



## THE MINISTRY OF PARENTING

### **Activities for children with ADHD – with an educational twist**

*Thank you to the parents who shared their ideas and experiences with us to formulate these activities*

### **Games for the ADHD child – general**

- Games with physical training are often enjoyable to ADHD children. A good workout is an alternative. It increases the flow of blood to the brain and decreases nervousness and anxiety. It also releases endorphins into the brain, providing a feeling of calmness and wellbeing. Most popular are trampolines, Hula hooping, skipping and Balance boarding. These help develop a child's gross motor and balancing skills while also providing the physical release kids with ADHD often need.
- Many children have problems with memory. So, try memory games see <https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/memory-games-for-kids/>
- Command games make great ADHD games. For example, "Simon said". Scavenger hunts are exciting for children, and they're effective for teaching kids how to follow a sequence of instructions. To play, hide an object or prize somewhere in a room. Then, determine places children will go explore to receive further instructions for finding the item. Leave note cards directing the players to the next location at each spot.
- Activities with model building, carving, woodworking, mosaics, jigsaw puzzles (have a jigsaw swap group) 3D puzzles (find them at Home bargains or at B&M) Lego building or that involve mechanical skills are very beneficial. Children with ADHD often love to figure things out and solve puzzles.
- Constructing models, art projects or creating things out of wood or metal will help your child learn how to turn his/her ideas into concrete reality. Successfully completing a project where he/she has something solid and visible to show for it can be extremely rewarding to your child.
- Card games teach social skills i.e. turn taking as well as maths and problem-solving skills. Uno is very popular
- Colouring – try putting in "free educational colouring sheets" into your internet search engine and lots will come up.
- Cooking. Most children love to cook, see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/learning-through-cooking> to make this fun activity more educational

Successfully completing a project where he has something solid and visible to show for it can be extremely rewarding to your child.

### Education Top tips

- Use whiteboard – playdough and objects instead of a pen and paper
- Online education games – these are very interactive
- Games with an educational twist: For example, Blokus: This strategy board game has become something of a sensation, winning a Teacher’s Choice Award and a Mensa Select Award. The goal is to fit all your differently shaped pieces onto the board – a task that draws on spatial reasoning and logic. Invented by a mathematician, Blokus draws on the stuff of geometry class, without feeling like, well, homework. Or try Dobble, this is a speedy observation game where players race to match the identical symbol between cards. Reliant on a sharp eye and quick reflexes
- Get visual i.e. Periodic Table Shower Curtain or magnets on the fridge
- When home schooling, try having your child dress in their school uniform while they are going the schoolwork activities
- Use flash cards

### Activity suggestions

<b>Name of Activity</b>	
Charades Family/Team Activity	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Social interaction Problem solving Fun	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
For charades, all you need is a bag full of slips of papers with things written on them. You could use popular films, TV programmes, books. You can ‘act out’ what genre they come from TV you make a square with your figures in front of you, a book you act out opening a book, for film you act out a camera rolling for instance. You will want the papers to have things written on them that someone can read and then act out without using any words for a crowd of people guessing. If you have a large group, separate into ‘teams’ and make it a competition. Let one person from one team act, while the other team guesses, and then switch roles.	
<b>Resources needed</b>	Paper and pens

<b>Name of Activity</b>
Fabric or Yarn Letters Family/Team Activity or one to one

<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Social interaction Creativity Fun	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draw your chosen letter onto your cardboard.</li> <li>2. Cut out the letter from the cardboard; or have letters pre-cut!</li> <li>3. Choose your coloured yarn and begin by wrapping the yarn around the letter multiple times - be sure to hold it in place at the beginning.</li> <li>4. Keep wrapping with various colours until you have achieved your desired look!</li> <li>5. Tie the end of your yarn at the back of your letter to secure in place.</li> </ol> <p>Alternatively use pieces of pre-cut fabric or magazine pieces to make a mosaic letter.</p>	
<b>Resources needed</b>	Cardboard Scissors or pre-cut letters Pencil Various coloured yarn/fabric OR use magazine pages torn up

<b>Name of Activity</b>	
DIY Laser Maze Family/Team Activity	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Social interaction Problem solving and reasoning skills Fun	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<p>?? Tape the crepe paper strips from one side of the wall to the other in various ways creating a maze for you to climb through.</p> <p>?? The aim is to make it from one side to the other without hitting or breaking any of the paper!</p>	
<b>Resources needed</b>	Crepe paper or strips of paper Masking tape or Sellotape

<b>Name of Activity</b>	
Pasta Relay Race Family/Team Activity	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Problem solving and reasoning skills	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
You may wish to do this activity outside, or it could be done inside with raw pasta.	

