

# Parenting a child with ADHD



## Key Points

- **Building the right environment at home can help create a space for good communication and support for your child.**
- **Creating routine can help provide stability for your child.**
- **Clear communication can help children with ADHD understand what is asked or expected of them.**
- **Create an ADHD-friendly environment.**
- **Access any support that is available to you and your child.**

## Introduction

Parenting a child with ADHD can require unique and tailored strategies and approaches to support their happiness, well-being and development. This brief guide aims to provide you with some practical tips, techniques, and insights to help you navigate the challenges and create a positive environment for your child. By understanding what ADHD is, establishing routines, employing effective communication, and accessing appropriate support, you can empower your child to reach their full potential.

## Understanding ADHD

- Learn as much about what ADHD is as you can, from reliable sources such as [The ADHD Foundation](#), [Focusmag.uk](#), [ADDitude](#) or [CHADD](#). Many people (understandably) do not know what ADHD is and rely on the myths and misinformation that persistently circulates through society. Start to familiarise yourself with the characteristics of ADHD, including inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Understand that ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder and not a result of poor parenting or laziness.
- If you haven't already, seek an assessment for a diagnosis, as it will guide you in understanding your child's specific challenges and inform appropriate interventions.

## **Establish Routines and Structures**

Routine can help increase focus, reduce anxiety and stress and improve communication. Start small. Don't try to change everything at once. Start by creating a simple routine for one part of your day, such as your child's morning or evening routine. Be flexible; be willing to change your routine a little if it helps your child.

- **Consistency and predictability:** Children with ADHD can thrive in structured environments. Establish consistent routines for daily activities, such as mealtimes, homework, bedtime, and free time.
- **Visual schedules:** Make use of visual aids, like calendars, charts, or checklists, to help your child understand and follow routines. Visual cues provide clarity and promote independence.
- **Break tasks into manageable chunks:** Teach your child to approach tasks systematically by breaking them down into smaller, achievable steps. This approach reduces overwhelm and helps them build confidence.

## Effective Communication Strategies

Communication is important in any relationship, but especially so with a neurodivergent child. This is because people with ADHD may have difficulty with listening comprehension (following instructions or understanding what is being said to them), expressive language (difficulty expressing thoughts and feelings clearly) and social skills (difficulty reading social cues, understanding nonverbal communication, and responding appropriately in social situations).

- **Clear and concise instructions:** Provide explicit and concise instructions when assigning tasks or giving directions. Ensure your child understands what is expected of them and offer reminders when necessary.
- **Active listening:** Practise active listening when engaging with your child. Maintain eye contact, show empathy, and repeat or summarise their thoughts to demonstrate understanding.
- **Positive reinforcement:** Encourage positive behaviour through specific praise and rewards. Acknowledge and celebrate your child's efforts and achievements, promoting self-esteem and motivation.

## Create an ADHD-Friendly Environment

**Creating an ADHD-friendly environment can help reduce stress and anxiety, avoid overwhelm, improve focus and concentration and better enable children to engage with tasks such as homework which can improve self-esteem.**

- **Minimise distractions:** Reduce visual and auditory distractions by organising your child's environment. Designate quiet areas for study, limit screen time, and use noise-cancelling headphones if necessary.
- **Organisation strategies:** Implement organisational systems, such as colour-coding, labels, and storage solutions, to help your child locate and organise their belongings effectively.
- **Personalise their study space:** Create a study space that suits your child's learning style. Consider factors such as lighting, comfortable seating, and minimising clutter to enhance focus and concentration.

## **Collaboration and Support**

As a parent of a child with ADHD, there should be support available to you. This support can be vital in giving your child the best chance for success in life, academically and in terms of their own happiness.

If your child has ADHD, you have the right to request an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). An EHCP is a legal document that sets out your child's special educational, health and social care needs and the support that is required to meet those needs.

To request an EHCP, you should contact your local authority's Special Educational Needs (SEN) department. The SEN department will assess your child's needs and decide whether or not an EHCP is necessary. More information about EHCPs can be found [here](#).

If the SEN department decides that an EHCP is necessary, they will work with you to create a plan. The plan will include information about your child's needs, the support that is required to meet those needs, and the outcomes that you hope to achieve. The SEN department will be responsible for ensuring that the support in the EHCP is provided. This may involve providing additional teaching support, specialist equipment, or health care services.

**You have the right to appeal if you are unhappy with the SEN department's decision about your child's EHCP.**



Here are some of the benefits of having an EHCP for your child with ADHD:

- Access to additional support: An EHCP can help your child to access additional support in school, such as extra teaching, specialist equipment, or health care services.
- Increased chances of success: An EHCP can help your child to succeed in school and beyond. By providing the right support, an EHCP can help your child to reach their full potential.
- Peace of mind: An EHCP can give you peace of mind knowing that your child is getting the support they need.

Support groups can connect you with other parents of children with ADHD through local face-to-face groups or online communities. Here you can share experiences, exchange tips, and gain emotional support from those who understand the unique challenges of parenting a child with ADHD.