

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



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“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?”*