

Learning to Slow Down and Pay Attention — Suggestions for kids with ADD/ADHD (adapted from Kathleen Nadeau and Ellen Dixon)

Things I Can Do to Help Myself

Ways to remember...

- Write yourself a note. Colored post-its are wonderful because you can stick notes where you will be sure to see them.
- Ask your mom or dad to write you a note and stick it where you'll see it. It can be hard to remember things you're told.
- Always put things in the same place: a hook for your jacket, a shelf for books and backpack, a box for shoes, basketballs, etc. If these are all together in a convenient place, you can easily put your things away when you come home.
- Set the kitchen timer or mobile device as a reminder. For example, if you need to leave for soccer practice in 30 minutes, set the timer to remind you when to go.
- Learn to DO IT NOW! When you think of something, do it right away so you don't have time to forget!
- Put things for school in one special place by the front door.
- Learn to stop and think for a minute before you rush out the door. "Do I have everything I need?"
- Think about your day when you wake up. "Today is Tuesday, so I have basketball practice after school. I need to take my knee pads."

Morning Routines

- Put your clothes out the night before.
- Pack your lunch the night before.
- Gather all the belongings you'll need to take to school the next day, for example, lunch money, homework, signed permission slips, PE clothes, uniforms.
- Establish a regular routine in the morning. Doing things in order makes it easier to get it done.

- Make a checklist of what to do each morning and put it on a wall where you and your parents will see it. A calendar is a good way to keep track of your weekly events.
- Don't play around, watch TV or play video games until you're completely ready for the day.
- Enlist your mom or dad to set up a "launching pad." This is a place for you to put everything you'll take to school the next day. Make a list near your launching pad of what you'll need.

Ways to pay better attention at school...

- Keep your desk clear so you're only working on one thing at a time.
- Sit close to the front of the class and look at your teacher whenever s/he is talking.
- Get involved! Don't just sit there. Ask questions and make comments (after raising your hand, of course).
- Ask to be moved away from kids who talk or bother you, and don't talk when you should be listening.
- Remind yourself to pay attention by wearing a rubber band on your wrist and giving it a little snap when you find yourself daydreaming.
- Ask the teacher to move your desk to a quiet place in the classroom when the class gets too noisy or distracting while you're trying to work.
- Leave your toys/tech gadgets at home so you won't be tempted to distract yourself.
- Raise your hand and ask for help right away whenever you don't understand something.

Things to do if you feel fidgety...

- Ask the teacher if you can run an errand or help with something for a few minutes. Then go back to your work.
- Ask if you can keep a "squeeze ball" (or "stress ball") in your desk to squeeze some of your excess energy out (but never toss or throw it!).
- Ask your mom or dad in advance if you may leave the dinner table as soon as you have eaten.
- Stand up and stretch. Then bend over and touch your toes. Then sit back down. Do this quietly.

- Exercise every day, by playing outside, taking a walk with your mom or dad, or going to karate lessons or sports practice.
- Take a 5-minute break if your doing homework, or spend a few minutes memorizing things while walking around the table.
- Draw pictures at your desk, *if* you've finished your work.
- Practice slow, deep breaths to resettle your mind and body. Breathe in for a count of three, and exhale for a count of four. Remember to breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. Do this sequence three times in a row.

Homework

- Find a quiet place to do homework that's away from temptations like TV, technology or video games.
- Do your homework when you're not too tired. Some kids do better if they play after school and do their homework after dinner. Other kids are too tired after dinner. Think about the best time for you.
- Choose the best time of day and place for doing homework, and make it a habit.
- Try standing up for a minute or two while you read if sitting makes you tired.
- Try talking out loud and walking around the room when memorizing things like math facts.
- Reward yourself for finishing your homework. A snack or favorite activity is a wonderful treat to look forward to.
- Don't try to do too much at one time. Work for 15 minutes, take a short break, then work some more.