

How to Create and Maintain Your Child's IEP

11 Action Steps and
40 ADHD Accommodations



From ***ADDitude's*** Experts

ADDITUDE
LIVING WELL WITH **ATTENTION DEFICIT**

ADDITUDE

Strategies and Support for ADHD & LD

A trusted source of advice and information for families touched by attention-deficit disorder—
and a voice of inspiration to help people with ADHD find success at home, at school, and on the job.

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How to get a winning individualized education plan (IEP) for your child with ADHD—the legal document of special services and accommodations for your child's educational program

Before the IEP meeting:

- 1. Create a list of your child's academic challenges along with potential strategies to address each.** Before you set up an IEP meeting, list the different ways ADHD symptoms affect your child at school. Does she forget to turn in her homework? Does he fail to follow directions? Is she impulsively aggressive on the playground? List specific problems, then read up on potential accommodations that address them and/or list strategies you've used in the past that have worked. Include your child's strengths, passions, and skills as well so everyone gets a well-rounded, positive picture of your child.

At the IEP team meeting, where you'll write the IEP:

- 2. Do not accept an IEP that has already been put together without your input.** To ensure that parents are actively involved in the IEP development, federal regulations state that a finalized IEP should not be written before the team meeting. Parents should not be handed a completed IEP at the meeting and asked to sign it without contributing to the final document. Come prepared with the list you created to facilitate communication between you, the teacher, and the IEP team, and you will send the message that you are a valuable resource. Parents can be more effective, equal participants if they participate in the IEP development and implementation.

“As a teacher, I let my kids take their shoes off in the classroom. It helps them relax, especially the kids with ADHD. It makes the room a little stinky sometimes, but it is worth it.”

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What to include in the IEP:

- 3. Address behavior and academic challenges.** All too often only behavior problems, such as talking back or emotional blowups, are addressed. Most IEPs do not, but should, address common academic problems and executive-function deficits, such as disorganization, impaired sense of time, or tardiness. When academic challenges are dealt with effectively, behavior problems are often reduced.
- 4. Develop a list of specific, measurable, and achievable goals for the school year.** Time limits should be included: For example, “Johnny will reduce his interruptions from 10 times a day to two a day by month three” or “Julie will be able to decode words at the 50th percentile by the spring semester.”
- 5. List the specific objectives used to help your child achieve goals.** For instance, to improve written language skills, the IEP may include: “Richard will use prewriting strategies to organize his thoughts using webs and outlines.” Or to increase memory, “Joanna will use at least two memory strategies to compensate for memory deficits: mnemonics, visualization, chunking/associating, etc.” Parents can’t enforce objectives that aren’t written down.
- 6. Ask for proof.** If the school insists on certain interventions, ask for written evidence that what they’re suggesting is effective.
- 7. Think outside the box.** Many schools will give a menu of recommended accommodations, but don’t limit yourself to only the ideas on the list. These are only suggestions and any needed accommodation may be added.
- 8. Include instructions to have the results be evaluated.** Note who is responsible for implementing the objectives and state what measures or tests will be used—and how often—to evaluate progress. Will it be daily work samples, weekly reports, teacher records, or grades?
- 9. Share responsibility for IEP goals.** Delineate the responsibilities of teachers, therapists, parents, and the child. One common shortcoming of many IEPs is that the child is the only one asked to make changes.
- 10. Document every step of the IEP process.** As you secure services for your child, put all requests, concerns, and thank-yous in writing—and keep copies on file. A note asking the teacher for your child’s test scores can be valuable if you later have to document that the request went unmet. After each IEP meeting and conference with school staff, summarize the main points in a letter to participants to establish a written record of what was said.

“Sitting at the front of the class keeps my son focused.”

“If my son doesn’t finish an assignment, giving him the opportunity to finish it later helps a great deal.”

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After the IEP Is in Place:

11. Embrace change. An IEP may require tweaks and modifications. Sometimes it doesn't work as well as the parent and teacher thought it would. Write the need for change into the IEP: "In addition to the accommodations listed in the IEP, the teacher and parent will communicate with each other immediately if the student begins to struggle. Adjustments to the IEP may be made and accommodations may be added as needed."

40 Great Accommodations for Your Child with ADHD/LD

Increase the odds of your child succeeding in school by pinpointing his problems in the classroom and including effective accommodations in his IEP to remedy them. Below is a list of challenges your child may face during the school day along with specific accommodations to overcome them. Talk with your child's teacher about implementing these strategies.

