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OUR ANNUAL SPECIAL

# SUCCESS @SCHOOL

Grade-A strategies from top teachers to help your student do his best

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VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1



Display until Nov. 1, 2012

>> READERS SOUND OFF ON...EZ, tasty meals, getting kids to bed, breaking a bad mood

"If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn." —IGNACIO ESTRADA

# 2012

## Success at School

Classroom pros tell how you and your child's teachers can work together to help him excel.

"Imagine playing a game. It's a game that you really want to do well at, but one that you absolutely hate," say Robert Reid, Ph.D., and Joseph Johnson, Ph.D., in *Teacher's Guide to ADHD: What Works for Special-Needs Learners*.

"The game makes you feel awkward. You struggle even on a good day, and you frequently experience frustration and failure....You try your best, but, no matter how hard you try, you seem to screw up regularly. Often you're not sure what you did wrong. It would be a lot more fun if you had a friend who could play, too, somebody who might help you, perhaps, but nobody seems to want to play with you."

When teachers consider school from the point of view of the student with ADHD, it's easier for them to face the classroom challenges posed by the disorder. That's why *ADDitude* asked a group of top professionals who help our kids succeed in school (see "Meet the Teachers," opposite page) to give tips and tools to you and your child's teachers to help him make the grade. Special thanks to Chris A. Zeigler Dendy, M.S., author of *Teaching Teens with ADD and ADHD*, who consulted with the teachers to create a guide that will help kids in the post-elementary years through high school.

As you see, the teachers cover a wide range of subjects: reading, writing, math, algebra, chemistry, physics, general science, increasing listening comprehension, getting started in the classroom, staying organized, sticking with homework, and making friends. There are strategies for almost every subject your child will take in middle school and beyond.

We hope you will refer to this guide often and share it with your child's teachers. After all, all of the information comes from classroom teachers who get results with our kids.

If you would like to purchase copies of previous back-to-school handbooks, log on to [ADDitudeMag.com/store/booklets.html](http://ADDitudeMag.com/store/booklets.html). And drop us a line at [letters@ADDitudeMag.com](mailto:letters@ADDitudeMag.com) to tell us what works for *your* child at school. We'd love to hear from you.

—the editors of *ADDitude*

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# Meet the Teachers

Seventeen pros with decades of experience in the classroom—these are the experts behind this year's Success at School.



**ALGEBRA**  
**DAWN WEIGEL** is a seventh-grade teacher at Minnetonka Middle

School West, in Excelsior, Minnesota. Weigel has been teaching for 10 years and is currently working toward an M.S. in Education.



**CHELSEA LEE, M.A.,** is a math teacher at Minnetonka Middle School West, in Excelsior, Min-

nesota. She teaches mainstream and basic skills math classes, working with students at all levels.



**GENERAL SCIENCE**  
**BROOKE McFry (left)** is a third-grade teacher at Saks Elementary

School, in Anniston, Alabama. She has an M.S. in Elementary Education from Jacksonville State University, with endorsements in middle school science and math.

**JILL BROOKES** is a fourth-grade teacher at Saks Elementary School, in Anniston, Alabama. She has sponsored teams of students to compete in the Science Olympiad and GEMS (Girls Engaged in Math and Science).



**GET STARTED**  
**SELENA CONLEY, Ed.S.** (Educational Specialist) is a third-grade teacher at Trion

Elementary School, in Trion, Georgia. She has been teaching for 13 years.

## LISTENING SKILLS, HOMEWORK, SOCIAL SKILLS



**GINA WHITING (left),** a Kindergarten teacher

at Saks Elementary School, in Anniston, Alabama, has an M.S. in Elementary Education. She is a National Board Teacher for Early Childhood and has been teaching for 20 years.

**SARAH AMBERSON (center)** is a special education teacher specializing in behavior interventions at Saks Elementary School, in Anniston, Alabama. She has a B.S. in Collaborative Education and has taught for seven years.

**BRANDI BARNES (right)** is a first-grade teacher at Saks Elementary School, in Anniston, Alabama. She has a B.S. in Elementary Education and has taught for eight years.



**LONG-TERM PROJECTS**  
**SANDRA DENDY** has more than 20 years experience teaching in both

urban and rural school settings. A graduate of Georgia Southern University, she currently teaches eighth-grade Language Arts at Andalusia Middle School, in Andalusia, Alabama.



