



St. Helens Council

Bridgewater Community Healthcare   
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# TOP TIPS

These tips have been produced by parents, carers and practitioners based on what has worked for them. You will find that some may work for your child or young person and some won't. We hope you find them helpful.

We have tried to group them by Autism, ADHD and Sensory Processing Difficulties but you will find that many overlap.

## Sensory Processing Difficulties

This advice comes from the North West Boroughs Healthcare Paediatric Therapy Service.

Complete movement breaks regularly – try to incorporate them into everyday activities but aim for your child to access movement every couple of hours. Each activity should last for two minutes (at least). Examples include:

- Going for walk with weighted back pack
- Push ups against a wall
- Reaching up to sky and reaching down to toes
- Heavy work such as tidying up heavy toys, lifting boxes etc.
- Tactile activities can be useful for children who display difficulties with touch or seek excessive tactile input, try some of these activities in conjunction with movement breaks:
- Messy play
- Access to fidget toys e.g. stretchy rubber toys (useful to use as a distraction when your child is becoming anxious).

## Autism

- Use your child's name to get their attention and speak to them when they are in view. If your child can handle touch, try a gentle hand on their shoulder to get their attention.
- Don't expect your child to look at you when talking.
- Get down to their level when talking to them.
- Keep your language simple and sentences short.
- Give your child processing time after an instruction before speaking again.
- Think about how you phrase requests i.e. tell your child what you would like them to do rather than what not to do e.g. walk nicely rather than don't run, kind hands rather than don't hit.
- Explain the sayings you use e.g. wait a minute, watch yourself, get a move on.
- Your child may not understand jokes or sarcasm and may take things literally.
- Show your child how to do something rather than tell.
- Rather than saying NO, e.g. instead of no more crisps, say crisps finished for today but you can have again tomorrow.



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- Have routines and be consistent.
- Use timers.
- Use visual aids/picture cards to help with everyday instructions and activities e.g. brush teeth, go to bed.
- As well as pictures use real objects e.g. plate when it's dinner time.
- Build up your child's tolerance when going out, short visits and repeating visits.
- Create a real photo album to use when going out e.g. photo of the car, photo of the shop.
- Try using a reward system that you can give consistently, not expensive as your child will expect the same every time!
- Spend time playing with or talking to your child about their interests – i.e. enter their world.
- Warn your child about changes and keep reminding them. Use first, then, now and next.
- Use emotion cards of pictures of faces to help your child recognise emotions.
- Praise your child for something they do well and tell everyone so that they hear your praise. Praise will help them feel valued and improve their self-esteem and confidence.
- As a family, make House Rules and consequences and then make sure everyone sticks to them (including you!)
- Pick your battles! If it isn't that important, let it go and don't beat yourself up!
- Educate yourself.
- Last but not least, make sure you get support e.g. St. Helens Carers Centre, Listen 4 Change and the many Parent Support and Play Groups.

## ADHD

**(The Autism tips above are also appropriate for ADHD)**

- Educate yourself; ADHD is not caused by parenting, diet etc.
- Stay calm and don't react – take time out ready to start again.
- Decide together what behaviours are acceptable, define the rules.
- Look at the trigger for the behaviour.
- Reward positive behaviour – be consistent, ensure expectations are achievable and do not take away once earned.
- Agree consequences and be consistent in applying them.
- Have a plan for managing anger and aggression or when your child has a meltdown e.g. chill-out space.
- ADHD is not a learning difficulty but it can make learning difficult.
- Recognise the signs that your child is getting anxious and look at the triggers and what strategies can be used.
- Limit distractions.
- Encourage physical activity and exercise.
- Empower your child and encourage them, let them know you believe in them.
- Expect setbacks and bad days.