Problem: ACTS UP IN CLASSROOM

"Erik is easily distracted by classroom activity, acts out in class to gain negative attention, and reaches across desks to talk to or touch other students."

Accommodations to Request

- Seat him front and center, near the teacher, and away from doors or windows where noise or passing students may distract him
- Tweak the seating plan so he sits next to a good role model
- Increase the distance between desks, if possible
- For younger students, mark an area with tape around his desk in which he can move freely

Problem: INCOMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS

"Julie is unable to complete work within the given time, isn't able to keep up the quality of work, and has difficulty following instructions."

Accommodations to Request

- Allow her extra time to complete assigned work
- Break long assignments into smaller segments
- Shorten assignments or work periods
- Pair written instructions with oral instructions
- Set a kitchen timer for 10-minute intervals and have the student get up and show you her work

"Untimed testing and taking exams away from peers have helped."

"A homework planner. His teacher and we have to reinforce the habit of using it, but it has been a godsend."

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Problem: GETS DISTRACTED

“Jennifer falls behind during classroom discussions; when taking notes, she complains that lessons are boring, and turns in work with careless mistakes.”

Accommodations to Request

- Provide her peer assistance in note taking and ask her questions to encourage participation in discussions
- Enlist her to help present the lesson
- Cue her to stay on task with a private signal—a gentle tap on the shoulder, for example
- Schedule a five-minute period for her to check over work before turning in homework or tests

Problem: INTERRUPTS

“Richard constantly engages in attention-getting behavior, blurts out answers, and interrupts others. He needs reinforcement and long-term help with improving behavior.”

Accommodations to Request

- Ignore minor inappropriate behavior
- Increase immediacy of rewards and consequences for good and bad behavior
- Acknowledge correct answers only when his hand is raised and he is called upon
- Send daily/weekly progress reports home
- Set up a behavior contract with student and parents

Problem: LOSES FOCUS

“Alex daydreams a lot and isn’t able to stay focused on the subject matter that is being taught.”

Accommodations to Request

- Use clear verbal signals: “Freeze,” “This is important,” or “One, two, three...eyes on me”
- Use a flashlight or a laser pointer to illuminate objects or words you want him to pay attention to
- Illustrate vocabulary words and science concepts with small drawings or stick figures
- Ring a bell or chimes; play a chord on a guitar or keyboard

“Having teachers who understand that there are differences in children’s learning styles is a huge bonus after years of my child’s having a “bad kid” reputation at other schools.”

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Problem: RESTLESS IN CLASS

“Robby is constantly tapping his foot and fingers in class and has difficulty focusing for long periods of time.”

Accommodations to Request

- Allow him to run errands, to hand out papers, or to stand at times while working
- Give him a fidget toy in class to calm him down and to increase concentration
- Provide short breaks between assignments
- Give him an air-filled rubber disk to sit on that allows him to wiggle.

Problem: DISORGANIZED, POOR PLANNER

“Anita can’t keep track of papers and has trouble remembering homework assignments. She loses books all the time.”

Accommodations to Request

- Color code binders to specific academic subjects—green for math, red for English
- Provide handouts that are three-hole punched in advance
- Use brightly colored paper for project assignments, providing details and due dates
- Provide student with assignment book and supervise writing down of assignments
- Appoint monitors to make sure that students write down homework assignments at the end of the day
- Allow student to keep a set of books at home

Problem: SOCIAL PROBLEMS

“Marnie is unclear about social cues. She does not work well with others and isn’t respected by her peers. As a result, she has low self-confidence.”

Accommodations to Request

- Set up social-behavior goals with her and implement a reward program
- Encourage cooperative learning tasks
- Assign special responsibilities to her in presence of peer group
- Compliment positive behavior and work
- Give her an opportunity to act in a leadership role
- Encourage social interactions with classmates
- Plan teacher-directed group activities
- Acknowledge appropriate behavior and good work frequently

“Smaller groups, incentives for completing work, and going to school with kids who have similar struggles.”

“Keeping a journal and learning how to use a graphic organizer.”

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ADDitude Special Reports Available Now

www.adhdreports.com

A Parent's Guide to ADHD at School

How to manage ADHD symptoms at school, secure accommodations, get organized, tackle homework, and more.

