☐ Post directions on board or give written copies to students.

Getting organized

- ☐ Walk all students step-by-step through organizing their notebooks, and check them regularly.
- ☐ Ask another student to help him organize his notebook.
- ☐ Parent/tutor reviews student's notebook weekly and helps with organization.

No sense of time (late)

- ☐ Have student set watch or cell phone alarm to keep up with time.
- ☐ Parents review how much time is needed for driving, parking, visiting the locker, and talking with friends. Leave early enough to get to school on time.

Changing activities or classes

- ☐ Give a warning, "Finish up. In five minutes

you need to start work on your math assignment/leave for lunch, PE, or art."

Planning ahead

- ☐ List step-by-step requirements, divided into segments with separate due dates.
- ☐ Notify parents/students of pending separate due dates.

Controlling emotions, acting impulsively, talking a lot, or daydreaming

- ☐ Medication is most helpful when a child talks a lot, daydreams, blurts out, or interrupts.
- ☐ Take a photo of the child raising her hand; tape it to her desk as a visual reminder.
- ☐ Give opportunities to talk more: read the morning bulletin, read stories to younger children.

COMMON ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

Slow processing speed (slow reading, writing, responding to questions, and taking longer to complete tests and homework)

- ☐ Shorten assignments (e.g., every third math problem).
- ☐ Give extended time on tests.
- ☐ If student spends hours completing homework that takes most students 30 minutes, shorten assignments.
- ☐ Allow student to write answers only, not the questions (photocopy questions).
- ☐ Ask a question, give a few minutes to think, and come back to student for answer.

Remembering key points in lectures and what they read and study

- ☐ Appoint a note taker who copies and shares with the class.
- ☐ Have student slide color cellophane strip or ruler down the page to highlight and help him focus on what he's reading.
- ☐ Use erasable highlighter to note important information.
- ☐ Underline main noun and verb in first sentence in each paragraph to identify main idea.
- ☐ Write key points on Post-it notes.
- ☐ Teach test-taking skills.

- ☐ Encourage students to review test material briefly right before going to bed.

Memorizing facts: letters, numbers, words, multiplication tables, math formulas, and foreign languages

- ☐ Use memory tricks, such as acronyms or mnemonics.
- ☐ Write key facts on strips of poster board and post at school or home.
- ☐ Consider *Times Tables the Fun Way*, a book that helps kids memorize math facts.
- ☐ Post chart with multiplication tables on desk.

Analyzing, synthesizing, paraphrasing, and problem-solving

- ☐ Provide step-by-step written instructions for assignments.
- ☐ See tips below for organizing and writing essays.

Writing essays or reports

- ☐ Have student dictate essay to a "scribe" or parent to type, then edit and organize on the computer.
- ☐ Use graphic organizers with step-by-step tips for essay components.
- ☐ Average two grades on essays—one for content and one for grammar.
- ☐ Give topic choices of only two or three titles, quickly narrow down to one topic.

Completing complex math/algebra problems

- ☐ Solve sample problem and leave on the board.
- ☐ Have students work in pairs (teacher explains problem, students make up their own examples, and discuss answers).

Completing long-term projects on time

- ☐ Provide graphic organizer to plan necessary steps to complete the project.
- ☐ Provide a job card with steps required for completion.
- ☐ Divide long-term projects into segments with separate due dates and grades.
- ☐ Notify parents about projects. Include this in the student's IEP or 504 Plan.

