



PARENT TOOLKIT

ADHD and Autism



Supporting Emotional Regulation

- Use **visuals or colour charts** (like “The Zones of Regulation”) to help your child identify feelings.
- Keep **routines predictable** — consistent schedules reduce emotional overwhelm.
- When your child is upset, **stay calm and lower your voice**. They co-regulate through your calmness.
- Create a **calm corner or safe space** at home with soft textures, weighted blankets, or calming lights.
- Teach **coping skills** such as deep breathing, squeezing a stress ball, or using sensory toys.

Managing Anxiety

- **Validate feelings:** Say things like “I can see this is hard for you,” to show understanding.
- **Prepare for changes:** Use visual schedules, countdowns, or social stories before transitions or new events.
- **Break big tasks into smaller steps** and celebrate small successes.
- **Practice calm-down tools together** — deep breathing, muscle relaxation, or listening to music.
- Encourage **predictability** (e.g., same bedtime routine) to build a sense of security.

Supporting Sensory Needs

- Provide **noise-cancelling headphones**, soft clothing, or fidget tools.
- Create a **quiet space** at home for breaks when your child feels overwhelmed.
- Build a “**sensory diet**” — include daily movement, deep pressure hugs, jumping, or stretching to help your child regulate their body.

Helping with Attention and Behaviour

- Use **clear, simple instructions** — one step at a time.
- Give **positive feedback** for effort, not just outcomes (“I love how you kept trying!”).
- **Visual reminders** (charts, checklists) can help with routines and independence.
- Keep **expectations consistent** across home and school.
- Offer **choices** to give your child a sense of control (“Do you want to brush teeth first or change into pyjamas first?”).

Supporting Yourself as a Parent

- **Connect** with other parents through local or online support groups.
- **Ask for help** — from family, friends, or professionals.

- **Take short breaks** when possible; even 10 minutes of quiet time can help.
- Remember: **Your child's challenges are not your fault.** You're learning together.

Working with School and Community

- Keep **regular communication** with teachers or support staff.
- Ask about **adjustments** such as sensory breaks, movement opportunities, or quiet workspaces.
- Explore **community programs** that are inclusive and autism- or ADHD-friendly.

Helpful Resources

Autism Education

Trust - <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>

- They have something called "Autistic Young Experts". It's a panel of young autistic ambassadors who do videos explaining their experiences of Autism (<https://www.youtube.com/@autisticyoungexperts7988>)

Autism Central - <https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/>

- This website has come highly recommended as one of the best information sources for parents

- Includes resources, a one-to-one chat hub and different events

National Autistic Society - <https://www.autism.org.uk/>

Parenting a neurodivergent child can be challenging — but it's also filled with moments of deep connection, creativity, and growth. Celebrate progress, no matter how small, and remember: you're doing an incredible job.