You're always trying new ways to help your child focus on lessons, adhere to classroom rules, and turn in his homework on time. You want support strategies that will nurture his strengths — and push him to meet the challenges each new school year brings. This eBook has them

>> Learn more about this special report: <http://additu.de/school-book>

The ADHD Homework Survival Guide

A plan for getting assignments written down, completed, and handed in on time.

Use this ADHD-friendly guide to help you (and your child) survive nightly homework without tears, tantrums, or fights. Learn how to establish after-school routines that work, night after night, make sure assignments are written down accurately, help your child study smarter, and more.

>> Learn more about this special report: <http://additu.de/hw-book>

The Complete IEP/504 Guide

A step-by-step road map to the school accommodations that your child needs to succeed.

This downloadable eBook is a step-by-step road map to securing school accommodations for your child with ADHD and/or LD. Learn how to: get a correct diagnosis for your child, navigate the IEP/504 process, track your child's progress, and more.

>> Learn more about this special report: <http://additu.de/iep-504-guide>

FREE ADDitude Downloadable Booklets

Does Your Child Have a Learning Disability?

Use this self-test to find out if your child's problems at school may be due to LD

Is It Depression?

Depression is a serious mood disorder, but it's not always easy to recognize.

Who Can Treat ADHD?

Doctor? Psychiatrist? Coach? Learn who can treat your attention deficit.

You Know You Have ADHD When...

Real ADHDers share personal stories highlighting the lighter side of living with attention deficit.

Is It Adult ADHD?

Habitually disorganized? Always running late? It could be ADHD.

Smart Comebacks

Witty responses to ADHD doubters.

It's Not ADHD

Doctors are sometimes too quick to diagnose ADHD. Read up on common misdiagnoses.

Find these and many more free ADHD resources online at:

<http://additu.de/freeloads>

FREE ADHD Webinar Replays from ADDitude:

Download This! Assistive Technology for Tweens and Teens with ADHD

>> <http://additu.de/assistive>

Young adults today are overbooked. They juggle more academic demands, extracurricular activities, after-school jobs, and social and family responsibilities than any generation had before — and they do it all under the glaring lights of Instagram. Add ADHD to that mix, and it's no wonder our kids benefit so hugely from technology tools and strategies designed to keep them focused, organized, and on-task. Janet DeSenzo explains which ones to choose.

How Mindset Impacts Learning

>> <http://additu.de/mindset>

Perception is reality. According to research, a child's confidence, motivation, and perseverance at school are all hugely impacted by his own personal perceptions of how well he learns. In other words, if you think you're a strong student, you will become one. This presentation by Cindy Goldrich aims to help parents and educators foster self-confidence and improve motivation for kids who struggle with learning challenges. We will explore the best ways to help children see themselves as learners and to help them persevere amid setbacks.

Addressing ADHD Behaviors in the Classroom

>> <http://additu.de/19z>

Sit down. Pay attention. Quit squirming. Be quiet. Keep your hands to yourself. These school 'rules' can be tough for any child, but they can be especially challenging for children with ADHD who lack the brain maturity of their peers. Chris Dendy, M.S., explains how parents and teachers can address behavior issues in the classroom.

Where is My Notebook? Teaching Organization Skills That Last

>> <http://additu.de/notebook>

No more forgotten papers, missed deadlines, or perpetually messy desks! Shari Gent explains how parents can help their children conquer time management and implement a lasting organizational system.

Homework Made Simple

>> <http://additu.de/hwk>

Homework doesn't need to be daily battle between parents and their ADHD children. Expert Ann Dolin, M.Ed., takes the 'work' out of homework with these tips for creating a study sanctuary, combating careless mistakes, and dealing with ADHD distraction.

FREE ADHD Newsletters from ADDitude

Sign up to receive critical news and information about ADHD diagnosis and treatment, plus strategies for school, parenting, and living better with ADHD:
<http://additu.de/email>

Adult ADHD and LD

Expert advice on managing your household, time, money, career, and relationships

Parenting ADHD and LD Children

Behavior and discipline, time management, disorganization, making friends, and more critical strategies for parents

ADHD and LD at School

How to get classroom accommodations, finish homework, work with teachers, find the right schools, and much more

Treating ADHD

Treatment options including medications, food, supplements, brain training, mindfulness and other alternative therapies