

Resource for Parents of Kids with ADHD

1. Is there a good way to help my child understand her brain?

- Their brain is like a race car with bicycle brakes.

2. What are some of the common traits of individuals with ADHD?

- The ADHD brain matures more slowly
- It runs in families.
- It is not correlated with intelligence.
- You do not outgrow it; you can learn to manage it
- It can be hard to pay attention to things, but it can also be hard to remember to stop paying attention to things once you're engaged. This "hyperfocus" can lead you to stay focused on an activity even when you should be moving on.
- Time is an elusive concept; Strategies to manage time and plan need to be taught explicitly; Teach and practice routines and organization
- Research shows that many people with ADHD have trouble with emotional regulation, experiencing symptoms such as low frustration tolerance, impulsivity, temper outbursts, and significant mood fluctuations. Jan 5, 2021
- O-G approach to teaching is best: Multi sensory, Sequential, Incremental (scaffolding) Cumulative, Individualized, Explicitly

3. What should I tune into to better know my child?

- Continually assess her ability to regulate her emotions
- Her ability to communicate what she want/needs to say; Encourage gesturing, Use shorter sentences; Rather than give answers or solutions, give choices
- Teaching and practicing with children (and reminding ourselves as their model) to focus on and control their breathing can help them become less reactive and more reflective when feeling anxious or stressed. As children practice controlled breathing, their brains develop and reinforce the "habit" of responding to anxiety by focusing on breathing. This leads to reflective rather than reactive responses. The more controlled breathing is practiced, the more self-managed and mindful children become. They'll learn to breathe in a way that helps their brain think more clearly.
- By modifying the environment, adjusting routines, and using sensory strategies, we can help our child reach and maintain an optimal state of regulation. Time is the variable and learning is the constant. The goal is to determine the optimal level of input for each specific child. Is your child an avoider or seeker? Sensor or bystander?
- Prepare (practice) for new situations, transitions. Debrief. What went well? What would you change? What strategies did you use to help yourself? What is one question you have for me? What would you like to learn more about?

4. Should I teach my child to advocate for herself?

- Yes! At home, advocating for your child is supporting and fostering their emotional, physical, and communication needs
- You may have to be their prefrontal cortex for a long time! If they could, they would!
- Outside the home: Stay connected to those who will be working with your child.
- Prepare relatives for where your child is right now in his/her journey
- Advocate for your child until he can advocate for himself
- Teach your child about her brain

5. What's one of the best, and yet rarely recognized ADHD management tools?

- The truth we needed to hear back then, and the truth that I deliver in my talks, is simple enough, but it makes all the difference. The truth is this: the purpose of your years spent growing up is to fall in love. Fall in love with a person, sure, but even more important, fall in love with a subject, an activity, a time in history, a Great Woman or a Great Man, indeed develop and fall in love with your own vision of what greatness truly is, fall in love with a dog, or with a shooting star or constellation, with a movie or a play, with creating music, fall in love with cooking a perfect dish, fall in love with solving equations —your imagination carries you away.
- Ongoing creative outlets (strengths based) The greatest gift you can give your child is to love her for who she is. Specific praise is the best kind of praise

6. What is an important strategy for me to model, teach, and practice with my child?

- Focused Awareness: The Core Practice It puts children (and adults) in control of their mental and physical energy.
- Paying attention to breathing also supports strong functioning in the higher brain. Controlled breathing lessens anxiety by overriding the “Flight, fight, or freeze” response set off by the amygdala, and gives control to conscious thought, which takes place in the prefrontal cortex)
- Teaching children (and reminding ourselves as their model)to focus on and control their breathing can help them become less reactive and more reflective when feeling anxious or stressed.As children practice controlled breathing, their brains develop and reinforce the “habit” of responding to anxiety by focusing on breathing. This leads to reflective rather than reactive responses.
- The more controlled breathing is practiced, the more self-managed and mindful children become. They’ll learn to breathe in a way that helps their brain think more clearly.

7. What is a positivity practice that can be started at any age?

- Measuring backwards

8. Is it important to teach my child organization, routines, and time management?

- Yes. See #2 above. Routines and organization are antidotes to negative thinking.
- See #3 above, too. Think of these areas: Sleep; Nutrition; Time Management; Self Management/Emotional Regulation; Movement; Learning: Attention/Focus/Step-by- Step

9. How can I help my child develop resilience?

- All of the above. Teach her to understand herself. Sometimes the difference between hope and despair is a good night’s sleep.

10. What are the top resources you’d recommend to help guide me on this ADHD journey?

- *ADHD 2.0* by Edward M Hallowell, MD and John J Ratey, MD
- *Additude Magazine*, “Strategies and Support for ADHD and LD” (Additudemag.com)
- *Bright Kids Who Can’t Keep Up* by Drs. Ellen Braaten and Brian Willoughby
- *The Gap and the Gain* by Dan Sullivan with Dr. Benjamin Hardy
- *Tiny Habits* by BJ Fogg, PhD
- MindUP Curriculum: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning and Living; Grades Pre K-2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8, mindup.org
- *Raising Good Humans* by Hunter Clarke-Fields, MSAE
- *Healing ADD* by Daniel G Amen, MD
- *Your Brain’s Not Broken* by Tamara Rosier, PhD
- ExecutiveFunctioningSuccess.com