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## Suggested Classroom Interventions For Children With ADD & Learning Disabilities

Children with attention deficit disorder and/or learning disabilities can be a challenge for any classroom teacher. This page provides some practical suggestions that can be used in the regular classroom as well as the special education classroom. By looking through a given list of interventions, a teacher will be able to select one or more strategies that are suited to a specific child in a specific environment.

- [Ideas for Attention Deficit Children](#)
- [Strategies for Cognitively Impulsive Children](#)
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### Ideas for Attention Deficit Children

Children whose attention seems to wander or who never seem to "be with" the rest of the class might be helped by the following suggestions.

1. Pause and create suspense by looking around before asking questions.
2. Randomly pick reciters so the children cannot time their attention.
3. Signal that someone is going to have to answer a question about what is being said.
4. Use the child's name in a question or in the material being covered.
5. Ask a simple question (not even related to the topic at hand) to a child whose attention is beginning to wander.
6. Develop a private running joke between you and the child that can be invoked to re-involve you with the child.
7. Stand close to an inattentive child and touch him or her on the shoulder as you are teaching.
8. Walk around the classroom as the lesson is progressing and tap the place in the child's book that is currently being read or discussed.
9. Decrease the length of assignments or lessons.
10. Alternate physical and mental activities.
11. Increase the novelty of lessons by using films, tapes, flash cards, or small group work or by having a child call on others.
12. Incorporate the children's interests into a lesson plan.
13. Structure in some guided daydreaming time.
14. Give simple, concrete instructions, once.
15. Investigate the use of simple mechanical devices that indicate attention versus inattention.
16. Teach children self monitoring strategies.
17. Use a soft voice to give direction.
18. Employ peers or older students or volunteer parents as tutors.

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## Strategies for Cognitively Impulsive Children

Some children have difficulty staying with the task at hand. Their verbalizations seem irrelevant and their performance indicates that they are not thinking reflectively about what they are doing. Some possible ideas to try out in this situation include the following.

1. Provide as much positive attention and recognition as possible.
2. Clarify the social rules and external demands of the classroom.
3. Establish a cue between teacher and child.
4. Spend personal discussion times with these children emphasizing the similarities between the teacher and child.
5. Get in a habit of pausing 10 to 16 seconds before answering.
6. Probe irrelevant responses for possible connections to the question.
7. Have children repeat questions before answering.
8. Choose a student to be the "question keeper."
9. Using a well known story, have the class orally recite it as a chain story.
10. When introducing a new topic in any academic area, have the children generate questions about it before providing them with much information.
11. Distinguish between reality and fantasy by telling stories with a mix of fact and fiction and asking the children to critique them.
12. Assign a written project that is to contain elements that are "true," "could happen but didn't," and "pretend, can't happen."
13. Do not confront lying by making children admit they have been untruthful.
14. Play attention and listening games.
15. Remove un-needed stimulation from the classroom environment.
16. Keep assignments short.
17. Communicate the value of accuracy over speed.
18. Evaluate your own tempo as teacher.
19. Using the wall clock, tell children how long they are to work on an assignment.
20. Require that children keep a file of their completed work.
21. Teach children self talk.
22. Encourage planning by frequently using lists, calendars, charts, pictures, and finished products in the classroom.

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## Suggested Classroom Accommodations for Specific Behaviors

### When you see this behavior

1. Difficulty following a plan (has high aspirations but lacks follow-through); sets out to "get straight A's, ends up with F's" (sets unrealistic goals)

2. Difficulty sequencing and completing steps to accomplish specific tasks (e.g. writing a book report, term paper,

### Try this accommodation

+Assist student in setting long-range goals: break the goal into realistic parts.  
 +Use a questioning strategy with the student; ask, What do you need to be able to do this?  
 +Keep asking that question until the student has reached an obtainable goal.  
 +Have student set clear timelines of what he needs to do to accomplish each step (monitor student progress frequently).

+ Break up task into workable and obtainable steps.  
 + Provide examples and specific steps to accomplish task.

organized paragraphs, division problem, etc.)

