

The Teac



IT'S HARD TO SAY WHO GETS MORE FRUSTRATED

when a child with ADHD struggles with school: the child, who cannot seem to fulfill the expectations of parents or school, despite great effort; the concerned parents, who see education as a key to their child's future success; or the committed teacher, who wants to expose the child to a lifelong love for learning.

When parents and teachers work together to best serve the needs of students who struggle with school, the results can be extraordinary. Sometimes that is easier said than done—for all the parties involved.

In November 2014, CHADD volunteer leaders raised tough questions about this issue during a town hall meeting at the organization's conference in Chicago. We shared our concerns about how difficult it can be for families to partner with schools—both for the families and the teachers. The ones who get lost in the struggle, of course, are the children.

As a community of CHADD leaders, we recognized that there is no lack of information available to address these concerns. The real challenge is to develop materials that are simple and evidence-based and get them into the hands of the teachers and parents who need them the most.

The role of local leaders

Over a hundred CHADD chapters and satellites provide community support and ADHD education on a local level. Some focus primarily on adults with ADHD, some on children, and some focus on both populations. Some spend their energy providing support for local families,

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her Card on ADHD

by Elaine Taylor-Klaus, CPCC, PCC, and Sharon Bell

while others provide education in the schools. All are led by volunteers who are passionate about CHADD's mission.

Local leaders have the freedom to identify the needs in their community, and to make the effort to meet those needs as best as they can, with the support of the national organization behind them.

Sometimes, local leaders partner with each other and with the national office to go above and beyond, to meet a need identified on a grander scale. Some CHADD groups host regional conferences or provide programming on a state-wide level. And some step outside their local community to provide a resource for others to use around the nation.

The creation of the Teacher Card

Part of CHADD's mission is to help educators and families support children with ADHD at school. So, when so many colleagues from around the country expressed frustration over the absence of a simple, useful resource to educate teachers at that 2014 town hall meeting, the national affiliate development and support committee asked local leaders to help make it happen. The result was the development of a new resource, now known as the Teacher Card.

"There was a focus on empowering affiliates to do things themselves, rather than always waiting for CHADD National to create support materials for affiliates to use," says committee member Larry Maltin. "The Teacher Card was identified as an example of a concrete tool that could be provided quickly and sent out to volunteers as soon as possible. We felt we could pull together specific texts from Parent to Parent, Teacher to Teacher, and other CHADD programs and materials, and distill them into very clear

statements on a two-sided card that would speak volumes to teachers with students with ADHD in their classes."

Local volunteers from all over the United States got involved with the project. Working in collaboration with national staff members, they developed, reviewed, and revised the first of many drafts. Then they organized the text into a concise section for each side:

- **Recognizing ADHD in the Classroom** was narrowed down to a set of five easy-to-read and clearly understandable sets of ADHD symptoms.
- **Strategies & Tips to Help Students with ADHD** was organized into five major classroom strategies and tips on implementation.

With content in hand, the next step was to make the card easy to follow and visually appealing. Larry Maltin shared the draft with Elkins Park CHADD coordinator Claire Noyes, an expert in industrial design, and Michael Casano, PhD, a clinical psychologist specializing in treatment of children and adolescents with ADHD and the founding member of the Elkins Park CHADD professional advisory board.

More rounds of revisions followed a review by CHADD's national professional advisory board as well as standard editing, proofreading, and fact-checking. The team added a place for local affiliates to customize the card with their contact information.

Eventually, the Teacher Card was born, a proud example of what can be created when we work together toward a common vision. Presented at the volunteer leadership training during the 2015 conference, the card is available as a PDF that can be printed on the paper of choice.

STRATEGIES & TIPS TO HELP STUDENTS WITH ADHD

SEATING

1. Away from distractions	Offer seating options such as single desks instead of two-person desks or tables; U-shapes, E-shapes, and rows (straight or staggered) often help.
Responsible peers	Teacher can help focus attention to tasks, clarify directions. Seeing others at work can cue student to return to task.

ORGANIZATION

Textbook	Many students with ADHD have trouble remembering and tracking assignments.
Homework assignments	Students who struggle with organization need strategies that help them complete their work in spite of their struggles.
Organization skills	Students must be taught missing skills or compensatory strategies on a level that matches their younger developmental age.
Important due dates	Ultimately, everyone who touches a student's life has a role to play. Regular communication is essential.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Encourage good listening	Be specific about what to do (eye contact, not interrupting). Reward good behavior. Positive reinforcement works best.
Established routines	Practice, monitor, review, and reteach routines. Keep reviewing until it becomes a habit.
Use objects	Fidgeting objects can help children with ADHD focus rather than being a distraction.
Provide positive feedback	Positive feedback is more powerful in changing behavior. It should also be specific so they know what behavior to repeat.

