

TEACHING STRATEGIES

For Typical ADHD & Executive Functioning Impairments

| Specific Learning/Classroom Presentation of ADHD/EF Impairments | Teaching Strategies /Accommodations |
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| <p>1. Difficulty Sustaining Attention and/or Easily Distracted</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce visual and auditory external stimuli • Keep visual distractions at the front of the class to a minimum • Cue student before giving directions • Ask student to repeat instructions to confirm comprehension • Attempt to actively involve student in lesson – cue and use prompts to encourage and set up opportunities to participate • Give frequent ,specific, immediate feedback • Dramatize information • Reward attention and timely accomplishments • Break activities and lessons into small units • Teach self- monitoring of their own attention – stop and ask themselves if they have been listening – prompts can assist • Change teaching style frequently to capture the student’s attention • Use physical proximity and agreed upon touch to redirect attention • Use earphones, study carrels, quiet places, preferential seating • Reduce noise stimuli with the use of a FM system, tennis balls on the legs of chair • Allow for use of headsets with music when working • Allow the use of chewing gum, sour candies or straws to chew on as many as they may aid concentration |
| <p>2. Difficulty Following and Holding Directions in Mind</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the student has heard you and you have their attention before giving directions • Use visual, non-verbal, gesturing cues to alert student that important instructions are coming • Use a multi-sensory approach with both visual & oral instructions • Rephrase and repeat directions allowing time for processing • Encourage the student to ask questions to clarify their understanding • Give one or two instruction at a time |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quietly review and repeat instructions to the student after they have been given to the rest of the class • Check for understanding by having the student repeat the directions • Make sure the classroom is quiet when giving instructions • Provide written Instructions or post instructions for referral • Provide a “study buddy” and allow student to quietly ask questions and confirm that they are on the right track |
| 3. Difficulty with Initiation or Starting a Task | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the instructions with student to ensure understanding and that no misinterpretation or gaps have occurred • Assist student in preparation for starting the task, ask “What do you need to be able to do this?” And then get them started • Chunk work and have them report back when each part is done |
| 4. Difficulty Sequencing and Completing all the Steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and practice steps required • Allow for lists of steps, sample questions to be used as prompts • Model chunking tasks into workable and obtainable steps - do it for them and then with them encouraging increased participation • Provide sample of completed assignment |
| 5. Planning, Executing and Monitoring Projects and Assignments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach, mentor and practice the steps of developing a plan • Break assignments into manageable chunks, encouraging increased participation of student as they increase their skill level • Show the student how to set and achieve short and long term goals and then have them do it with you increasing their involvement • Provide constant monitoring and positive reinforcement to encourage progress • Use tracking sheets, graphic organizers and time management aids • Avoid open-ended assignments with due dates too far in the future |
| 6. Difficulty Sustaining Effort | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of expectations, assignment length and strive for quality not quantity • Praise success frequently when small amounts of work completed • Increase the frequency of positive reinforcements when effort is being expended to control behaviour • Vary challenging tasks frequently and intersperse with easier tasks • Model and teach students how to give themselves “pep” talks when they are doing well to help them stay on track |
| 7. Shifting From One Uncompleted Activity to Another Without | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for a set number of questions to be completed and then add another set if need be • Offer frequent breaks |

