

12 Tips for Parents of ADD/ADHD Children

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The budget shortfall is putting a squeeze on Arizona's educational resources, and teachers, parents and students are no doubt feeling the pinch. While hard on everyone, these trim times are especially tough on children with ADD or ADHD. As teachers are forced to cope with the vast symptoms of swollen class sizes, learning-challenged students are forced to go without the extra attention often critical to their success.



While solutions for schools remain to be seen, solutions for parents and children do exist – and they can be found around the house. “The rules and routines parents implement at home can have a significant impact on their kids' success at school,” says Nadine O'Brien, principal of Sedona's [Oak Creek Ranch School](#) (OCRS). OCRS is a private, fully accredited school that was founded in 1972. Its specialty is helping ADD/ADHD kids learn, grow and achieve through an innovative mix of traditional and experiential teaching methods.

While sending kids to a private school like OCRS is an option for some parents, it isn't always in the cards for others. But all families, especially those with ADD/ADHD students, stand to benefit from the recommended and proven practices of such learning outposts. Here, O'Brien shares 12 at-home practices parents can adopt in order to set the stage for their children's success at school.

- 1) Create a consistent schedule for activities and set expectations for behavior. Be steadfast regardless of your child's opposition.
- 2) If your child is in middle school or high school, start a dialogue about what he or she is going to do to be successful. Instead of taking on the responsibilities of your child, assist him or her in determining and reaching those goals.
- 3) Make mistakes blame-free (except for the really big ones). Life is full of blunders, but as long as you are learning from them you are heading in the right direction. Encourage your child to talk with you about what went wrong during the day and how things could be handled differently next time.
- 4) Keep an extra set of textbooks at home. Make homework an active endeavor by reading aloud with your child and asking questions to spark discussion.
- 5) Communicate with teachers about issues including homework. Inform teachers if your child has to take more medication in the evening to focus on homework and how that affects him or her, i.e., having trouble sleeping or waking up, etc. Find out if homework can be reduced or modified.
- 6) Do weekly check-ins about grades with the school and your child.
- 7) Help your child create a list of short-term goals for the week ahead. Keep goals simple and achievable.
- 8) Host study groups with other ADD or ADHD families to help address homework and social issues at the same time.
- 9) Talk with your child about the positive contributions he or she makes to family, friends and school. This lets your child know he or she is valued.
- 10) Help your child develop a “thank you” habit by thanking him or her for doing the right or helpful thing. Set a good example by thanking your peers, teachers and neighbors.
- 11) Leave an opening for academic and extracurricular interests and opportunities to engage in those interests through classes, clubs, etc.
- 12) Shut off electronics and make physical activity a consistent part of your child's day.