Divide your players into two teams. Have the teams line up behind two large, empty pots at one side of the room. On the other side of the room, have two large pots filled with dried pasta. Provide each team a ladle or large wooden spoon. Team members take turns racing to the pot filled with pasta, filling the ladle, racing back to the empty pot, dumping the pasta, and running back to their team. The first team able to transfer all their pasta wins the race.

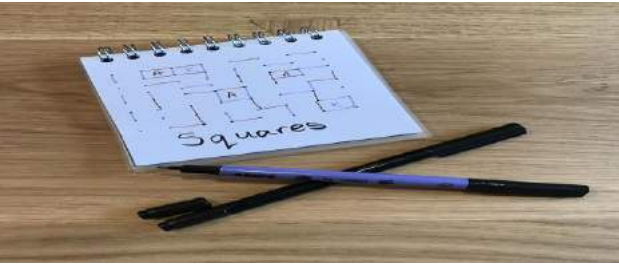
**Variations:**

To make the game more difficult, use cooked pasta, slippery and more difficult to keep in the ladle.

Provide each team member a large spoon or ladle and have them transfer the pasta from player to player to fill the empty pot from the full one in relay race style.

**Warning – this game gets messy!!!**

Resources needed	Pasta Large spoon (needs to be safety plastic) Bowls (needs to be safety plastic)
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<b>Name of Activity</b>	
Squares 2 players	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Problem solving and reasoning skills	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<p>To play you need to make a square array of dots i.e. 10 by 10 dots. Each player takes it in turns to draw 1 line between two adjacent dots. Lines can either be horizontal or vertical, NOT diagonal. The aim of the game is to make as many boxes as possible, without letting the other player get them. If you managed to complete the 4th side to a box, then add your initial on the inside. The winner is the person with most initialled boxes.</p> 	
Resources needed	Paper Pens

<b>Name of Activity</b>
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<b>Connect Four Pen and Paper Game</b> <b>2 players</b>	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Problem solving and reasoning skills	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<p>No need for a store-bought version of this fun game. Simply draw ten lines horizontally and vertically to create twenty squares. Then take turns drawing circles in an attempt to get four in a row. Once the bottom row is filled, players must “drop” their circles on top of another. Players can either mark the circles with their initials or use X and O. The first to get four in a row wins.</p>	
<b>Resources needed</b>	Paper Pens

<b>Name of Activity</b>	
<b>Noughts and Crosses</b> <b>2 Players</b>	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Problem solving and reasoning skills Social interaction Concentration Strategy	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<p>An easy pencil and paper game.          Grids of two and two horizontal lines are filled with either an X or O as players take turns. The goal is to have three marks in a row – horizontally, vertically, or diagonally – before your opponent. The player vertical who goes first can have the advantage. Two experienced players often end the game in a draw.</p>	
<b>Resources needed</b>	Pencil Paper

<b>Name of Activity</b>	
<b>Word Ladders</b> <b>Family/Team Activity or one to one</b>	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Teamwork and social communication skills Language skills	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	

Word Ladders is a fun word game that can get you using your brain to improve your vocabulary. Word ladders can be played in pairs or in teams

For Word Ladders you will need a single piece of paper and a pen for each player. Each player must start with the same word at the top of their paper – it is usually best to start with three letter words like cat. Every turn, each player can write a new word below it that has either one letter changed from the word it derived from or one extra letter added. Here is an example with the starting word cat.

- Cat
- Bat
- Fat
- Fate
- Late
- Later

Each player can keep going until they can't think of any new word changes. The objective is to achieve the biggest word possible, and a point goes to the player who manages to achieve that.

*Cat*  
*Bat*  
*Fat*  
*Fate*  
*Late*  
*Later*

Word Ladders Game

**Resources needed**

Paper  
Pens

**Name of Activity**

**Pictionary**

**Family/Team Activity**

**Value/ Learning Point for YP.**

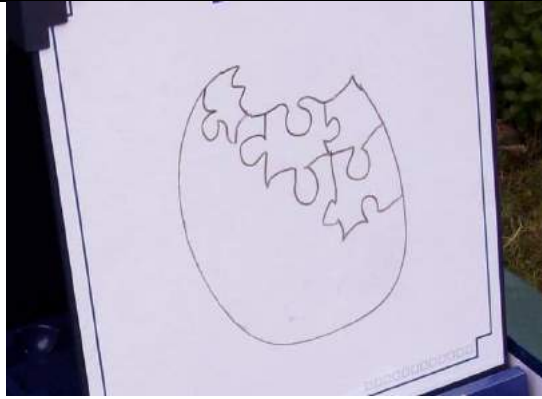
**Teamwork and social communication skills**

**How to deliver activity.**

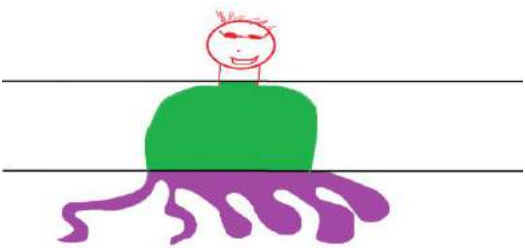
Pictionary is one of the most popular pen and paper games out there because it's readily available. With Pictionary, players take turns drawing out a particular thing while the rest of the players will have to try to guess what the thing is.

