

Talking to Your Child's Teacher About ADHD

It can be helpful to talk with your child's teacher about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Working with the teacher can be an important part in your child's overall treatment plan.

This guide is designed for parents and caretakers of elementary school-aged children who have been evaluated and diagnosed with ADHD by a trained healthcare professional. Many topics may also apply for adolescents diagnosed with ADHD.

Start the Conversation With This Step-By-Step Guide:

1. Print Out This Guide

Print out this guide and bring it with you to take notes on the feedback from your child's teacher.

2. Come Prepared

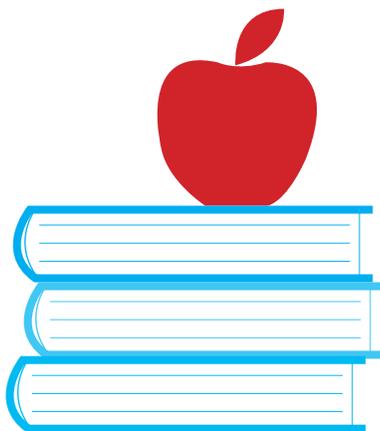
While teachers may be familiar with working with children with ADHD, they may not know about your child's unique situation. It may help to come prepared with questions about how your child is doing at school, and share both the good and bad moments you have noticed at home.

3. Take a Positive Approach

Talking about ADHD with your child's teacher may not be easy. But a chat with him or her may make a difference. Remember, the teacher is your partner in your child's development plan and has your child's best interests in mind.

4. Use These Conversation Tips

- Talk about where, when, or how your child excels
- Say what areas are hard for them
- Use a friendly tone to keep things upbeat
- Give examples of your child's behavior, and how it affects the day
- Create plans and goals together. Use a "we" attitude



Don't wait for Parent-Teacher Conferences with your child's teacher. Reach out to him or her early and often. This may help your child stay on track during the year.

Topics of Discussion

Keep in mind that not all sections will fit your situation. Use these topics to guide the conversation with your child's teacher. Remember, it should be a two-way conversation. You'll see that each topic in this guide is split into a SHARE section and an ASK section. Look at the SHARE section for ideas about what to tell your child's teacher. After sharing, use the ASK section for ideas of questions you can ask. Make sure to really listen to what the teacher has to say, even if it may be difficult to hear about your child.



Introduce Your Child:

Start by telling the teacher that your child has been diagnosed with ADHD. Speak about your child's home life, personality, what they like, and other things that can help the teacher understand your child.

SHARE:

- How your child acts at home, whether alone or around siblings and other family members
- If your child is having trouble sleeping or eating
- Any treatments your child is receiving, such as social skills training and music therapy
- A description of a day in your child's life at home

ASK:

- What methods have worked for you in the past when teaching children with ADHD?



Schoolwork:

Your child might find their schoolwork to be tough. Ask how you and your child's teacher can work together to help your child in the classroom and at home.

SHARE:

- How long it takes your child to do their homework
- How hard you and your child find his or her homework to be
- The kinds of homework your child may struggle with

ASK:

- How do you help students who have trouble with certain assignments?
- How do you help kids who struggle with taking tests?
- What can I do to help my child stay on top of their work?
- Does my child participate in class? How might you encourage more class participation?
- Does the school offer any learning support programs for my child like an Individualized Education Program (IEP)*?

*To learn more about IEPs, please visit www.healthychildren.org and search for "IEP."



Interactions With Others:

SHARE:

- What you have noticed about your child's social interactions with friends and family
- If you feel that your child stands apart in how they get along with other children their age
- How your child interacts with adults, such as teachers, therapists, and guidance counselors

ASK:

- How would you describe my child's social interactions?
- Does my child seem to be getting along with others? How is my child viewed by their peers?
- What are my child's physical activities during the day? Are they different from those in the classroom?



Medicine:

SHARE:

- Side effects you've seen
- Particular behaviors you've seen
- How you give or talk about medication with your child. For example, does your child know he or she is on medicine?
- How you discuss the medication with your child if they don't know they're on medication
- If this is your child's first time on medication, and for how long they have been on it

ASK:

- Do you see behaviors change during the day?
 - Are there any staff members who should know that my child is taking medication (e.g. school nurse, principal, teachers)?
 - Do staff members know if the child is or is not aware they are on medication?
-



Behavior Displayed:

SHARE:

- If your child is prone to particular inattentive, hyperactive, or impulsive behavior
- Triggers that affect your child's behavior
- How you address certain behaviors that your child presents with and what has worked for you in the past
- If you use motivation or reward systems at home

ASK:

- Have you seen any particular triggers that affect classroom behavior?
 - How do you react to disruptive behavior?
 - What types of behavior techniques do you use for children with ADHD?
 - Is there a quiet place to do work if my child is having trouble with his or her attention or behavior?
-



Seasonal Transitions:

The change of seasons may be hard for your child. It can be helpful to plan ahead and talk about setting up meetings before and after vacations or long breaks to stay in a routine.

SHARE:

- How you work with your child to get ready for breaks or to come back to school after days off
- Your ideas to stay on the same page over holidays and breaks to make sure your plan does not get off track

ASK:

- Do you have any ideas that may help prepare my child when coming back from holiday breaks or starting a new year?
 - How can we keep communication open before and after breaks?
-



Resources:

SHARE:

- Offer resources that you have found to be helpful
- Here are some Web sites and organizations that you can visit to find out more about ADHD and ADHD support programs:
 - Children and Adults With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: www.chadd.org
 - American Academy of Pediatrics: www.healthychildren.org
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd

ASK:

- Do you have any resources that you would recommend?
-



Have a Follow-up Plan:

SHARE:

- Talk about the good things that were covered and express interest in having more meetings in the future
- Suggest creating an action plan and talk about any immediate steps to be taken
- Repeat your appreciation to the teacher for meeting with you and for all his or her continued efforts

ASK:

- How often should we meet and check in with one another to monitor my child's progress?
- What is the best way to get in touch with you? By phone, text, or e-mail?