**MATH**  
**MONIQUE CARLISLE GRIER (left)** is a third-

grade teacher at Saks Elementary School, in Anniston, Alabama. She wrote and received a grant for implementation of Math-R-Us—math instruction taught through demonstrations, visual aids, manipulatives, and hands-on learning—in her classroom.

**KRYSTAL McDANIEL** is a fourth-grade teacher at Saks Elementary School, in Anniston, Alabama. She received a B.S. in Elementary Education from Jacksonville State University. At Saks Elementary, McDaniel serves on several committees that center on student success.

## ORGANIZATION



**JUDY BANDY, RN, LSN,** is a school nurse at Minnetonka Middle

School West, in Excelsior, Minnesota. She consults with schools on incorporating new strategies to support students with ADHD. She is founder of a support program for middle school students with ADHD and author of *Tools for an ADHD Learning Lab*. She is taking a leave of absence for the 2012-2013 school year.

## CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS

**BILLIE ABNEY** teaches physical science, anatomy, physiology,



and forensics at Sonoraville High School, in Calhoun, Georgia. She has a B.S. from the University

of Tennessee at Chattanooga and has spoken internationally with her sister, Chris Dendy, on ADHD and executive function.



**READING**  
**SHASTA McFry (left),** an educator

for 12 years, is a reading specialist at Saks Elementary School, in Anniston, Alabama. She holds an M.S. in Educational Administration.

**JESSICA COBB,** an educator for eight years, is a reading interventionist at Saks Elementary School, in Anniston, Alabama. She holds an M.S. in Elementary Education.



**WRITING**  
**GREG SPOON** is a seventh-grade Language Arts teacher at Centre Middle School, in

Centre, Alabama. He has been teaching for 19 years.



**AMELIA BARNES, M.Ed.,** taught English for over 30 years in the San Diego area, and now lives in

Anniston, Alabama.

**On the Web** Tell us about a special teacher in your child's school who connects with your son or daughter on [ADDConnect.com](http://ADDConnect.com).

# Remember More from the Page

**S**TUDENTS WITH ADHD OFTEN COMPLAIN TO THEIR PARENTS AND teachers, "I've read the whole page, but I don't remember a thing." Difficulty remembering what is read is caused by executive function deficits. The following strategies can help kids remember and comprehend more of what they read.

Listen up! Audio books can focus an ADHD student.



**>Go beyond lectures to teach new material.** The technique called "carouseling" will help kids retain more of what they read. Students form small groups and respond to questions written on posters, hung up around the room, about the reading assignment. The teacher gives them time to discuss and form a response to a question on one of the posters. After the allotted time, the groups will move to the next question.

**>Practice reading in different ways.** Have everyone in the class read together at the same time. This is an excellent strategy when using a short piece to focus on. Read or re-read a passage orally to the class, leaving out key words. Give students a short, interesting passage to read. They re-read it until fluency increases, and they record their progress on a graph.

## Pointers for Parents

**>Team up.** Read to and with your child every day. Take turns reading paragraphs or pages. You read the pages on the left, and she reads the pages on the right. Read in unison, as you run your finger under the words.

**>Handle difficult words.** If your child mis-reads a word, immediately tell her the correct word. Have her track the word with her finger and read it aloud three times. Then ask your child to re-read the sentence with the word in it, and then continue on.

**>Give her a pass.** Give your child a blank piece of paper. After he reads a short passage, give him one to two minutes to write down everything he can about what he just read. When he is done, he hands it to you and gets a short break. Repeat the process.

**>Make it brief—and fun.** Struggling readers are intimidated by long books with too few illustrations. Give them age-appropriate picture books that have minimal text, joke and riddle books, comic books and magazines, and sheet music with lyrics.

**>Color-highlight key information.** Photocopy a chapter/unit from your child's textbook and have him highlight important words and definitions in one color and the main ideas in another.

## Tools for Teachers

**>Structure the lesson,** but accommodate students' different learning styles. Structured reading—the teacher reads a passage first, then the student, then together—limits stress for challenged readers, and also allow students to map the routine in their mind. Let a child stand at his desk or walk around the room when reading.

**>Create interest in the words on the page.** Gestures, facial expressions, and movement will keep a student's focus during a reading lesson. Air Spell allows a student to

practice spelling vocabulary words by writing them in the air with his finger. Response cards enable students to demonstrate their understanding of a reading passage. Write "yes" or "no" and "a," "b," or "c," on cards and have kids use them to answer questions.

