



PARENT TOOLKIT

ADHD



This toolkit is designed to give you practical strategies to help with attention, emotional regulation, organization, behaviour, and anxiety. ADHD brings challenges, but also energy, creativity, curiosity, and passion — this guide helps you support your child while nurturing their strengths.

Understanding ADHD

Children with ADHD may experience:

- Difficulty focusing or staying on track
- High energy or impulsivity
- Challenges with organization or planning
- Emotional ups and downs
- Sensory seeking or sensitivity

These are **neurological differences**, not character flaws or intentional misbehaviour. Understanding this builds empathy and reduces frustration.

Setting Up for Focus & Success

Structures and supports help your child thrive. Try:

- **Visual schedules** for morning, after-school, and bedtime routines
- **Short, clear instructions** (“First shoes on, then we go outside”)
- Breaking tasks into **small, manageable steps**
- **Checklists** for chores or school tasks
- Providing **movement breaks** every 10–20 minutes
- Using timers, alarms, or “first–then” boards to keep on track

Tip: Start with one or two supports and build gradually — keep it doable.

Supporting Emotional Regulation

Children with ADHD may feel emotions intensely and struggle to calm down.

What helps:

- Teach simple calm-down tools: deep breathing, counting, squeezing a pillow, or a short movement break
- Use **emotion charts or visuals** to help them identify their feelings
- Offer **predictable routines** to reduce stress
- Stay calm and speak slowly when they are overwhelmed — your calmness helps them regulate
- Create a **calm corner** at home (soft blanket, books, headphones, sensory items)

Managing Anxiety

ADHD and anxiety often appear together.

Support your child by:

- Preparing them for transitions with countdowns or reminders
- Using social stories or pictures to explain new situations
- Helping them break big tasks into small steps
- Teaching grounding skills (5 senses check-in, slow breathing, stretching)
- Validating feelings: “It makes sense you’re worried — I’m here to help”

Behaviour Support

Challenging behaviour is often a sign the child is overwhelmed, not defiant.

Strategies:

- Use **positive reinforcement**: praise effort and small improvements
- Give **clear expectations** and be consistent
- Offer **choices** to build cooperation (“Do you want to brush teeth before or after putting on pyjamas?”)
- Avoid long lectures — keep guidance short and simple
- Focus on teaching skills, not punishment

Sensory Regulation

Many children with ADHD have strong sensory needs or sensitivities.

Try:

- Movement-based activities (jumping, climbing, spinning, pushing heavy objects)
- Fidget tools or chewable jewellery
- Noise-cancelling headphones
- Dim lighting or a quiet break space
- Working with an Occupational Therapist to create a **sensory plan**

Movement isn't a distraction for many ADHD children — it's regulation.

Executive Function Support

ADHD affects organization, working memory, and planning.

Helpful tools include:

- Visual timers
- Written reminders
- Color-coded folders or school supplies
- A “launch pad” near the door for backpacks, shoes, and essentials
- Practicing routines through repetition, not pressure

School Collaboration

- Check in often with teachers or support staff
- Ask about supports such as:

- movement breaks
- quiet seating
- extra processing time
- chunked assignments
- visual supports
- Share strategies that work at home

Consistent support across environments makes a big difference.

Supporting Yourself

You are doing an important job — and you matter too.

- Take breaks when needed; small moments of rest help you stay regulated
- Connect with other parents for encouragement and ideas
- Celebrate every small win
- Remember: ADHD is not caused by bad parenting — you're supporting a brain that works differently

Your child with ADHD is capable, creative, and full of potential. With the right support, patience, and understanding, they can thrive both at home and at school. You don't have to aim for perfection — just connection, consistency, and compassion.