

Possible Accommodations for students with Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADD/ADHD tendency behaviors:

Inattention:

___ Seating

The student should be moved until a seat is found that will be beneficial to both you and the student. The student should be close to the instructor, or the area the instructor may spend most of her/his time during the lesson. This can be in different places in the room, based on the activity. This is also known as “preferred seating”. The child may not have a fixed assigned seat, but several assigned seats, depending on the activity.

___ Signals

The teacher may develop a set of non-verbal signals in the class that the teacher can use when the student needs redirection. Often students who are living with ADHD are redirected verbally over and over again, and they may become “de-sensitized” to the constant verbal prompts. Calling their name, making sure they make eye contact, and then using the non-verbal prompt can be an effective accommodation.

___ Eye Contact

Often students living with ADHD respond to cues without processing them. You may ask, “Did you hear what I said?” to the student and they respond with a “Yes”, automatically. Before using moving to your classroom’s discipline steps, make sure your student heard AND processed your request by requiring eye contact before moving on.

___ Visual/Written Instructions

Whenever possible, instructions should be displayed in written form in the classroom, as well as visual representations (when possible). For example, if you ask the students to read silently for ten minutes, and then write their responses to the reading in their journals, you can have those instructions written on the board, and create visual signs to post as well - a picture of a student reading, a clock representing the time, and then a pencil accompanying a journal. Each of these symbols should be discussed (taught) prior to using them. If the student responds, these symbols can be used from year to year.

___ Shortened Assignments

The purpose of shortened assignments is not to lessen the workload, but to direct it, and to break up the assignments into smaller, more concise chunks. In doing this, the students should be allowed to work for a few minutes, and then turn their attention to a new assignment, in order to avoid “overload”. An example might be breaking a spelling list into two, one for the first half of

the week, and one for the second half of the week. If the student is struggling, the teacher may shorten the assignment by reducing the words, but ensuring that the words chosen reinforce the spelling lesson for the week. (Five "EA" words, rather than ten).

_____ Timer for Classwork

The purpose of this accommodation is to allow for the student to have frequent breaks. The timer serves two functions, one, to give the student a better understanding of the time required to complete a task, and for the teacher to remember to give the student frequent breaks. The timer is set in 2-3 or 4-5 minute increments, depending on the student's age and ability and the student is asked to work continuously until the timer sounds. When the timer goes off, the student will be allowed to get up, move, or stretch.

Hyperactivity:

_____ Manipulatives

Allowing the student to manipulate a small tactile object, or a small toy may actually improve their focus and increase their ability to retain information. Objects should be no bigger than their hand, and the student must not have any other issues (impulse control, or anger issues) so as to prevent the manipulative from being used as a projectile! Some options are: beanie babies, squishy balls or objects, the use of Yarn for older students can be helpful as well (teaching them to finger knit or crochet). The use of a manipulative is especially helpful in large group instruction, and during quiet activities, such as "Rug time". We call these items, "Fidgets". The goal is to teach the child to keep their body still while releasing the energy through their hands quietly.

_____ Seating Alternatives

A way to incorporate physical activity into a student's productive classtime might be to look at alternative forms of seating. A rug time alternative may be to use a Bosu ball, or exercise ball for the student to sit on, so that they may work to produce balance, but still sit with the rest of the class. There are seat cushions designed for fidgety students called air cushions or seat discs. They come in various sizes, and are air-filled with nodules on the tops for sensory stimulation. These allow the child to rock and stay in their seat while they work.

_____ Foot Work

Many ADHD children have a hard time controlling their feet when sitting at a desk. There are two accommodations you might be able to provide. One is a roller bar. Roller bars can be found in many Occupational Therapy catalogs, and other teaching supply catalogs. These bars are placed on the floor under the students desk, and allow the student to spin the long bar with his/her feet. They are quiet, but not soundless. A second, cheaper alternative may be to offer a foot band. You can often purchase sturdy elastic bands from craft supply stores for under

\$5.00. You may tie a length of band to the student's chair or desk, and allow them to use the band to work their feet. They can stretch the band, wrap their feet in the band, bounce it, etc.

Weighted Wear

Sometimes a Hyperactive child may have sensory issues as well. The best solution for these students would be to purchase or produce your own "Weighted Wear". Weighted vests, pads and belts can help a student calm down, feel supported and relieve anxiety. You can purchase many weighted items in most teaching catalogs. You can also create the same effect as a purchased weighted mat by adding rice to heavy duty ziplock bags (several to prevent spills from tears), and sealing the seam with duct tape. Those who might be able to sew can create vests with pockets that can hold various weights. The use of the weighted wear can be sparse, or every day.

Bending the Rules

Does your school allow gum? Probably not- however, if you have a child with ADHD, gum can be a great alternative to the accommodations listed above. Chewing gum can provide the release of energy, and increase the ability to focus, and it is fairly easy to provide to most children. Here are some more "Rule-Benders" that might help your student:

- *Standing at their desk, instead of sitting*
- *Listening to music through headphones*
- *Taking frequent breaks to walk around the classroom during tests or other focused activities*
- *Sitting at a back table instead of a desk (So they can spread out)*
- *The "Losing Recess is Not an Option" option. These students need the break to run, and expel energy, and often teachers are making it worse by keeping them inside. If the student has to lose free play at recess, allow them to go outside and walk a path or a track, run around the fence of the playground, or other physical activity.*