



Wellness News

Getting Children to Listen

Does your child have problems paying attention? Is your home chaotic? Do you wish everyone would just cut the shenanigans and LISTEN for a change? Living with someone who has attention problems can be frustrating and challenging. However, there are steps you can take to minimize the stress and bring calm to your home and family.

Follow a routine. When it comes to meals, playtime, homework and bedtime, it is important to set simple and

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predictable routines. Practice planning skills by having your child lay out tomorrow's clothes before going to bed. Model organization by helping your child to prepare his or her backpack before bedtime so it's ready to go the next morning.

Create a quiet place. Is there a place in your home like a porch or a cubby that your child can use for a private space of his or her own? Decorate it with a theme and add a few books and stuffed animals for comfort. Cut a door in a large cardboard box and let the child draw artwork inside and out. A

bedroom will work too, as long as it's not the same place the child goes for a time-out.

Do your best to be neat and organized.

Children learn what they live. If your home is set up in an organized way, your child will learn that everything has its place. Parents

are the child's most important role model, so if you want your child to be neat and organized, let him watch how you do it.

Use clocks and timers.

Transition times are critical hotspots for children with attention problems. Instead of counting to ten as a threat, consider placing clocks throughout the house, with a big one in your child's bedroom. Use the clock to anticipate and mark the transitions. Set a timer so the child knows when she is expected to move on to the next task. Be sure to allow enough time for each activity, and follow up with praise for completing the chore in the time allotted.

Simplify your child's schedule.

It's important to find the right balance between too many activities and too much free time. Idle time can invite restlessness, but a child with attention problems may also become more “wound up” if there are too many after-school activities. You know your child best. Plan his time based on his



individual abilities, attention span, and interests.

Having a child with attention problems affects parents in many ways. It can be physically and emotionally exhausting. **Staying positive** is your best asset for helping your child succeed. When you are calm and focused, your child is better able to connect with you and to accept your guidance and instruction. Hold on to your sense of humor, and don't sweat the small stuff. **Create realistic expectations for your child** and celebrate when she stays focused and completes a task. Make a list of everything that is positive, valuable, and unique about your child and post it on your bathroom mirror as a reminder.

For more help and support in dealing with attention problems, call Southeast Health Group at 1-800-511-5446. Our team of professionals are available to provide assessment, counseling, and skill-building groups to help your family.