

One-Page Summaries:

School Productivity, Attention & Focus

ADHD Parenting Summit 2024



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Often Overlooked Ways to Empower Your Kid to Break Through School Barriers & Succeed in Life

Dr. Emily W. King



“No parent on the planet got the child that they imagined in their mind. We are shepherds on their journey, not ours.”

ADHD and autism

Autism and ADHD share **executive functioning challenges** but for different reasons. ADHD kids may hyper-focus on specific tasks, while autistic children become deeply engaged in their passions, showing intense enthusiasm.

Both groups struggle with emotional regulation, though ADHD kids process emotions quickly, and autistic kids experience emotions more intensely. Socially, ADHD kids might struggle with boundaries, whereas autistic kids may find it challenging to initiate social interactions, especially outside their interests.

School challenges

For ADHD kids, the challenge is whether they're even absorbing the teacher's instructions, as they can be **easily distracted by their surroundings**. Autistic children, however, might be distracted by their own imaginations. But once they are paying attention, ADHD students usually struggle with focus. In contrast, autistic students can stay focused longer when the task aligns with their interests.

Autistic children and school

If a child is anxious, overwhelmed, or upset, they can't learn effectively. For young autistic children, school readiness isn't about academics; it's about **emotional and developmental readiness**. Autism impacts areas like emotional regulation, language, and motor skills. Often, delaying traditional schooling for a year of play-based learning can help better prepare the child for school.

Once they're in school, it's key to create a safe, comfortable space. Autistic kids might still struggle with sensory overload or transitions, so tools like quiet areas or visual schedules can help. Teachers should also know that just because a child doesn't respond immediately doesn't mean they're not engaged—they might just need a little extra time to process.

Transforming the Kid's School Experience With Little-Known ADHD Coaching Strategies



Cindy Goldrich

"Discipline shapes behaviour; punishment just causes fear."

Smooth transitions

Kids with ADHD can really struggle with the routine and switching between tasks. However, the key is to keep calm during the transition in a way that the child doesn't even realise they've switched gears. To do that, you need to understand what is a transition? **A transition is actually three things.**

First, there's the stop. Think about what your child is doing that they need to stop. Is it something they love, or are they worried about getting in trouble for not finishing? There could be many reasons they struggle to stop.

Next, you have the move—whether it's physical or mental, it's about shifting gears to the next task. How do they feel about what's coming next? If they're dreading it, that's a big part of the challenge.

Finally, there's the start. Getting started, or initiation, is actually an executive function skill. If they're not starting, it's not because they don't know—it's likely a lagging skill, and we need to help them build it. This step-by-step breakdown helps pinpoint where the struggle really is so we can problem-solve together.

Loving authority

The best thing you can do for your kid is to identify their behaviour patterns and avoid generalising. You want to move past the mindset of, *"I know my kid, this is who they are, and they'll never change,"* to truly see your kid's potential.

That's why I encourage parents to remember that what you pay attention to grows. If you're paying attention to all those things that your kid is doing that are driving you crazy, stressing you out, and are not productive, that's what you're going to see. I encourage you to look at some of the good things they're doing.

Very often, if they're doing okay, we ignore it. But when we highlight it, we're highlighting it for the kid. **They start to feel better about themselves.** Yes, we need to put out the fires and deal with tantrums. But we're going to do that by helping the kid feel better.

Expert Advice From +25 Years in the Classroom to Get Your Kid in Sync and Maximize Their Strengths



Carol Stock Kranowitz

"The less kids do, the less they see what they can do, and they start to believe they can't."

How doing less holds kids back

When it comes to kids with sensory processing challenges, one of the things I've noticed is that the less they do, the less they're able to see what **they're truly capable** of. It's like a shrinking world for them. They miss out on discovering new skills because they're hesitant to try activities that other kids might dive right into.

Over time, this can lead them to believe that they simply can't do certain things, which isn't true—they just haven't had the chance to see what they can really do.

For example, give a typical child a rope, and they might quickly think of several ways to play with it—stretch it, throw it, or scrunch it. But a child with sensory issues might say, *"I don't know"* and stop trying. This is exactly why these kids need extra encouragement to stretch their imagination and engage in play.

Sensory struggles

It's also so important to remember that **sensory issues are physical**, not behavioural. These kids aren't trying to be difficult, and they're certainly not waking up each day thinking, *"How can I upset everyone around me today?"*

Also, when they're not getting the sensory information they need, trying new things can feel incredibly daunting. It's not that they don't want to try; it's that their bodies aren't giving them the reliable feedback they need to feel safe.

Their actions are a response to how their bodies are interpreting the world around them. For some, the world feels more dangerous, while others might not perceive enough of the risks around them. These responses aren't about willful behaviour—they're about survival. We need to keep this in mind, so we can approach them with the understanding and support they need.

The Gold Standard Guide for Turning Your Bright Kid into a Brilliant Success in School and Life

Dr. Edward Hallowell



"Kids are not looking for the easy way out. They're looking for the right way in."

