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# Students with ADHD: Preparing for High School

Facts about High School  
Facts about ADHD Students  
Recommendations  
Resources



Chesterfield County Public Schools



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## Facts about High School

- Many ADHD students earn acceptable grades in middle school but perform poorly in high school.
- The expectations in high school are much greater than in middle school.
- High school students need to understand the difference between homework and studying—both are required for success in high school.
- Homework grades count more in high school than before. Students who do not turn in homework will fail high school.
- Students in high school need to study at least twice as much as middle school students.
- Material is not presented with the repetition of middle school—concentration during class is more important than before.
- High school requires good organizational skills—students will have fewer helpers with this than in the past.
- If students fall behind, they have more problems catching up than in middle school.
- Block scheduling in high school presents increased demands for skills in concentration, organization, and time management.



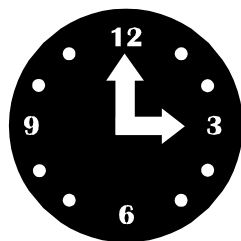
## Facts about ADHD

- ADHD affects concentration, motivation, organization, and time management—essentials for success in high school.
- Completion of homework and studying are the greatest problems for most ADHD high school students.
- ADHD students give in to the urge to avoid boring things—and most find homework and studying excruciatingly boring.
- The more boring the student finds a subject, the more likely that subject will be avoided.
- ADHD high school students find most reading very boring and have to reread passages several times in order to understand them. Many simply do not read textbooks.
- ADHD students benefit from frequent monitoring of organizational skills. Some will need weekly help getting papers in the right place. However, organization is probably less important than homework and studying.
- Many ADHD students who benefit from medication want to start high school “on their own” without medication. Starting high school is probably not the best time to experiment with medication if it has been helpful.
- Many parents want their ADHD students to handle high school on their own without medication or study time structure BUT ...
- ADHD high school students tend to function more like 11 or 12 year olds in time management and responsibility (30% delayed according to research).
- Research shows medication is the single most effective treatment.



## Recommendations

- Get off to a good start. Together decide on a study regimen—including start and stop times—prior to the start of school. (See Resources on back.)
- For a student with weak study habits, 1-1½ hours a day—Sunday through Thursday—is a good starting point.
- Study habits will serve as a better predictor of overall 9th grade success than grades during the first interim or so.
- Most ADHD students need increased structure to start 9th grade instead of decreased structure. It's easier to give independence later than add structure.
- If the student currently benefits from medication, the parent and child should discuss with the physician the possible need for medication during study time.
- If the student has benefited from medication in the past, but has chosen to stop, the parent and child should talk with the physician before school starts about starting medication again.
- If the student complains about the way medication makes him/her feel, the parent should just suggest they talk with the physician about other medications.
- Students report great success from listening to novels on tape as they read along. Students say the tapes make the novel more interesting and less boring.
- Plan ahead and obtain the audio tapes from the school or local library or rent them from an audio book vendor.
- If homework completion has been a problem, parents need to check with teachers before the first interim to monitor homework completion and establish open communication.



## *Transition to High School*

- If the student resists parent help, consider a tutor (older student or adult) to work at least weekly on organization and time management.
- Help students focus on the most important issues—homework and studying. Choose your emphasis.
- Many students with ADHD have negative feelings about school. Do not argue with them about this issue. Listen, agree it must be hard for them, and praise them for persisting.
- Remember, the parent/child relationship remains crucial even during high school. Remember to
  - spend time relaxing together;*
  - enjoy each other's company;*
  - praise, praise, praise.*



## Resources

### Books for Parents

Barkley, R. A. (2000). *Taking Charge of ADHD: The Complete, Authoritative Guide for Parents* by Russell Barkley (Revised Edition), ISBN:15723056-6 . New York: The Guilford Press.

Flick, G. *Managing Teens with ADHD*. West Nyack, NY: The Center for Applied Research and Education.

### Books for Teens

Nadeau, K. *Help 4 ADD@High School*. Bethesda, MD: Advantage Press.

Gordon, M. *I Would if I Could: A Teacher's Guide to ADHD/Hyperactivity*. DeWitt, NY: GSI Publications.

### Web Sites

[http://odp.od.nih.gov/consensus/cons/110/110\\_intro.htm](http://odp.od.nih.gov/consensus/cons/110/110_intro.htm)

(This National Institutes of Health site lists consensus statements developed after presentations by experts on ADHD.)

### Organizations and Support Groups

Children & Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders  
(C.H.A.D.D.)

8181 Professional Plaza, Suite 201  
Landover, MD 20785

Parent Resource Center, Chesterfield County Public Schools, 743-3703 (The Center has a helpful staff to assist you with its wide range of materials on ADHD.)

### Booklet

*Attention Deficit in Secondary Students: A Parent Guide to Understanding and Acting*. Chesterfield County Public Schools. (Available from the school psychologist at your child's school.)

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