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Parent Checklist: 15 Ways to Help Children with ADHD and Learning Disabilities

Effective strategies for raising children with both ADHD and a learning disability like dyslexia.

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A quick checklist of pointers for parents of children with ADHD and a learning disability... Add your suggestions to the comments box below!

1. **Identify and treat the problems as early as possible, preferably before age 10.** The first years in school are crucial to beginning intervention and preventing failure and feelings of inferiority.
 2. **Help the child gain an understanding of his disability from a biological perspective.** Don't use or allow negative labels, such as "lazy," "stupid," or "inferior."
 3. **Help the child learn to identify feelings,** use words to describe them, and talk about them.
 4. **Provide a structured and stable environment at home.** Routines (morning, study time, bedtime) are essential for young children. Insist that the child learn these routines and take responsibility for following them.
 5. **Help the child find his strength and capitalize on it.** Pursue skill and competency in that area. You may have to try several activities to find the right one for the child.
 6. **NEVER take away the area of strength as a punishment,** or as a way to motivate the child to do better in school.
 7. **Involve the child in group activities** (sports team, photography club, church group) to develop social skills.
 8. **Make a point to praise and reward effort,** not just successful outcomes. Grades are less important than progress.
 9. **Help the child set realistic, achievable goals.** Confidence cannot survive without success.
 10. **Don't take over and do the work for the child.** Provide help, be a monitor, but never take away the primary responsibility for doing the work.
 11. **Help the child keep trying when faced with obstacles.** Determination and resiliency will help the child get through any hardship.
 12. **Never give up or lose hope.** Never allow the child to give up on himself. Don't allow the child to make excuses for not trying. Failure means failing to try.
 13. **Help the child develop diverse activities, interests, and friends.** Try many things and keep the child engaged in them. Variety challenges the brain and helps it grow.
 14. **Use all appropriate interventions.** In addition to school services, take advantage of outside resources when needed.
 15. **Provide multimodal, interactive, and hands-on learning.** Children with disabilities learn better by doing things than by talking about them.
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