12 Parent Advocacy Secrets

Check off the advocacy strategies you plan to use to work with your child's teacher this year.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Start early in the school year. Set up a meeting in the first few weeks of school to sit down with the teacher, even if just to chat and get to know her classroom rules. Starting the relationship early helps to address potential problems and identify difficulties before they become disasters.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask what you can do at home to help your child grow academically and socially. Let the teacher know what you are focusing on at home, so she can contribute ideas. Learn to work together.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Help the teacher see your child as an individual. Tell her about his strengths, potential behavior issues, learning challenges, and health conditions. If there are changes in family circumstances, such as a death in the family during the school year, let the teacher know, as these can adversely affect his behavior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Let go of past bad experiences. Not every teacher is created equal. You might have had difficulties in the past with other teachers. It is best to put this aside as you try to work with this year's teacher.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get involved. Join the parent organization, volunteer to help in the classroom, add your name to be a chaperone on field trips, attend school functions. When you are involved, you not only have the chance to observe how your child behaves, you have the opportunity for positive interactions with your child's teacher.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reach out in good times and bad. If you contact your child's teacher only when he is doing poorly or acting out, you might have a more negative view of the teacher, or your interactions might be defensive. Instead, when your child says something nice about his school day or about his teacher, take time to send her a note of appreciation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respect the teacher's time. Keep in mind that the teacher has many students, and cannot stop everything to talk when you want. During your early conversations, discuss the best ways to communicate that will allow regular discussions but not interfere with her ability to attend to the rest of the class. Explain the best ways to reach you.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Document communication with the teacher. Write down the date of the communication, what you discussed, and the resolution. This helps you keep track of what steps you should take and what you expect the teacher to do.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have a clear objective in mind before talking to the teacher. Think about your concerns before reaching out. You might say, "I'm concerned about Elana's poor math grades. I'd like to set up a time to talk about steps we can both take to make sure she doesn't fall behind."
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be specific when making requests. If you are asking for the teacher's assistance, instead of saying, "Jeremy needs help gathering materials to bring home," and expecting the teacher to assist him, say, "I am concerned because Jeremy often shows up at home without the materials to do his homework. Can you work with Jeremy each afternoon to make sure he has everything with him?" Clear expectations prevent misunderstandings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid criticizing the teacher. Whether in person, over the phone, or through email, always pay attention to the words you use when talking to the teacher. Criticizing is the quickest way to make a teacher feel defensive.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on solutions rather than problems. Keep your conversation solution-centered, rather than focusing on how your child misbehaved, treated others disrespectfully, or is having learning challenges.

Accommodations Request

Send this sample letter to your district's head of education and a copy to your child's principal.

Dear Mr./Ms. [name]:

I would like to request an evaluation of my son/daughter [full name and student ID# or date of birth] for his/her eligibility for special education provisions (IDEA) and/or Section 504 accommodations. I have been concerned that he/she is not progressing well in school, and that he/she may need some special help in order to learn. He/she is in the [grade level and name of current teacher].

During the last two years, his/her classroom teachers have noted that he/she has substantial problems completing assignments, problems with excessive motor behavior, and impulsivity. Please note that Dr. Verywell Qualified [your doctor's name] has recently evaluated and diagnosed my child as having Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Because Dr. Verywell Qualified [your doctor's name] was concerned that his/her ADHD was resulting in decreased alertness and impairment in school performance and learning, he/she urged us to pursue these school-based evaluations in order to get my son/daughter the help he/she needs.

I understand that the evaluation is to be provided at no charge to me. My reasons for requesting the procedure are [keep this paragraph short, but give one or two reasons for your concern about your child].

I would appreciate meeting with each person who will be doing the evaluation before he/she tests my child, so that I might share information about [child's name] with him/her. I will also expect a copy of the written report generated by each individual, so that I might review it before the [IEP or 504 Plan] meeting.

It is my understanding that I have to provide written permission for these tests to be administered, and I will be happy to do so upon receipt of the proper forms and explanation of the process.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience, so that we may begin the next steps in planning an evaluation.

Sincerely,

Parent [your name]

Homework Ideas That Work

Check off the strategies you think would work best for your child and discuss with the teacher.

