ADHD Strategies & Tips

Cardinal Pediatrics
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Non Medical Options for School-Aged Children

Here is a list of behavioral things that you can try for your child.
These are all sourced from The Doc Smitty - Dr. Justin Smith, Pediatrician

Supplements with Scientific Studies behind them

Fish Oil - A few studies have shown that fish oil might be helpful for kids in terms of organizing their thoughts and activities. While it's probably not the cure-all, because it is safe, it could be reasonable to try.

Zinc-A few studies have shown improvement in hyperactivity when children are supplemented with Zinc. It's not clear if it's because they are deficient as some suggest or it the supplemental zinc is helpful in some way.

Caffeine-Studies are highly mixed on whether caffeine is helpful for treating ADHD symptoms. The main downside is how quickly your body processes it which would require multiple doses throughout the day to maintain effectiveness.

1. **Make a schedule daily**. All kids have difficulty and waste time with transitions. Children with ADHD do this to the 1000th degree. If these transitions are scheduled and the child knows what comes next it might speed up the transition. Things that should be included on the schedule are homework time, daily chores and self-care items (shower, brushing teeth, etc).
2. **Make separate areas in the house for necessary tasks**. Keep toys and video games out of the space where homework needs to be completed. This helps limit the child's distractions so that they can finish the task at hand.
3. **Set small goals that are attainable**. Don't ask the child who is failing to make the A honor roll in the next six weeks. Start with turning all assignments in and that they are complete, then slight increases in grades, etc.
4. **Use charts and checklists**. Children with ADHD are often very visual and concrete. If you can put a list in front of them that can be checked off, they are much more likely to complete what needs to be done. I find this to be helpful for me as well …
5. **Keep choices to a minimum**. Don't tell them to go to the closet in the morning and pick out something to wear. This is a sure way to start a huge fight as they stand in front of the closet for hours while you are trying to wrestle them out the door. Pick out two options ahead of time for them to choose from.
6. **Don't discipline them impulsively**. Remember that one of their biggest problems is that they don't stop to think about consequences before they act. If your discipline follows the same pattern, how can we expect them to learn to act differently? Plan out your discipline plan in advance and be consistent. As tempting as it may be, corporal punishment is rarely effective. Timeouts and restriction of privileges seem to be more effective for children with ADHD.
7. **Help your child with organizational skills**. Developing a system that helps them keep track of all the papers is a way to keep them from getting thrown away, having them sit in the floorboard of the car or (more infamously) avoiding having the dog eat them.

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Remember we are only a phone call away!