**>Use color and sound.** Colored overlays for words, sentences, or pieces of text increase reader involvement. Listening to audio books and having students read aloud to themselves also improve comprehension. Use music to alert students that you are moving to the next reading topic.



**On the Web** Find lots more reading tips for your student on [ADDitudeMag.com](http://ADDitudeMag.com).



## MATH

BY MONIQUE CARLISLE GRIER  
AND KRYSTAL McDANIEL

# Conquer the Fear of Numbers

MIDDLE SCHOOL AND high school math are tough for students with ADHD. For one thing, the concepts get more abstract. Shifting to ADD-friendly ways of teaching at home and in the classroom will enable students to master the material.

## Tools for Teachers

**>Encourage active learning.** Before showing students how to solve word problems, give them a word problem and encourage them to work with peers to develop various methods to solve it. Some students will draw a picture to solve the problem; others will use mental math and solve it in their head. Others may identify key words within the word problem and use the standard algorithm to solve it. Give students time to discuss how they came to their own solutions.

**>Set up shop.** Open a classroom store/bank in which students use checkbooks and transaction sheets for deposits and withdrawals. Collect shopping circulars and allow students to shop in class. Give them a set amount of "money," and have them recalculate their balance as they purchase items. The class store will give students an idea of how money is managed while reinforcing addition, subtraction, decimals, and dollar/cent notation.

**>Make learning musical.** Many children like to sing along with tapes that set multiplication tables and other math concepts to catchy tunes. To engage students in your class, come up with chants or class songs set to a familiar tune.

**>Get other students to teach.** You've just taught a well-planned math lesson, but most of your students respond with a blank stare. Change your approach and allow the students who "get it" to teach it. Providing students the opportunity to learn from, share strategies with, and exchange feedback with peers is an effective way to gauge and evaluate student understanding. It also allows students the opportunity to discuss



Kids can learn about numbers at a garage sale.

difficult concepts using age-appropriate terminology and examples that students are apt to comprehend.

**>Teach the properties of key math concepts.** Do not rely solely on memorization and practice drills to teach math. Focus on the "why." For example, teach properties and rules of multiplication (before introducing basic facts), such as whenever you multiply a number by two, the product will end in an even number. This approach has been successful for our students who struggle in math. When we ask students with a learning disability why  $5 \times 2$  is not 11, they reply, "Any number multiplied by 2 should have an even product. Eleven is not an even number, so it is not the correct answer."

## Pointers for Parents

**>Be upbeat about math.** Many parents don't like math because they did poorly in it in school. Remain positive about the subject, so you don't pass along negative views to your child. Also, know your limits when working with him. Help him in areas in which

you are confident, and hire a tutor for topics in which you are not.

**>Key into your child's learning style.** Accommodating your child's learning style will make the difference between his doing well and failing math. Visual learners may master multiplication more easily if they can draw the problems. Five times six can be drawn with five rows of six objects in each row. When your child counts the objects, he will have 30. Auditory learners can master multiplication facts more quickly if they use a skip-counting jingle or a multiplication rap. Tactile/kinesthetic learners may benefit from using Unifix cubes—colorful interlocking cubes similar to Legos. If Unifix cubes are unavailable, use bingo chips, beans, or coins.

**>Stay open to new approaches.** Solving a double-digit multiplication problem the conventional way may be a no-brainer for you; however, there

are other approaches, such as repeated addition and the break-apart strategy, which may be easier for your child to understand. Encourage your child to explain his thinking process while solving problems. You may learn something, too.

**>Use math in everyday activities.** If you are serving a snack, such as cookies or grapes, allow your child to divide snacks among family members as a quick multiplication/division problem. While at a grocery store, practice converting ounces to pounds. On your ride home, tell him to pick out four passing cars on the road. Ask him how many cars were red, then ask him what fraction of the cars were red. If two of the four cars that passed were red, the fraction would be  $\frac{2}{4}$ .

**>Create and use manipulatives.** Using items around the house for a math lesson will strengthen a child's grasp of key concepts. Use uncooked pasta or dried beans to reinforce the concepts of division, subtraction, and addition. Try placing 40 items on a table. Then ask your child to divide them into 5 groups of 8—or subtract 10 and add back five.

**On the Web** Tell us about a teaching method that helped your child master math on [ADDConnect.com](http://ADDConnect.com).