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| <p>Completion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use tracking sheets with rewards for success • Reduce work load (reduced questions to number required to demonstrate competency) |
| <p>8. Difficulty with Organizational Skills – loses things or forgets things for tasks</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifically state and display the list of materials needed until a routine is developed • Provide specific locations for all materials • Colour code specific subject material • Teach, mentor and practice organizational strategies • Provide student with a list of needed materials to be brought in from day to day and share with parents • Have a consistent process for handing in assignments and homework • Provide positive reinforcement for good organization • Frequently monitor notebooks, desks, backpacks • Use notebook tabs with a separate binder for each subject • Teach and use reminder cues |
| <p>9. Difficulty with Time Management and Prioritizing</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach time management skills, estimating, revising and monitoring time required and incorporate into the plan, model and practice – use time management aids • Chunk larger assignments, help student estimate times required for specific chunks and then monitor progress comparing estimated times – they will need continuous practice • Share chunked assignment timeline with parents • Show student how to get started • Help student begin the first step and ask them to report back to you after each chunked portion of the assignment is complete before they go onto the next part • Allow them to pass work by you for suggested improvements before due date to encourage earlier completion and accuracy • Post steps of how to develop a time line • Monitor for success frequently and praise especially after each completed section • Help them to work on procrastination • Teach skills on how to prioritize most to least important • Specifically indicate which tasks are a priority • Give directions/assignments one at a time and in order of priority • Use assistive devices with brain storming software to help them to start a project |
| <p>10. Difficulty Completing Assignments</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If student is having difficulty completing work supports should be put in place immediately • Teach project management skills – list, post and discuss all the necessary steps to complete each assignment |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List steps necessary to complete each assignment –make the steps reasonable and attainable • Reduce the assignment to manageable chunks with specific due dates – chunk down the assignment • Monitor closely and frequently check the progress of work assignments • Encourage the student to have a ‘study buddy’ who they can contact for clarification and due dates • Provide notes and guides for assignments • Use visual checklists • Provide extended time limits on projects and assignments |
| <p>11. Difficulty Remembering what has been studied Difficulty Remembering Daily/Weekly Routines</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use manipulatives, models, taped books and graphics to enhance memory • Allow access to reminder sheets with steps, formulas etc. • Teach memory techniques and study strategies (mnemonics, visualizations, oral rehearsal, writing and repetition) • Use technical aids such as a calculator, computer or tape recorder • Allow time for processing and memory retrieval • Post daily and weekly schedules in the classroom • Allow for the use of electronic organizers when old enough |
| <p>12. Difficulty Demonstrating Their Understanding of the Material on Tests and Exams</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow extra time for testing • Teach test taking skills and strategies • Use a variety of test formats and allow alternative test formats that are best for the student • Use assistive devices such as voice to text computer software • Allow use of calculators and reference charts • Allow access to reminder sheets with steps, formulas etc. • Use clear readable and uncluttered test forms • Allow ample space for the student to respond – leave room for scribbled notes or drawings that the student might require • Consider using lined paper for exams or short answer tests • Use graph paper for mathematics and space the questions • Use a scribe • Write in a quiet room free of distractions |
| <p>13. Difficulty with Note Taking and Recognizing What is Important</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the student with a copy of the teacher’s notes or another student’s notes • Provide a copy of the reading material with the main ideas highlighted • Show the student how to recognize the important points in reading material and have them practice this skill • Teach outlining of main-idea concepts • Allow student to record a teaching sessions for later review |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide student with a copy of presentation notes or Power Point • Provide framed outlines of presentations or lessons for student to use and fill in during a lesson • Use visual and auditory cues to emphasize important information • Teach and emphasize key words, and how to harvest information |
| <p>14. Difficulty With Written Work – Impaired Fluency, Lack of Product and Often Messy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide worksheets for the student to write on or graph paper • Use pencil with rubber grip • Reduce the amount of written work required for demonstrating competency • Grade for content, not handwriting • Allow for a scribe • Use computer with appropriate software to aid in producing written work and polished products • Use a variety of alternative evaluation formats instead of written responses – this may include oral, visual, taped, recorded work • Do not penalize a student for mixing cursive with printing • Allow for shorter assignments (quality vs. quantity) • Allow extra time |
| <p>15. Poorly Developed Study Skills</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach study skills specific to each subject area • Provide notes and study sheets • Teach skills like skimming texts to get the main information – making a picture or anagram to remember specific facts – highlighting of main ideas and important information • Provide models for study, especially in mathematics and science |
| <p>16. Poor Self-Monitoring of Work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the student on evaluating their finished product and allow them time to improve it prior to marking • Provide examples of finished product • Do not expect student to be able to proof read their own written work as they are unable to pick up on their own mistakes • Do not have other students read, edit or mark their work |
| <p>17. Difficulty Recognizing Inappropriate Behaviour and Monitoring and Controlling Behaviour</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferential seating close to the teacher to allow for frequent monitoring • Preferential seating beside another student who models appropriate behaviour • Set them up for success and then reward appropriate behaviour (Catch them being good) • Use study carrel if appropriate for quiet work, if they agree or choose to, but not as a consequence or as an isolation booth • Practice appropriate ways to gain other’s attention – raised hand • Allow for movement breaks • Provide opportunities to demonstrate appropriate behaviour – give them a job (attendance, door person, score keeper, |

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| | <p>equipment manager) which requires them to focus on responsibility and praise even the smallest success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignore minor behaviour issues and do not dwell on them • Divert attention to alter behaviour • Do autopsy on inappropriate behaviour and help them understand how they could have done it better – avoid embarrassing them and try to remain positive • Praise student when he can delay gratification • Actively teach, model and practice appropriate social skills • Teach and practice cues they can learn to pick up on when others may be annoyed with their behaviour • Teach student to recognize nonverbal cues – model recognition of nonverbal cues and have the class or group of students practice • Train student in self-monitoring – teach self- questioning strategies – reinforce improvements (What am I doing? How will it affect others?) • Do not take inappropriate behaviour personally or define it as defiance • Set- up social situations where they can be successful and reward |
| <p>18. Frequent Excessive Talking and Interruption</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on the use of particular signals to prompt the student that they need to be quiet • Praise the student frequently for appropriate behaviour and listening in a way that will reinforce but not embarrass • Teach, remind and reward the steps of appropriate classroom and social interaction – explain the rules, model behaviour – set up situations allowing them to practice, and then praise and reward without embarrassment • This process will need much repetition and consistent rewards |
| <p>19. Difficulty with Transitions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give numerous advance warnings that a transition will be taking place 5-10 minutes before change occurs • Review steps of the transition with the class or student • Transition routines may need to be repeated many times before they become routine for the student • Set up transition buddies – another student who can assist with physical or subject transitions • Have the student stand at the front of the line with teacher • Give the student a task to do while moving between classes or waiting in line such as holding the teacher’s clipboard • Have student come into class a few minutes early to prevent problems in highly stimulating unstructured times – Lining up is often a trigger • Provide student with a definite purpose for activity (We are going to the library to...) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the student up for success during unstructured times such as recess, lunchtime, and in the hallways, by offering increased monitoring, providing an activity and group play |
| <p>20. Difficulty Remaining Seated, Squirms, Fidgets etc.,</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give student frequent opportunities to get up and move around and allow space for movement • Arrange a cue with the student that acknowledges his need to go for a walk, drink or deliver a message with the knowledge that he will return and start back to work with your help • Allow alternative movement when possible • Give students a squeeze ball or other manipulatives to use • Sanding desk, exercise ball or other seat options that allow for movement • Do not keep student in during recess, lunch or during gym, which will restrict opportunity for movement breaks |

Additional Things to keep in Mind

Students with ADHD frequently also have other impairments such as disorders Developmental Coordination Disorder, Sensory issues and Anxiety that can impact their functioning and attentional issues can impact unexpected areas of functioning.

Look out for:

- Difficulty with coordination and reluctance to participate in gym class
- Symptoms of agitation or shutting down when too much stimuli is present
- Anxiousness when asked to do timed or competitive activities