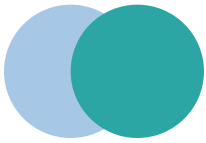


# Parent Resource Collection: Supporting Children with ADHD





# Parenting Children with ADHD & Executive Functioning Struggles: Practical Tips for Home

## Understanding Executive Functioning

Executive functioning helps children plan, organize, remember, and manage emotions. Kids with ADHD often struggle in these areas—not from lack of effort, but because their brains work differently. With support and structure, they can succeed.

## Create Predictable Routines

Use visual schedules, timers, and consistent routines. Predictability reduces anxiety and improves follow-through. Keep transitions gentle and expectations consistent.

## Break Tasks Into Manageable Steps

Large tasks can overwhelm. Give one or two directions at a time and celebrate small progress. Try saying, 'Let's start with this first step together.'

## Support Time Awareness

Use analog clocks and visual timers to make time visible. Practice time estimation and add extra minutes for transitions.

## Organize the Environment

Set up a 'launch zone' for backpacks and homework. Color-code folders and keep surfaces clear to reduce distractions.

## Focus on Relationship Before Correction

Connect first—'I can tell this is hard for you right now.' Praise effort and persistence rather than perfection. Calm guidance works best.

## Teach Emotional Regulation

Model calm-down strategies such as deep breathing and movement breaks. Help your child name emotions and find healthy outlets.

## Build Executive Functioning Skills

Encourage planning (planners, checklists), working memory (repeat directions, use visuals), and impulse control (games like Simon Says or Freeze Dance).

## Partner With Teachers and Counselors

Collaborate with your child's support team. Share strategies that work at home and ask about 504 or IEP supports if needed.

## Encourage Strengths and Interests

Celebrate creativity, curiosity, and persistence. Let success in one area build confidence in others.

## Practice Patience—For You and Your Child

Progress takes time. Offer grace on tough days and celebrate small wins. Your calm presence is powerful.

## Helpful Resources

- **CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD):** [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)
- **ADDitude Magazine:** [www.additudemag.com](http://www.additudemag.com)
- **Understood.org:** [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)
- **The Explosive Child** by Ross Greene
- **Smart but Scattered** by Peg Dawson & Richard Guare

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# Understanding the Connection Between Inattentive ADHD and Hoarding Behaviors in Children

## Overview

Children with inattentive ADHD often appear distracted, forgetful, or disorganized rather than impulsive or hyperactive. These children may struggle to start tasks, remember details, or manage their belongings. Over time, these executive functioning challenges can contribute to hoarding-like behaviors—the tendency to collect, save, or resist discarding items that seem unimportant to others.

## Why It Happens

### Executive Functioning Challenges

Children with inattentive ADHD often struggle to categorize, prioritize, and organize their possessions. Sorting requires sustained attention and working memory—two areas affected by ADHD (Barkley, 2015). Disorganization may lead to piles of items or difficulty letting go because 'it feels too overwhelming to decide.'

### Emotional Attachment and Comfort

Objects can serve as emotional anchors. Children with ADHD may develop strong attachments to belongings as a way to feel safe or maintain control (Frost & Hartl, 1996). They may say, 'If I keep it, I won't forget about it,' reflecting a connection between memory, emotion, and possessions.

### Perfectionism and Fear of Regret

Inattentive ADHD can co-occur with anxiety and perfectionism (Kofler et al., 2019). Children may fear they will need something later or make a mistake by discarding it. The emotional load of decision-making makes avoidance easier than sorting.

### Memory and Attention Difficulties

Due to working memory deficits, children may forget what they own or where things belong. Keeping items visible may seem helpful but can increase clutter and stress (Tolin et al., 2011).

## How Parents Can Help

### Create Gentle Structure

Use labeled bins or baskets with your child's input. Offer limited, easy choices such as, 'Do you want to keep this or take a picture of it before we recycle it?'

### Use Timed Sorting Sessions

Keep sessions short and positive (10–15 minutes). Pair cleaning with upbeat music or a movement break.