# Experiment with These Strategies

## GENERAL SCIENCE

BY JILL BROOKS  
AND BROOKE McFRY

ADHD AND SCIENCE DO not make a perfect marriage. Learning abstract concepts and organizing complex projects take work and imagination. The tips below will help parents and teachers bring out the inner scientist in your child.

### Tools for Teachers

**>Begin each lesson with a hands-on demonstration.** Many scientific concepts are difficult to read about in textbooks. Demonstrations spark students' interest and allow them to grasp the concepts. Explaining a closed circuit by turning on a switch connected with wire to a D-cell battery and a light bulb will intrigue and enlighten him at the same time.

**>Pose a question.** If you are going to investigate a soaked bean seed, allow students to pose a question for this investigation. A possible question might be "What is found on the inside of a bean seed?" This simple question, when referred to throughout the investigation, helps to keep the focus of the ADHD student.

**>Make it memorable and concrete.** Instead of lecturing, turn your classroom into a scientific laboratory full of experiences for the senses. Get your ADHD students out of their seats to act out rotation, revolution, and phases of the moon. Build electrical circuits, construct simple machines, conduct chemical reactions to keep all types of learners actively learning.

**>Keep science journals for organization and recording results.** Keeping journals provides an outlet for students' observations. Following the steps of the scientific method for investigative lessons (Question, Hypothesis, Materials and Methods, Results, Conclusion) provides a structured framework for discovery to the disorganized ADHD student. Students can color-code each section of their journals to make sure that they do not miss anything, and kids who prefer not to write can sketch illustrations.



**>Encourage cooperative collaboration.** Choose partners/teams carefully, pairing students with different learning styles to enhance the experience. Every scientific investigation group needs a leader, organizational specialist, recorder, and materials expert, so choose each role in the group based on the students' academic, organizational, and focus skills. Giving each child a job maintains the group's focus. Change up the group from project to project.

### Pointers for Parents

**>Develop science study tricks.** Create flash cards with questions on one side and answers on the other. A student can use these to quiz himself on the periodic table or play a quiz show game with friends. Try songs (think "Schoolhouse Rock") and mnemonic devices (think Roy G. Biv to remember the color spectrum—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet) to aid rapid recall of science facts.

**>Explore the outdoors.** Whether in a wildlife sanctuary or your own backyard,

there are opportunities for scientific discovery in the outdoors. Bring along a "science pack" containing a camera, journal, pencil, and specimen collection containers along on your nature trek. This will help your ADHD child organize materials and focus on learning while keeping her busy hands active.

**>Grow a garden.** Work with your child to plant vegetable seeds and make meals from the harvest. Planting lets an ADHD child explore the needs, care, and life cycle of plants. It also teaches patience as he tends the garden and watches the vegetables grow, week by week. When it's time to harvest, he will feel the satisfaction of knowing he's helped provide the ingredients for a family meal.

**>Turn the kitchen into a laboratory.** The kitchen is a great place to take the ADHD child beyond the textbook. Gather materials from the pantry or the fridge. Conduct experiments with vinegar: Turn an egg into rubber, or mix it with baking soda to make a volcano. To see physical changes, look no further than the freezer. Make ice cubes, then watch the ice melt back into water.

➔ **On the Web** Tell us about a teacher who turned on your child to science on [ADDConnect.com](http://ADDConnect.com).

# I Heard What You Said!

ONE OF THE FRUSTRATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS OF children with ADHD is getting a child to stop, listen, and understand what is being taught or asked of him. These tips and strategies will enable students to listen and learn in school and at home.



## Tools for Teachers

**>Get your students' attention!** Clap out a rhythm and have your students clap the rhythm back until the class is quiet. This signals that it is time to move to the next activity. During group lessons, keep students involved by asking them questions. Play music or sing a song to keep them focused on the material being taught.

**>Repeat it back.** When giving instructions, limit the number of steps involved and have the students repeat the steps back to you, one at a time. Use the words first, next, and last to give order and structure.

**>Go beyond textbooks.** Relate concepts to real-life experiences through visuals, sign language, or gestures. Bring vocabulary words and stories to life by giving students

## LISTENING SKILLS

BY SARAH AMBERSON, BRANDI BARNES, AND GINA WHITING

examples from everyday life. If you are starting a story about a supermarket, bring in items that you buy there.

**>Make directions concrete.** Make sure your commands and directions are precise. "Do careful work" or "Be respectful" are too vague. Be specific in what you expect to see: "Eyes looking at me, bottoms in your chairs, book open to page 21, and desks cleared except for a pencil."