INSTRUCTION DELIVERY

Written directions to oral	Students may miss parts of oral directions. Written or pictorial instructions help fill in the gaps.
Oral directions. Give outlines for note	Students understand and remember information better when ideas, words, and concepts are associated with pictures, diagrams, charts, and maps.
Spelling instruction	Use song and movement to practice spelling words. Use color to call attention to letters with the word and to aid memory.
Repeat at a time	Students may have memory problems and may only be able to remember one step at a time. Repeating directions helps keep them in memory longer.
Break into small tasks with each task	Students with ADHD have difficulty breaking down large projects into smaller tasks, leading to projects that are not completed or rushed through on the night prior to due date.

WORK

Frequent redirection to task	Use a prearranged private signal. Ask student for input on what will work best.
Written directions	Task cards serve as reminders. Explain to class that everyone learns differently or give everyone task cards to avoid stigmatizing the child with ADHD.
Assignments to student	Sometimes performance or skill expectations are a struggle; for example, cursive writing or reading independently.
Every other math problem,	This is to compensate for the length of time it takes to complete.
Answers only, word (not)	Motor skills may not be fully developed in these students.



RECOGNIZING ADHD IN THE CLASSROOM

ATTENTION	DISORGANIZED/FORGETFUL	RESTLESS	IMPULSIVE	WORK HABITS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily distracted • Tunes out of lessons • Daydreams • Trouble staying in seat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgets to take books home • Forgets assignments or forgets to turn them in • Loses homework, pencils, etc. • Messy desk, backpack, papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fidgets • Fiddles with nearby objects • Trouble waiting, taking turns • Trouble staying in seat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks excessively, blurts out or interrupts • May disrupt class • Trouble following rules • Careless errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble starting/finishing work • Incomplete, late or missing assignments • Trouble following rules • Doesn't follow instructions • Easily frustrated

FOR STRATEGIES & TIPS TO HELP STUDENTS WITH ADHD SEE REVERSE SIDE



Your local CHADD chapter may have printed cards available (with chapter contact information).

Go to chadd.org/TeacherCard for printable PDFs.

Benefits to families

Working together, of course, is what we want families and teachers to be able to do in support of all students with ADHD. The Teacher Card is already working to achieve that vision.

Carrie L. captured it perfectly when she wrote, "I just wanted to thank you again for sharing this valuable resource with me and the whole community! I used it this week to help my son, and it made our parent-teacher conference much more effective. It allowed me to make specific suggestions without getting emotional, without getting the teacher defensive, and with the confidence that CHADD has validated it! In fact, the teachers kept the document I had circled during our talk, and asked me to send them an electronic copy. They want to share it with the rest of the faculty!"

In his regular feature for the Elkins Park CHADD newsletter, Dr. Mike Cassano shared the following note:

One of the most challenging aspects of raising a child with ADHD is establishing and maintaining a collaborative relationship with teachers. The parents I work with consistently report stress and worry about a range of school-related topics. Perhaps the most frequent concern I hear is whether or not a teacher really understands the learning needs of their child. The teachers I work with report a related concern. Specifically, many well-intentioned teachers have never had formal training in teaching children with ADHD, and are often left to create or interpret interventions (e.g., 504 Plan accommodations) on their own.

In an effort to provide teachers with knowledge about school-based strategies for children with ADHD, CHADD has developed a Teacher Card that summarizes critical interventions and accommodations. As someone who regularly sees how little training teachers receive related to the topic, I can tell you that these cards

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are expertly crafted, and include some of the most important aspects of an effective learning environment for kids with ADHD.

In addition to providing valuable information, the card can also be used to continue a conversation between you and your child's teacher. In this way, the Teacher Card can advance the foundation of a comprehensive treatment plan: knowledge and relationships.

Collaboration is the key

The collaborative energy of the Teacher Card continues. Dr. Cassano will initiate a pilot program to introduce the Teacher Card to special education staff and teachers in a selected district. The results of the program will serve as a model for other school liaison volunteers from Elkins Park CHADD to introduce it to schools in their local districts.

There are many pieces to the puzzle of successful education of children with ADHD. Relationships are just as important as strategies, and the Teacher Card allows parents to focus on both.

CHADD leaders, volunteers, and staff share a vision of improving life for families and individuals living with ADHD. Each local affiliate expresses this mission differently, impacting one individual at a time, one family at a time, and one community at a time.

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CHADD's National Resource Center on ADHD

Science, Information, Resources, Support

About the NRC

The National Resource Center on ADHD (NRC) serves parents and adults with ADHD, health professionals, educators, and policymakers by providing information on the most relevant topics about ADHD and related disorders:

- › Diagnosis
- › Treatment options
- › Educational rights
- › School and workplace challenges
- › Tips on parenting, time management, legal issues, social skills, coaching, and more
- › All information in English and Spanish

Access the NRC

- › **CALL** toll-free at **800-233-4050**
- › **CONTACT** specialists online at www.help4adhd.org (Se Habla Español)
- › **SEARCH** the Web's only library dedicated to ADHD

Health Information Specialists are available to answer your questions and help you find the help you need!

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