



THE THREE Rs

Make Reading Riveting

Helping your budding scholar get the most out of her reading time.

Getting an ADHD child to meet reading goals for school can be like pulling teeth. His hyperactivity and distractibility make it difficult to sit long enough to read even a few pages. And following a storyline can be challenging if her ability to hold on to information, or “working memory,” is deficient. But choosing the right material—and getting creative with how your child reads—can make all the difference.

■ **Choose books at your child’s reading level.** Have your child read aloud to you for the first few pages of a new book. If she makes more than five mistakes per page, it’s too hard for her to read on her own. If you’re unsure which books are appropriate, ask her teacher for suggestions.

■ **Try the magazine rack.** An entire book may be daunting to the child who can’t stay focused. A children’s magazine may be a

less intimidating alternative. If your child likes stories, try *Spider* (ages 6-9) or *Cricket* (ages 9-14); if she likes science, pick up *Ranger Rick* (ages 7 and up) or *Kids Discover* (ages 6 and up). [For more information, visit cricketmag.com, nwf.org, and kidsdiscover.com.] Ask her teacher whether your child can read a few magazines to meet the monthly reading goal.

■ **Pick the best time and place.** Many families schedule reading time when kids are getting ready for bed. But if her medication has worn off by then, she won’t be able to give her best effort. Pick an earlier time—and a quiet spot—when she can concentrate.

■ **Read together.** Help your child stay focused by sharing the reading with him. Take turns reading pages, or paragraphs, depending on his skill level and ability to focus. A bookmark can also keep your child on track and prevent him from losing his place. E.Z.C. Reader Strips have a tinted, transparent window to help kids focus on the text. They’re available at reallygoodstuff.com.

■ **Review every day.** Children with ADHD sometimes have trouble remembering the sequence of events in a story. After your child reads a chapter, have her explain to you what happened. You can jot down her words and review them with her the next day, before moving on to the next chapter.

■ **Use a tape recorder.** Reinforce his reading with a book on tape (available at local libraries and most bookstores). By seeing *and* hearing the book’s words, he should find it easier to stay focused. Hold his attention by having him record his voice as he reads. He’ll feel as though he’s “acting” rather than reading, and he can share the tape with a younger sibling. ▲

By LEANE SOMERS, a freelance writer and reading specialist who teaches first grade in Oswego, New York.

Recommended Reading

Your child may take comfort—and find inspiration—from a character who has ADHD, too. Here are three terrific books.

- ▶ ages 4-9 // *Junie B. Jones* series, by Barbara Park // It’s never said that Junie has ADD. But her difficulty with impulse control makes her a funny character all children can enjoy. (Random House)
- ▶ ages 5-9 // *Eagle Eyes: A Child’s Guide to Paying Attention*, by Jeanne Gehret // Focuses on the “gift” of ADHD rather than the disability. (Verbal Images Press)
- ▶ ages 8-12 // *Hank Zipzer* series, by Henry Winkler and Lin Oliver // This series is great for anyone who learns differently. (Grosset & Dunlap)

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