

# N·P·S

NEALPSYCHOLOGICALSPECIALTIES, LTD  
& THE NPS CENTER FOR ADHD

## Specific Strategies to Support Children with ADHD

**1) If a child has trouble sitting still or staying in his seat he should be given opportunities to move throughout the day.**

Opportunities for movement can include:

- standing up at his desk while doing work
- walking around the class in a predefined area
- getting out of his seat to stretch
- passing out materials
- erasing the board
- running errands to the school office
- going to the water fountain

It is up to the parents and the school team to work with the child to figure out what type of movement break would be best.

**2) Seat the child away from distractions as much as possible-ie: window, door, pencil sharpener, and talkative peers.** If child needs to be moved, be sensitive to not make them feel uncomfortable or different.

**3) Have lists available for students who can read so they can refer to the list for tasks requiring multiple steps** (e.g., a list of the steps for the morning routine or a list of steps for long division). Remind them to refer to the list if they forget the steps and do not independently refer to the list .

For students who are not yet able to read, try to provide a visual schedule of the steps or give them reminders of the steps if you cannot provide visuals.

**4) Chunk classwork into small manageable steps. Give the student a certain task to complete.** Check it when done and then give him a break to move or engage in a preferred activity when the task is completed. For example, if the class has to complete 20 math problems, allow the student with ADHD to complete 10, take a two to five minute break and complete the next ten. Make the goal reasonable for the child. Some children might need a break after only five questions.

For more open ended assignments such as listening to a class lecture, try using a timer. For example have the student listen for five minutes and write down three important facts, then give the student his break. Also use a timer to time the break time. Allow the timer to dictate the end of the break, rather than you arbitrarily saying

“okay, breaks over.” Let the student know the exact plan (e.g., after you write down three facts, you will have a two minute break). For children who have trouble understanding the concept of time or numbers a visual timer can be helpful because the child can see how much time is left. Visual timers can be purchased here at NPS, on [Amazon](#) or other online stores. Here are some examples:

**Red Clock Visual Timer** (NPS sells this)



With a red clock visual timer, children can see time running out as the red disappears.

You can even get a visual timer app on your iPhone, iPad, or Android device.

Graphic organizers can be another great way to help students with ADHD pay attention during lectures.

**5) Assist the student with staying organized.** Show him exactly how to organize his materials and supervise and guide him regularly, while he tries to do it independently. As he becomes more independent with organization, slowly fade out the organization checks.

6) Stay close to the student: Frequently walk by his desk, keep him seated near your desk, or stand near his desk when teaching (whichever strategy makes the most sense for your classroom).

- **Phrase directives in the positive and use redirection.** Tell your students what you want them to do rather than what you don't want them to do (e.g., “put your pencil down” instead of “stop tapping your pencil,” “look up here” instead of “stop talking,” or “finish writing your sentence” instead of “stop playing with things in your desk,” etc.). Sometimes nonverbal redirection such as tapping the student's paper to remind him to continue writing or pointing to where the student should be is enough.
- **Post clear rules that tell your students exactly what you expect** (e.g., raise your hand, quiet while working, stay in your area) and frequently review these rules. When any child breaks the rules, including a child with ADHD, remind him of the rule in a neutral tone (e.g. when the student calls out point to the rule and say “raise your hand when you have something to say.”). Some children respond to a simple gesture even better than a verbal reminder of the rule. For example pointing to the rule or making a gesture, such as raising your **own** hand to remind the child to raise his hand. Remember to phrase rules in the positive, “raise your hand” rather than in the negative “stop calling out.” Research shows that children respond better when you tell them *what to do* rather than *what not to do*. Implement these rules with consistency. If you allow some of the children break the rules some of the time, you can't expect children to know when to follow the rules. The expectation should be for them to follow the class rules at all times.