To begin, all players must agree on a theme. For example, players could choose to draw movies, common sayings or specific types of words. Once a theme has been selected, the first player must secretly think of something to draw. Once the drawing is complete, they can show it to the others and at they must guess what the image represents.

After one player guessed the picture correctly, the next player will have a turn to draw something. You can choose to play Pictionary for fun or make it competitive by awarding points for correct guesses.



Resources needed	Easel or large paper that everyone can see. Marker pen Options – some cards with theme ideas
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<b>Name of Activity</b>	
<b>Make a Monster</b>	
<b>Family/Team Activity</b>	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
<b>Teamwork and social communication skills</b>	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<p>This is a paper game that requires a piece of paper, a pen, 2-4 players and lots of imagination. It is primarily a drawing game, but players do not need to be good at drawing to make the game fun.</p>	
<p>The game starts with the first player holding an empty sheet of paper and their pen. The first player must secretly draw a head at the top of the paper. Once the first player has drawn a head, they must add two neck lines and then fold the paper so that the next player can see the two neck lines, but the picture of the head has been folded over and cannot be seen by anybody else.</p>	
<p>Assign a body part to each player and repeat this process for the body, legs, and feet of the creature. Afterward, reveal the image and behold the abomination you have all unwittingly created!</p>	
	
Resources needed	Pens Paper

<b>Name of Activity</b>	
<b>Anteater Relay</b>	
<b>Family/Team Activity</b>	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
<b>Teamwork and social communication skills</b>	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<p>This is a fun relay race game. You will need empty bowls on one side of the room and bowls with an equal number of peas (or Maltesers) on the other – enough bowls for the number of teams you have (dependent on the size of your group). Each player needs a straw. The goal of this game is to transport the peas from the full bowl to the empty bowl using the straw. If a pea is dropped, it must be picked it up with the straw by the person who dropped it and transported to the bowl. The winning team is the one which transports all their peas first.</p>	
<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Bowls or plastic cups</b> <b>Straws</b> <b>Peas (frozen or fresh) or Maltesers</b>
<b>Name of Activity</b>	
<b>Puzzle Piece Hunt</b>	
<b>Family/Team Activity or one to one</b>	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
<b>Teamwork and social communication skills</b>	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<p>Choose a specific area of an inside room and hide the puzzle pieces.  Have a clear tabletop available for assembling the puzzle  YP are to search for puzzle pieces and bring them to the table and attempt to reassemble the puzzle.  If you wish to play this game with teams, have players put team initials or names on the back of the puzzle pieces. The team with the most pieces wins.</p>	
<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>You will need a jigsaw puzzle that's age appropriate or cut a large picture into several pieces.</b>

<b>Name of Activity</b>	
<b>Ice Cube Hunt</b>	
<b>Family/Team Activity</b>	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
<b>Teamwork and social communication skills</b>	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<p><b>Pre– planning:</b> For this game you will need to have frozen several trays of ice cubes coloured with food colouring.  A game for teens to play outside on a rather cool day, variations contribute to the ability to customise this game depending on the size and composition of your group.  Tell your teens set area boundaries (i.e. the courtyard area) for the game and distribute the frozen ice cubes in the search area whilst the teens are not with you!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The teen who collects the most ice cubes in a set amount of time wins.</b></li> </ol>	



2. As a team game, have two or more colours of ice cubes and team members must find the colour they are assigned.
3. Teens must use plastic spoons to carry the ice cubes they find.
4. Label large plastic cups with teen's names and they must put their found ice cubes into their cup.
5. Give each team a small bucket or large bowl to put their ice cubes in.

<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Freeze trays of ice cubes or have coloured plastic ice cubes ready frozen.</b> <b>Food colouring</b> <b>Large bowl</b> <b>Paper cups</b> <b>Plastic spoons</b>
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<b>Name of Activity</b>	
Car wash activity	
Family/Team Activity or one to one	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Social interaction	
Fun	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
Wash the car...	
<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Car wash sponge or cloth</b> <b>Car shampoo</b> <b>Bucket</b>

<b>Name of Activity/ Group</b>	
Bubbles – just for the joy of bubbles or	
Bubbles to regulate breathing for anxiety etc	
Bubble painting	
Family/Team Activity or one to one	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Social interaction	
Regulate breathing for calming down	
Creative	
Fun	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
Bubbles – just for the joy of bubbles (1)	
Bubbles to regulate breathing /anxiety (2)	
Learning how to breathe properly can benefit physical and emotional health. For example, deep abdominal breathing can improve circulation, boost ventilation and	

relieve anxiety and stress. Bubble blowing provides a playful way, to learn various breathing techniques.