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| 3. Shifting from one uncompleted activity to another without closure.   | + Define the requirements of a completed activity (e.g. your math is finished when all six problems are complete and corrected; do not begin on the next task until it is finished).  |
| 4. Difficulty following through on instructions from others.  | + Gain student's attention before giving directions. Use alerting cues. Accompany oral directions with written directions.<br>+ Give one direction at a time. Quietly repeat directions to the student after they have been given to the rest of the class. Check for understanding by having the student repeat the directions.  |
| 5. Difficulty prioritizing from most to least important.  | + Prioritize assignment and activities.<br>+ Provide a model to help students. Post the model and refer to it often.  |
| 6. Difficulty sustaining effort and accuracy over time.   | + Reduce assignment length and strive for quality (rather than quantity).<br>+ Increase the frequency of positive reinforcements (catch the student doing it right and let him know it).  |
| 7. Difficulty completing assignments.   | + List and/or post (and say) all steps necessary to complete each assignment.<br>+ Reduce the assignment into manageable sections with specific due dates.<br>+ Make frequent checks for work/assignment completion.<br>+ Arrange for the student to have a "study buddy" with phone number in each subject area.   |
| 8. Difficulty with any task that requires memory.   | + Combine seeing, saying, writing and doing; student may need to subvocalize to remember.<br>+ Teach memory techniques as a study strategy (e.g. mnemonics, visualization, oral rehearsal, numerous repetitions).   |
| 9. Difficulty with test taking.   | + Allow extra time for testing; teach test-taking skills and strategies; and allow student to be tested orally.<br>+ Use clear, readable and uncluttered test forms. Use test format that the student is most comfortable with. Allow ample space for student response. Consider having lined answer spaces for essay or short answer tests.  |
| 10. Confusion from non-verbal cues (misreads body language, etc.)   | + Directly teach (tell the student) what non-verbal cues mean. Model and have student practice reading cues in a safe setting.  |
| 11. Confusion from written material (difficulty finding main idea from a paragraph; attributes greater importance to minor details) | + Provide student with copy of reading material with main ideas underlined or highlighted.<br>+ Provide an outline of important points from reading material.<br>+ Teach outlining, main-idea / details concepts.<br>+ Provide tape of text / chapter.  |
| 12. Confusion from written material (difficulty finding main idea from a paragraph; attributes greater importance to minor details) | + Provide student with a copy of presentation notes.<br>+ Allow peers to share carbon-copy notes from presentation (have student compare own notes with a copy of peer's notes).<br>+ Provide framed outlines of presentations (introducing visual and auditory cues to important information).<br>+ Encourage use of tape recorder.<br>+ Teach and emphasize key words (the following..., the most important point...,etc.). |
| 13. Difficulty sustaining attention to tasks  | + Reward attention. Break up activities into small units.   |

- or other activities (easily distracted by extraneous stimuli)
14. Frequent messiness or sloppiness.
15. Poor handwriting (often mixing cursive with manuscript and capitals with low-case letters)
16. Difficulty with fluency in handwriting e.g. good letter/word production but very slow and laborious.
17. Poorly developed study skills
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18. Poor self-monitoring (careless errors in spelling, arithmetic, reading)
19. Low fluency or production of written material (takes hours on a 10 minute assignment)
20. Apparent Inattention (underachievement, daydreaming, not there)
21. Difficulty participating in class without being interruptive; difficulty working quietly
22. Inappropriate seeking of attention (clowns around, exhibits loud excessive or exaggerated movement as attention-seeking behavior, interrupts, butts into other children's activities, needles others)
23. Frequent excessive talking
- Reward for timely accomplishment.
- + Use physical proximity and touch. Use earphones and/or study carrels, quiet place, or preferential seating.
  - + Teach organizational skills. Be sure student has daily, weekly and/or monthly assignment sheets; list of materials needed daily; and consistent format for papers. Have a consistent way for students to turn in and receive back papers; reduce distractions.
  - + Give reward points for notebook checks and proper paper format.
  - + Provide clear copies of worksheets and handouts and consistent format for worksheets.
  - + Establish a daily routine, provide models for what you want the student to do.
  - + Arrange for a peer who will help him with organization.
  - + Assist student to keep materials in a specific place (e.g. pencils and pens in pouch).
  - + Be willing to repeat expectations.
  - + Allow for a scribe and grade for content, not handwriting. Allow for use of computer or typewriter.
  - + Consider alternative methods for student response (e.g. tape recorder, oral reports, etc.).
  - + Don't penalize student for mixing cursive and manuscript (accept any method of production).
  - + Use pencil with rubber grip.
  - + Allow for shorter assignments (quality vs. quantity).
  - + Allow alternate method of production (computer, scribe, oral presentation, etc.).
  - + Use pencil with rubber grip.
  - + Teach study skills specific to the subject area - organization (e.g. assignment calendar), textbook reading, notetaking (finding main idea / detail, mapping, outlining), skimming, summarizing).
  - + Teach specific methods of self-monitoring (e.g. stop-look-listen).
  - + Have student proof-read finished work when it is cold.
  - + Allow for alternative method for completing assignment (oral presentation, taped report, visual presentation, graphs, maps, pictures, etc. with reduced written requirements).
  - + Allow for alternative method of writing (e.g. typewriter, computer, cursive or printing, or a scribe).
  - + Get student's attention before giving directions (tell student how to pay attention, look at me while I talk, watch my eyes while I speak). Ask student to repeat directions.
  - + Attempt to actively involve student in lesson (e.g. cooperative learning).
  - + Seat student in close proximity to the teacher.
  - + Reward appropriate behavior (catch student being good).
  - + Use study carrel if appropriate.
  - + Show student (model) how to gain other's attention appropriately.
  - + Catch the student when appropriate and reinforce.
  - + Teach student hand signals and use to tell student when and when not to talk.