**>Take small steps.** Read a few pages of an article or story at a time. Teach students how to stop and ask themselves questions about what they have read. Allow them to draw a picture or write a key word on a sticky note and attach it to the page.

**>Use attention-getting strategies.** Make your voice go up or down, or make it louder or softer while doing a read-aloud or giving directions. Buy a garden glove and write a story element on each finger.

## Pointers for Parents

**>Keep it predictable.** Be consistent with the words you use to give directions, and stick to established schedules in your household. This will increase a child's listening comprehension because he knows what to expect and feels secure and calm.

**>Show him what you want him to do.** Walk through the steps of a task. Check for understanding of directions. Write down the task you want done (in words or pictures) and give it to your child for reference.

**>Check in with a child to make sure he isn't tuning out.** Before, during, and after chores, homework, or a task, have your child tell you specifically what he is doing. This continuous reminder of the task at hand keeps your child focused. It may seem redundant, but it works!

**>Move to remember.** Get your child up and moving to help with listening skills. Use hand gestures, exercises, or dance moves to help him remember what to do.

**>Help a child recall.** If your child is watching TV, ask her about what she is watching. When your child gets off the phone, ask him what he talked about—and don't interrupt.

➔ **On the Web** How do you get your child to listen to you? Share your tip or strategy on [ADDConnect.com](http://ADDConnect.com).

# Fast Fixes to Get It Done

## HOMEWORK

BY SARAH AMBERSON, BRANDI BARNES,  
AND GINA WHITING

**H**OMEWORK PROBLEMS LEAD TO MANY KIDS WITH ADHD FAILING in school. Almost every parent of a student with ADHD has been on the front lines of homework battles, but homework doesn't have to be exhaustive to be effective. The National Education Association and the Parent Teacher Association recommend 10 minutes per subject per day. In other words, a sixth grader should spend roughly 60 minutes per evening on homework. If teachers are piling it on, have a friendly discussion with them. The following strategies can shorten completion time and reduce stress at home.

## Tools for Teachers

**>One size doesn't fit all.** Data from assessments (formal and informal), daily observations, and anecdotal notes from the previous week should be used to determine homework assignments. Before assigning the entire class the same math practice page or reading passage, classroom teachers should consider "what does each child need some extra practice with?" Individualizing homework increases the odds that a child will complete it.

**>Factor in students' learning styles.** Be creative and give students a "menu of options" for homework. Options for learning weekly vocabulary words might be to write a rap song or create a PowerPoint using the words. Students will be more enthusiastic about the homework process if they are given choices.

**>Have a study buddy (or two).** Assign willing students to be the go-to person to answer questions from a student with ADHD who doesn't understand the homework assignment.

**>Be responsive to parents who report frustration over homework.** Be willing to adjust homework assignments, so that students with ADHD and LD spend a reasonable, not an excessive, amount of time doing them each evening. Does completing 50 subtraction problems really help a child learn? Wouldn't 10 or 15 math problems provide enough practice and give you enough feedback? Try to shorten and reduce the workload—particularly the amount of writing required.

**>Post assignments on the board.** Write

the homework assignment in the same place on the board each day.