### Validate Emotions

Avoid criticism. Instead, use empathy: 'I know it's hard to decide what to keep.' Help your child identify what makes an item special.

## Model Organization and Letting Go

Show your own process of sorting and letting go of items. Model that memories and connections can be preserved in ways other than keeping every object.

## Support Skill Development

Reinforce planning, prioritizing, and self-regulation through games and routines. If clutter or distress escalates, consult a child therapist or occupational therapist familiar with ADHD and executive functioning support.

## Key Takeaways

Hoarding behaviors in children with inattentive ADHD stem from executive functioning challenges and emotional regulation difficulties—not defiance. With empathy, structure, and guidance, children can learn organization and decision-making skills that foster independence and confidence.

## Helpful Resources

- **Understood.org**: [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)
- **CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD)**: [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)
- **The ADHD Workbook for Kids** by Lawrence Shapiro
- **Smart but Scattered** by Peg Dawson & Richard Guare

## References

- Barkley, R. A. (2015). *Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder: A handbook for diagnosis and treatment* (4th ed.). Guilford Press.
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- Tolin, D. F., Frost, R. O., & Steketee, G. (2011). An open trial of cognitive-behavioral therapy for compulsive hoarding. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *45*(7), 1461–1470.

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## ■ Bedtime Routine Expectations

Goal: Help kids feel calm, safe, and ready for rest. Consistent routines lower stress and help children with ADHD or executive functioning challenges transition smoothly to sleep.

I brush my teeth, wash my face, and get my PJs on.

After I'm ready, I can read a book, color, or snuggle with my stuffed animal.

When the lights go off, I stay in my bed so my body can rest.

When I sleep well, I have more energy for fun tomorrow!

### Parent Tips:

- Keep the same order every night—predictability helps kids stay calm.
- Use visual cues (like picture checklists).
- Offer small choices: 'Do you want your dinosaur or panda blanket?'
- Praise cooperation: 'You brushed your teeth right away—awesome job!'

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## ■■ Dinnertime Expectations

Goal: Encourage positive family connection and self-control around food and conversation.

When dinner's ready, I come to the table with clean hands.

I try one bite, say please and thank you, and use my indoor voice.

I take turns talking and listening while everyone shares about their day.

When dinner is done, I help put dishes in the sink or wipe the table.

### Parent Tips:

- Give advance notice: 'Dinner in 5 minutes!'
- Keep expectations simple and visual (a chart helps).
- Model calm talk even if behavior slips—connection before correction.
- Praise small successes: 'You stayed at the table the whole time—that's teamwork!'

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## ■ Morning Routine

Goal: Start the day with confidence and calm by following simple, predictable steps.

I get out of bed when my alarm rings and stretch to start my day.

I brush my teeth, wash my face, and get dressed.

I eat a healthy breakfast to fuel my brain.

I check my backpack for homework, lunch, and water bottle.

I say goodbye with a hug or high-five and head to school ready to learn!

### Parent Tips:

- Keep a visual morning checklist near your child's bed or bathroom.
- Use timers or a fun song for transitions.
- Keep mornings calm—avoid rushing or lecturing when possible.
- Offer encouragement: 'You're right on track this morning—great job!'

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## ■ After-School Routine

Goal: Help kids transition from school mode to home mode with connection and structure.

I hang up my backpack and shoes where they belong.

I have a healthy snack and take a short break to rest.

I check my backpack and finish homework before play.

I play, draw, or read until dinner time.

I pack my backpack, pick clothes, and get ready for another great day.

### Parent Tips:

- Create a calm transition period—10–15 minutes for snack and downtime.
- Praise responsibility: 'You unpacked your backpack all by yourself—amazing!'
- Avoid jumping into corrections right away; connect first, correct later.
- Model routine: show how you unpack or plan for the next day.

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## ■ ■ My Morning Routine

What helps me start my day?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Tips or Notes:

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## ■ My After-School or Bedtime Routine

What helps me feel calm at home?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Tips or Notes:

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