

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR ADHD

ADHD Resource Series — Guide 2

Purpose

Practical, moment-by-moment teaching strategies for supporting students with ADHD across every part of the ASL lesson — from setup to transitions.

Before Class

- Post the visual schedule and lesson agenda before students arrive
- Organize materials in advance to minimize downtime and waiting
- Set up preferential seating near the front, away from distractions
- Preview what's coming so the lesson feels predictable
- Offer a brief movement or sensory break before instruction begins

During Instruction

- Chunk lessons into short segments with clear stopping points
- Vary the pace — mix demonstration, practice, and movement
- Give one direction at a time
- Use a visible timer so students know how long an activity will last
- Check for understanding frequently, not just at the end

During Receptive Practice

- Keep video clips or demonstrations short and focused
- Pre-teach key vocabulary before receptive activities
- Check comprehension throughout rather than only at the end
- Allow rewatching or repeated viewing when needed
- Reduce visual clutter in the signing space during modeling

During Expressive Practice

- Start with low-pressure practice in pairs or small groups
- Allow movement or a fidget tool while thinking or responding
- Give processing time before expecting a response
- Use sentence starters or visual prompts to scaffold expression
- Offer specific, immediate feedback on attempts

Classroom Management

- Use consistent visual cues for attention and behavior expectations
- Build in movement breaks proactively, not just reactively
- Reinforce specific positive behaviors as they happen
- Address behavior privately, calmly, and consistently
- Set clear, predictable consequences and follow through calmly

Transition Ideas

- Give a visual or timed warning before each transition
- Use the same transition signal or routine every time
- Break longer transitions into small, clear steps
- Build movement into transitions (stretch, walk, pass out materials)
- Keep transition routines short and predictable

Attention Signals

- Establish one consistent visual signal for "all eyes on me"
- Practice and reinforce the signal routine regularly, not just when needed
- Pair the signal with a brief pause before continuing instruction
- Use proximity as a quiet, non-verbal attention cue
- Wait for the signal to be fully acknowledged before repeating directions

Remember

Small, consistent structures throughout the lesson — before, during, and between activities — make the biggest difference for students with ADHD. Predictability builds confidence and independence over time.