When imagination lights up

Kids bring enough fear into the classroom on their own, so instead of adding more, we need to build trust and encourage them. The old-school, fear-based methods don't work anymore. When you create a space high on trust and low on fear, kids blossom.

Learning should feel like play, where **imagination sparks and curiosity leads**. Ask open-ended questions that don't have simple answers, like *"Where does a circle begin and end?"*, or *"Why do we get born?"* In particular, *"Why did your brother get born?"*

It's not about memorising facts anymore. AI can handle that. What's irreplaceable is creativity and thinking outside the box, which is exactly where ADHD minds thrive. Great ideas happen when you're relaxed, not when you're forced. So, we want classrooms to be fun, trusting places where fear doesn't hold anyone back. It's good for ADHD, but honestly, it's good for every kid.

Unwrapping gifts

I believe that what truly matters in life isn't just fixing what's wrong but building on what's right. You don't build a life on remediated misery; you build it on developed strengths. And that's where the focus needs to be—on what a child can do, on the sparks of talent and interest that we see in them. When we recognize and fan those sparks, we help children grow into their full potential.

Creating the right environment is crucial. A learning environment should be **high on trust and low on fear**. And once they get rid of fear and experience some degree of mastery, the motivation follows naturally. When kids feel safe, they're willing to take risks and stretch beyond their comfort zones. The key is to find the right level of difficulty—where they're being challenged but not overwhelmed. It's that sweet spot where they're struggling a bit, but not so much that they want to give up.

Who Are These Twice-Exceptional Kids Anyway? Empowering Your Kid When School Doesn't Get Them



Julie Skolnick

"Giftedness thrives on kinesthetic, self-led, interest-based learning, and insatiable curiosity—even if it means pushing back and arguing."

The "Parent pivot" technique

You come to the world with your own perspective, and rather than focusing on how difficult the child might be making your life right now, **consider how hard they're trying**. They do not want to be the 'bad' child. They do not want to upset you. Fear-based parenting, such as 'do this or else,' only goes so far and, at the very least, completely sabotages your relationship with your child.

To get your kid to cooperate, use the "parent pivot" or "teacher twist" technique. So, instead of saying, 'do this,' say, 'why don't you do this?' Rather than solving problems for them, lead them to solutions. For example, instead of saying "Why is there an egg on the floor?" say, "Oh, there's an egg on the floor!" They'll first notice it and then ask, "I wonder what might be the best way to clean that up?"

Next, separate responsibilities from expectations. Cleaning the room is the responsibility, but expectations are in the details (like picking up LEGOs). Kids might not see it that way, so be clear and ask them to explain what "cleaning" means to them. This helps them understand and meet your expectations.

Gifted kids in the classroom

Teachers should **lean into the kids' strengths, passions and interests**. They should sit down and ask the child what they love, what they hate, what's interesting, what's their favourite book? What are the things they love to do when they're not doing something they're supposed to do? You want to learn who that person is and then use that information to help them gain joy in the classroom.

So let's say there's a kid who is a really amazing reader but can't write. Well, you're going to lean into having them illustrate rather than write at first because writing is all about executive functioning and organising thoughts. So if the child is an excellent artist and they're able to express themselves in that way, you're actually teaching them to write as they're illustrating what they want to say.

How to Turn Your ADHD Kid Into a Go-Getter Against All Odds: ADHD Hacks From a Harvard Success



Aron Croft

"ADHD is not a motivation issue. It's a translating motivation to action issue."

Magnetic Motivation Model

One of the ADHD traits is losing interest quickly. Most kids hyper-fixate on an idea, and then just drop it. But there's something you can do to get them to stay on track. It's called the **three-step magnetic motivation model**. Step one is to modify their environment. Who are the people they're spending time with? Are they taking on hard things? Are they executing with self-discipline on their goals?

Step one is all about changing their environment. Think about it like this: if your kid is surrounded by friends who are focused and driven—that's going to influence them, right?

Step two is about accountability. We tend to hide our bad habits. Like, "Yeah, I did my homework," when in reality, they didn't. But when they have someone to check in with—whether it's an accountability buddy or a friend—it brings everything into the open. They get honest about what they're actually doing, and that helps them to see patterns.

Step three? Use challenges. The ADHD brain struggles with things that feel endless. So, instead of thinking, "I'm going to do this forever," help them break it down. Maybe it's a two-week challenge to stay consistent, with a reward at the end. That's way more doable than thinking they've got to keep it up forever.

8% Productivity Habit Method

Most of us believe the social myth in the eight-hour workday. The reality is that the nine-to-five workday was created when the primary work was factory work, manual labour. The work today is knowledge work. For high-intensity knowledge work, we only get a few hours of great focus every day.