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|  | + Make sure student is called when it is appropriate and reinforce listening.   |
| 24. Difficulty making transitions (from activity to activity or class to class); takes an excessive amount of time to find pencil, gives up, refuses to leave previous task; appears agitated during change. | + Program child for transitions. Give advance warning of when a transition is going to take place (now we are completing the worksheet, next we will ...) and the expectation for the transition (and you will need...)<br>+ Specifically say and display lists of materials needed until a routine is possible. List steps necessary to complete each assignment.<br>+ Have specific locations for all materials (pencil pouches, tabs in notebooks, etc.).<br>+ Arrange for an organized helper (peer). |
| 25. Difficulty remaining seated or in a particular position when required to   | + Give student frequent opportunities to get up and move around. Allow space for movement.  |
| 26. Frequent fidgeting with hands, feet or objects, squirming in seat.   | + Break tasks down to small increments and give frequent positive reinforcement for accomplishments (this type of behavior is often due to frustration).<br>+ Allow alternative movement when possible.   |
| 27. Inappropriate responses in class often blurted out; answers given to questions before they have been completed.  | + Seat student in close proximity to teacher so that visual and physical monitoring of student behavior can be done by the teacher.<br>+ State behavior that you do want (tell the student how you expect him to behave).   |
| 28. Agitation under pressure and competition (athletic or academic)  | + Stress effort and enjoyment for self, rather than competition with others.<br>+ Minimize timed activities; structure class for team effort and cooperation.   |
| 29. Inappropriate behaviors in a team or large group sport or athletic activity (difficulty waiting turn in games or group situations)   | + Give the student a responsible job (e.g. team captain, care and distribution of the balls, score keeping, etc.); consider leadership role.<br>+ Have student in close proximity of teacher.   |
| 30. Frequent involvement in physically dangerous activities without considering possible consequences  | + Anticipate dangerous situations and plan for in advance.<br>+ Stress Stop-Look-Listen.<br>+ Pair with responsible peer (rotate responsible students so that they don't wear out!).  |
| 31. Poor adult interactions. Defies authority. Sucks up. Hangs on.   | + Provide positive attention.<br>+ Talk with student individually about the inappropriate behavior (what you are doing is..., a better way of getting what you need or want is...).   |
| 32. Frequent self-putdowns, poor personal care and posture, negative comments about self and others, low self-esteem   | + Structure for success.<br>+ Train student for self-monitoring, reinforce improvements, teach self-questioning strategies (What am I doing? How is that going to affect others?)<br>+ Allow opportunities for the student to show his strength.<br>+ Give positive recognition.  |
| 33. Difficulty using unstructured time - recess, hallways, lunchroom, locker room, library, assembly   | + Provide student with a definite purpose during unstructured activities (The purpose of going to the library is to check out. the purpose of...is...)<br>+ Encourage group games and participation (organized school clubs and activities).  |
| 34. Losing things necessary for task or activities at school or at home (e.g. pencils, books, assignments before, during and after completion of a given task)   | + Help students organize. Frequently monitor notebook and dividers, pencil pouch, locker, book bag, desks. A place for everything and everything in its place.<br>+ Provide positive reinforcement for good organization. Provide student with a list of needed materials and locations.  |

35. Poor use of time (sitting, starting off into space, doodling, not working on task at hand)

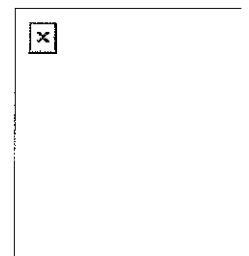
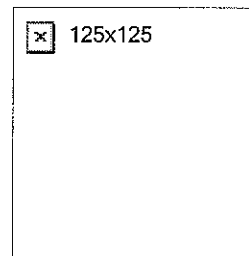
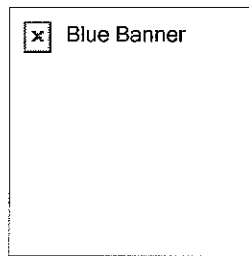
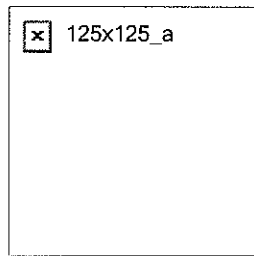
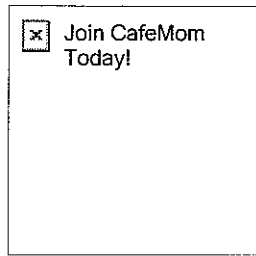
- + Teach reminder cues (a gentle touch on the shoulder, hand signal, etc.).
- + Tell the student your expectations of what paying attention looks like. (You look like you are paying attention when...)
- + Give the student a time limit for a small unit of work with positive reinforcement for accurate completion.
- + Use a contract, timer, etc. for self-monitoring.

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