**>Have students use an assignment calendar or agenda**—then guide and monitor the recording of assignments.

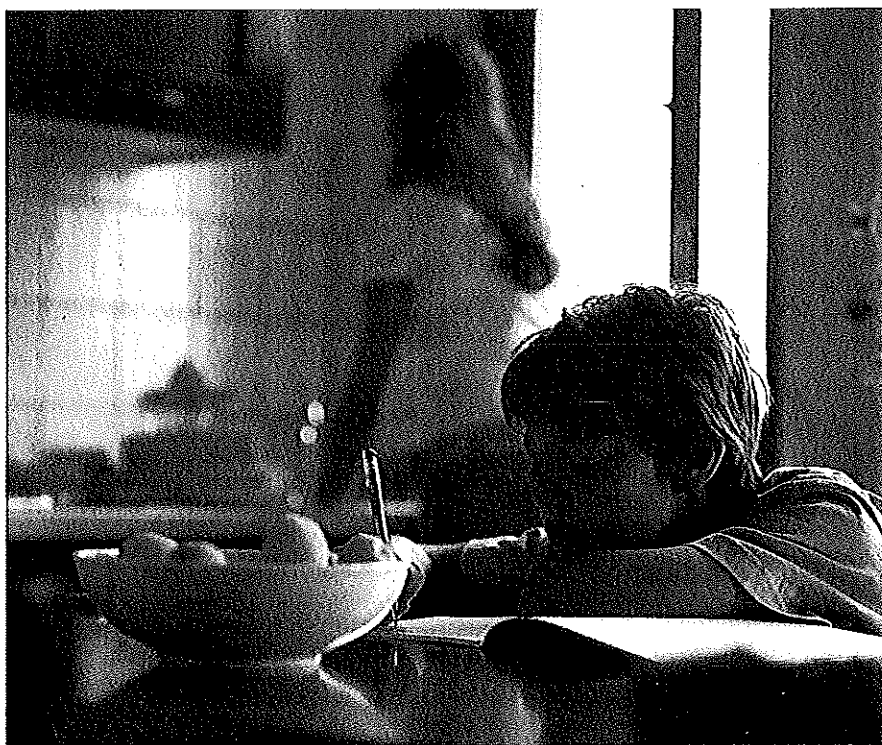
**>Collect homework and give some feedback.** It is frustrating to students and parents to spend a lot of time on assignments that the teacher never looks at.

**>Don't assign homework as a punishment or a consequence for misbehavior at school.** Don't send home unfinished

classwork to do as homework. Instead, provide the necessary modifications and supports, so that in-school work is in-school work, and homework is homework.

**>Provide a variety of ways for a student to get homework assignments.** Record assignments on a classroom answering machine or school voicemail, as well as on the teacher's Web page. Another option: Post homework assignments on an outside window of the classroom, so students can return to check it after school.

**>Provide incentives for turning in homework.** Let your students play Homeworkopoly (download the game board and "Chance" cards at [teachnet.com](http://teachnet.com)). Every day, students who have turned in their completed homework get to roll a die and move their individual marker that number of spaces along the game board, which looks like a Monopoly board. Along the way, they may land on special squares, earning small prizes or privileges.



➔ **On the Web** Share your best homework strategies with fellow parents on [Facebook.com/ADDitudeMag](https://www.facebook.com/ADDitudeMag).



**>Have students chart their progress.** Ask students to graph their own homework completion and return rates.

**>Check assignment calendars and planners,** since students with ADHD often make careless recording errors, entering as-

Give students a menu of homework options. For vocabulary words, they can write a rap song or create a PowerPoint using the words.

signments on the wrong date. Routinely ask table partners or groups seated together to check each other's assignment pads.

**>Are the parents in the know?** Invite parents to observe lessons in your classroom, so they will have a better understanding of how to work with their child. Don't assume that parents will know what to do or how to help their child complete the assigned tasks. Demonstrate ways for the parent to help her child. Parents are a key factor in student success, and teachers must take the initiative to educate them.

## Pointers for Parents

**>Be there.** Sit with your child and talk through what needs to be done. Once she starts to work, you may fold laundry, knit, or read in the same room. At some point, she may ask you to leave. If so, go.

**>Get him moving.** Physical activity—walking on a treadmill or fiddling with pipe cleaners—increases alertness for mental activity. Encourage your student to walk around the house reading aloud from a book. Chances are, she will soon settle down and be able to focus on her work.

**>Use medication.** By the time they get home from school, most kids with ADHD are tired and their medication is wearing off—a double whammy for doing homework. Talk with your doctor about prescribing a short-acting medication. When medication is working, students stay focused and com-

plete homework more quickly. They also tend to remember the material they studied.

**>Set the stage.** It's the end of the day and everyone in the household is tired, but you still have to do homework. Make your child feel comfortable as he starts his homework. Have him wear comfortable clothes and make the sure the environment doesn't distract him. Some kids need a quiet room with no distractions, while others may need a little background noise.

**>Make it fun.** Writing definitions for 25 vocabulary words is boring. Turn it into a game! Post words and definitions around the house for them to match. Have them jump on the trampoline while learning multiplication facts. Talk with their teacher about ways to make homework active.

**>Avoid interruptions.** Once the student begins homework, hold his telephone calls until break time or until homework is completed. You may have to take a cell phone away to keep him from texting.

**>Spice things up.** If a homework assignment is boring, play music or TV at low volume. When reading, break assignments into segments marked by colored paper clips. When the student reads as far as the clip, he can take a break.