The average worker is only **productive for two hours and 46 minutes of the day**. Similarly, your kid's aim should be to get the bulk of their work done in a limited two-hour block (or 8% of their 24-hour day) rather than trying to stay focused all night. This method helps the child limit their focus and time their work with their most productive hours—whether that's late morning or right after waking up.

Turning Off the ADHD Brain Chatter to Crush School Obstacles Once and for All

Bonnie Mincu



"Parents almost need to let go of what they've learned about best practices because those best practices are made for neurotypical people."

Becoming Timewise

What I call a poor or inaccurate time sense is when things take much longer than you think they will, or in some cases, actually much shorter than you think they will. And for a child to be able to get through homework assignments, it's important that they can gauge how long that assignment is going to take them.

One way to develop an accurate time sense is to take a piece of an assignment and guess how many minutes it's going to take to finish it. Write down the time they start and until they finish that piece. Write down when they stopped, then go to the calculator, show them how many minutes it really took, and compare that. Ask your kid, "How much longer did it take you than your guess?"

Characters on the Bus

Imagine your brain is like a bus, and you've got these characters on board who can grab the wheel at any time. Each of these characters can hijack your brain, and it's all about figuring out who's in charge and why. Only one of them, Steady Eddy, drives straight to your goal without a hitch. But the others? Not so much.

Whiny Winnie is like a toddler whining, "I don't feel like it!" That's procrastination. Then there's Impatient Iggy, who rushes through things, which leads to more mistakes. Helpless Hannah? She shuts down when things aren't clear, instead of asking for help.

Overwhelmed Oscar freaks out when things feel too much. Critical Calvin? He's the inner voice telling you, "You're gonna fail!" And then there's Emotional Emma, who lets fear take over, making it hard to focus. Finally, Disorganised Derek can't keep track of anything—homework, a messy room, you name it.

Executive-Level Attention Hacks to Help Keep Your ADHD Kids Laser-Focused

Juli Shulem



“Just like you used to plan naps for your baby, make sure to set aside time for your child to recharge before their focus starts to fade.”

How can kids practise focus?

Developing this habit takes time. It’s not something that can just be flipped on like a switch. If done in small increments, it can actually be developed into a habit. One of the tools I absolutely love is a timer clock. It’s a clock that shows time elapsing with a big red band that disappears as time goes on.

For kids, especially those who are too young to tell time, this is brilliant because it allows them to see time passing. One of the biggest challenges is time blindness and not being able to gauge how long it will take to complete something. This tool helps a child stay focused by setting a clear timeframe, saying, “You’re going to work on this task until the red is all gone, and then you’ll get a break.”

34% of entrepreneurs have ADHD

Many executives or CEOs are where they are due to the ADHD superpowers. These include the ability to think outside the box with innovative ideas beyond what many other people in the world are able to do. They are often brilliant at problem-solving because of this ability. If you have a problem and can’t find an answer, find someone with ADHD because they are a goldmine of solutions!

Those with ADHD tend to have a higher risk-taking mentality, which can lead to significant business successes. While some executives have these wonderful talents, they may sometimes struggle with time management and organising. As a result, having a strong support system is imperative for most of them to thrive.

To really tap into their strengths, get them in the habit of writing everything down—homework, chores, tasks. Just telling them won’t cut it, but seeing it will help them remember.

Then, help them build a solid structure. Make sure they have guilt-free free time after finishing the important things, so they can relax without that nagging feeling of unfinished work.

The Unseen Needs of ADHD Teens: Insights From Thousands of Coaching Hours



Kelly Biltz

“Don’t catastrophize and worry about where your child will end up; focus on giving them the skills to fail forward and learn from their mistakes.”

Life before and after ADHD diagnosis

When my son was diagnosed with ADHD, I started changing my parenting approach and my language. I’ve started observing what worked for my son. The tone of our home became much more peaceful. There had been a lot of frustration and arguing, and he was highly emotional.

What that looked like was he would have emotional meltdowns and literally fall on the floor and could not be consoled. That could happen anywhere, not just in the house. I thought, “*Oh my gosh, I’m going into the grocery store. Who’s going to show up now?*” It was like a ticking time bomb depending on the situation. But everything changed for the better after I started engaging with him differently.

For example, for the past years, I’ve stayed hands-off with his schoolwork. He knows I’m here if he needs me, but I don’t interfere. Because I’m not hovering, he’s learned by making mistakes and figuring things out himself. Setting clear expectations at the start of the school year has kept him focused and confident.

One question every parent should ask their child

One of the best things I asked my kid was, “*How does your body and brain feel in certain situations?*” Because I remember asking my son how he feels in one particular classroom when the teacher is telling him to pay attention. He said, “*I feel like my skin is on fire and I’m going to come out of my own body.*”

When we understand that, and when they can articulate it—which most of these teenagers can, because they know how they feel—it’s crucial. So, “*How does it feel when your medication is wearing off and you have your worst class, the one you hate, at two o’clock? How does that feel in your brain and body?*”

