

# Why Am I Having So Much Trouble With School?

It is very common to have difficulties in school if you have attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

## Common Reasons You Might Have a Hard Time With School and Homework if You Have ADHD

- It's hard to pay attention even if you are smart and you are trying hard.
- You might have trouble organizing things, so you forget assignments—or even if you do them, you might forget to hand them in.
- It's hard for you to always stay in control, so you get in trouble more than others.
- You might have a learning disability in addition to your ADHD—this can make understanding the material and using information that you hear or see more difficult.
- Even if you can do the schoolwork, it takes you longer than others.
- You have trouble remembering everything.
- You have trouble making or keeping friends, or dating.

## What You Can Do

- Cut yourself some slack—it's harder to get organized, stay on task, complete assignments, and learn material compared with your friends without ADHD.
- Work as a partner with your parents and teachers to make a plan and try your best to stick to it.
- Share your school Web site with your parents so they can log on to retrieve homework assignments and classroom policies and procedures (be patient if they need some help with the computer; it's very likely this is something you do better with computers than they do).

- Set up a homework space you can use every day, away from distractions.
- Join a group with other teens who have ADHD.

## Your Support Team Can Help You!

### Your doctor can

- Adjust or change your medication.

### Your parents can

- Send a letter to school at the start of the year to help your teachers learn about what works for you and how they can help you do your best.
- Send a copy of your education plan, if you have one (504 or IEP), to the teacher(s) to make plans for what you need.
- Ask your teacher(s) to fill out a parent contact sheet that includes information such as name, e-mail address, phone number, best times to contact him or her, how homework is assigned, procedures for turning in homework, and other classroom policies.

### Your teachers can

- Fill out your follow-up forms (and fax them to your doctor's office) to help your doctor determine if you need to have your medicines changed or adjusted.

### Your friends can

- Respect your need to keep all of your medicine for yourself.
- Help you pay attention when you are driving (eg, limit distractions, understand you drive best if you only have one passenger).
- Remind you about assignments and share notes (not tests) if you miss some pieces.
- Say NO to bullying.

Adapted from Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders Parent to Parent: Family Training and material developed by Laurel K. Leslie, MD, MPH, San Diego ADHD Project.

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