What Parents Can Do

<input type="checkbox"/>	Structure your child's time after school hours so that homework is completed at the same time each day. Some children have more focus immediately after school, before they enter "home mode." Others find they need a little down time to have a snack and play before settling down to tackle homework.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask your child's teacher how she passes along homework assignments. She might hand out worksheets, write homework on the board, or assign it orally. If your child forgets the assignments or supplies he will need, discuss different ways to assign homework, such as keeping it posted on the board throughout the day or using an online calendar to allow assignments to be accessed from home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a homework spot away from the family area where there will be fewer distractions. Stock the area with pencils, pens, paper, and a calculator.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with your child at the beginning of homework time to help him break assignments into 15- to 20-minute work periods. Allow him to take a short break after each period.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use behavioral charts to motivate your child. You might award a star each time he continues to work for 15 minutes, and give another star when homework is complete and in a folder to be returned to school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If returning work to school is a problem, talk to the teacher about your child's scanning the completed assignment (if it isn't done on a computer) and emailing it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a checklist your child can follow each day —gather supplies, complete math worksheets, read, etc.

What Teachers Can Do

<input type="checkbox"/>	Read assignments aloud and post them on the board each morning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Allow enough time during class for students to write down the assignments. Consider keeping assignments posted for the entire day.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use an online calendar to allow access to homework assignments from home. Teachers can use Google calendar or Assign-A-Day, a free tool for educators that lets students and parents see homework assignments, upcoming tests, and due dates from their phone, tablet, or computer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign study buddies, but don't put one student in charge of the other. Team up every student in the class and ask each one to check to make sure their partner has everything he needs to bring home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request that each student have a folder designated for completed work only. Each morning, have students take out their folders and hand in homework.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be responsive to the length of time homework assignments take. For some students, an assignment can take hours to complete at home. Consider giving them partial assignments, such as solving the odd-numbered problems. This will allow the child to show progress and understanding in less time and with less frustration.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with parents to determine how much time is needed to complete homework. If a student works on an assignment for an hour, the parent may consider it completed, even if the child didn't finish every problem.

Smart Learning Apps: The List

We asked teachers to recommend apps and programs that have helped their students learn and practice positive behaviors.

Academic Study and Review		
	STUDY STACK (studystack.com)	Create flash cards using the app or studystack.com for language, math, and science. Once you create the flash cards, the app automatically comes up with games to motivate you to study.
	KAHOOT! (itunes.apple.com)	Allows teachers to create classroom games based on any subject. You come up with multiple choice questions, and you can add videos, images, and diagrams to make it more engaging.
	VOCABULARY SPELLING CITY (spellingcity.com)	This website helps kids improve spelling and vocabulary by playing games. The site has word lists for every subject and grade level.
	KHAN ACADEMY (khanacademy.org ; itunes.apple.com)	A full menu of short YouTube video tutorials in math, algebra, science, engineering, computing, finance, arts, and the humanities.
	QUIZLET (quizlet.com ; itunes.apple.com)	Create your own flash cards on any subject or choose cards from other Quizlet users.
	DEXTERIA & DEXTERIA JR. (itunes.apple.com)	Help kids focus, improve, and perfect the fine motor skills necessary for writing through a set of hand exercises.
Student Tools		
	TOOLS 4 STUDENTS 2 (itunes.apple.com)	Features 25 graphic organizers for students in grades 4-12 to organize their thoughts while reading or preparing to write.
	INSPIRATION & KIDSPIRATION (inspiration.com)	This software is ideal for visual learners who retain information by associating words and concepts with images. The program offers graphic organizers, concept mapping, mind mapping, webbing, and other visual tools.
	MATHWAY—MATH PROBLEM SOLVER (mathway.com)	Answers algebra, trigonometry, and precalculus questions with step-by-step instructions. Caution: Let your child use this app only when he gets completely stumped and can't figure out how to solve a problem.
Classroom Behavior Management		
	PBISWORLD (pbisworld.com)	A website and app for parents and teachers that address challenging behaviors in class and at home. Click on the specific behavior and receive positive intervention strategies.
	CLASS DOJO (classdojo.com)	A classroom management system that allows teachers to encourage positive behaviors by providing immediate feedback to students.