**>Skip missing information.** Students with ADHD often look for excuses to stop doing their homework. So if he needs information to answer a question, have him work around it, leaving a blank that can be filled in later that night or the next day.

**>Take a break when no homework has been assigned.** Don't require your child to study on those days. Use the time to have fun with your child. You will deepen family relationships and build his self-esteem.

**>Find a tutor.** If you find it hard to help your child with schoolwork, find someone who can. A junior or senior high school student may be ideal—and the right price—depending on the need and age of your child.

**>Put completed homework into the appropriate folder.** See that completed work is placed in the designated folder and is put into the backpack the night before. To keep him from losing it before class, set up a system with the teacher to collect the work upon arriving at school.

# 4,376,281

families with ADHD will fight over homework tonight.

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—Nick C. 8th Grade

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# 51,768

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From an ADHD mother of ADHD children, and author of the best-selling study skills book in the world, *SOAR Study Skills*.

**Susan Kruger, M.Ed.**  
America's #1 Learning Expert



[StudySkills.com/additude](http://StudySkills.com/additude)

# Make Friends, Improve Grades

**SOCIAL SKILLS**  
BY SARAH AMBERSON, BRANDI BARNES,  
AND GINA WHITING



CHILDREN WITH ADHD OFTEN HAVE TROUBLE MAKING FRIENDS, AND A lack of friends can result in low self-esteem and frustration. It can also get in the way of doing well academically. Russell Barkley, Ph.D., believes that these kids don't have a social skills deficit, but a performance deficit. They know what to do, but fail to do it when it counts. Here are strategies that make a difference.

## Tools for Teachers

**>Seek out adults.** Positive interactions with adults are crucial to children with ADHD. Letting kids know that adults care gives them acceptance they don't get from classmates. Ask other staff members, such as former teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and support staff, to get to know your student. Ask them to encourage the student and celebrate small and large successes.

**>Plan ahead.** Notice the situations in which your student has problems with classmates, and work on them. If a student touches others while standing in line, make her the line leader. Look for behavior patterns and create situations in which it is easier for the student to be successful. If a student is easily angered, don't wait until he starts hitting another child. Notice the cues, and give him a break or change the task.

**>Teach a social skill of the day.** We identify a specific social skill, such as taking turns speaking, and role-play the skill. During the day, the class accumulates points toward an end-of-the-week reward each time the behavior is displayed by a student.

**>Have the student measure his own progress.** If a student is working on not interrupting others, let him tally up how many times he does it. At the start of the day, set an achievable goal with the student—keep interruptions to five today, say—and let the student keep count. If he goes over the limit, give him feedback.

**>Find role models.** Pair kids who are weak in social skills with kids who are socially skilled. Put kids who have trouble socializing into supportive groups.

**>Use visual cues.** Take photos of groups or individuals engaged in cooperative behavior and hang them in the classroom.

## Pointers for Parents

**>Focus on your child's interests.** Talk with your child about what he enjoys—sports, martial arts, organized clubs and programs, such as Boy or Girl Scouts—and encourage him to join or participate. Kids interact better with those who share the same interests.

**>Set up play dates with kids of similar temperament.** If your child is shy, find a friend who is reserved. Ask your child's teacher whom he gets along with in class or whom might make a good social fit. Start out slow with younger children, by inviting only one child and keeping play dates short. As your child becomes more social, increase the length of the play dates.

**>Be the coach.** Encourage your child to talk about his problems with friends. Our children usually open up during special events or outings involving just the two of us. Listen and empathize at first, then brainstorm ways, good and bad, to handle the problem. Talk about what might happen in each situation, and let your child choose a course of action. Follow up to see how your child handled the problem.

**>Be specific.** Identify a specific social situation, skill, or rule your child needs help with. Telling your child to be nice to friends at a birthday party is too vague. Instead, tell him to make eye contact when someone is speaking with him. Rehearse appropriate behavior by acting it out. Children with ADHD have difficulty interpreting emotions and body language. Playing charades is a good way to act out emotions.

**>Include a social skills goal in the IEP.** Services or accommodations may include a special-ed teacher or guidance counselor working with a child on making eye contact or entering into a group discussion.

**>Keep your kids with it.** To help them get along better with their peers, parents should teach kids about the hot topics of conversation likely to interest their peers: the latest video or computer games, the current won-lost record of favorite sports teams, or popular musical groups.

**On the Web** Tell fellow parents about your child's social challenges on [ADDConnect.com](http://ADDConnect.com).