#### **Pursed-Lip Breathing**

When you exhale slowly through pursed lips, you pressure to the back of your throat. Because the pressure in your lungs enables your airways to remain open it can also boost the volume of air that you draw into your lungs, lower your respiratory rate and alleviate shortness of breath. You can blow bubbles to learn how to breathe with pursed lips. When blowing the bubble, control your exhalation so as to create the bubble without exploding it.

#### **Deep Breathing**

The diaphragm is the engine behind deep, or abdominal, breathing. When the diaphragm is contracted, your abdomen expands and forces air into your lungs. Deep breathing improves circulation, encouraging the flow of blood back to the heart; it is also a great distraction to concentrate on your breath rather than your thoughts. Bubbles provide visual cues about our breathing.

While blowing bubbles, young people can adjust their breathing rate accordingly. For example, if the bubbles are popping out of the wand too quickly or erratically, the breathing should be softened, creating an exhalation to create more fluid bubbles.

#### **Calm or Slow Breathing**

Calm or slow breathing is a form of abdominal breathing that targets anxiety. Everyone takes short, shallow breaths when they are anxious or stressed. Because the body isn't getting enough oxygen, this type of chest breathing can exacerbate feelings of anxiety.

Once someone has learned deep breathing, you can progress and teach them how to slow their breathing. Have them breathe in on a count of four, hold her breath for a count of four and then breathe out on a count of four. This is so much easier with bubbles! Let them know if they slows their breaths down (counting in fours as above in their head, or you count for them) They will produce more bubbles with one breath.

#### **Bubble painting (also known as 'O' shaped breathing) (3)**

Add three tablespoons of bubble solution (this can also be made with washing up liquid if permitted) and two tablespoons of paint to a cup or shallow plastic bowl.

Mix the paint and bubble solution together.

Cover the work surface. Or do this outside.

Using the straw, dip it into the bubble paint and blow into the paint mixture so that bubbles form.

Lay the paper onto the top of the bubbles to capture them.

You can layer the bubbles by using varying colours of bubble mixture and using the same sheet of paper, before hanging up the colorful bubble paintings!

#### **Resources needed**

Bubbles (1)  
Bubble breathing (2)  
Bubble painting (3)  
Bubbles  
Shallow bowls or cups  
Straws

	<b>Paper</b> <b>Table covering</b>
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<b>Name of Activity</b>	
<b>Gardening</b> <b>Family/Team Activity or one to one</b>	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
<b>Social interaction</b> <b>Science</b> <b>Healthy eating (dependant on what is being planted or nurtured)</b> <b>Creative</b> <b>Fun</b>	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<b>Gardening activity in raised beds – weeding or growing seeds.</b>	
<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Compost</b> <b>Bucket</b> <b>Gardening forks/ trowel</b> <b>Seed trays or small pots</b>

<b>Name of Activity</b>	
<b>Sugar art</b> <b>Family/Team Activity or one to one</b>	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
<b>Social interaction</b> <b>You can use associated memories with the various colours if appropriate</b> <b>Concentration</b> <b>Creative</b> <b>Fun</b>	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
<b>You will need to be organised: have the materials you need ready.</b>	

**Materials needed:**

- Sugar
- Food coloring
- Plastic bottles with lids (Pepsi or similar are ideal)
- Bowls
- Plastic gloves for those who don't like to get messy
- Spoons
- PVA glue

Put the sugar into bowls. Separate the sugar into one bowl for every color. Make a little bit more than you think you need.

Put a few drops of food coloring in the sugar and mix it with a spoon. Start with just a few drops and see what the color looks like; then add more if you need it. Just a drop or two will make it significantly darker. Mix it well to disperse it evenly.

Do the same for each colour you want to use. You will need separate bowls of sugar for each color.

- Combine red and yellow to make orange, blue and yellow to make green, and red and blue to make purple.
- Consider combining two colors of sand for a two-toned look as well.

When all of the food colouring is soaked in the sugar, start kneading it with your hands. This mixes up the color better and evens out the texture. It's okay if it's clumpy; that's normal.

Start filling the bottles. Depending on the size and shape of your bottle, you'll need different materials to create layers. You could just spoon the sugar in – but to be more precise you'll need a funnel.

Put a piece of paper into a cone shape and use it to funnel in the sand. Alternatively, you could use a straw or other similar device. If the sand doesn't lie perfectly, you can adjust it with the end of a spoon or a cocktail stick (ends removed)

Try to create a pattern; using a funnel will be the easiest way to do this or tilt the bottle to build up colours in varying layers.

Once the bottle is full and they are happy with their creation, use PVA glue to secure the lid on. Whilst this isn't necessary, it does keep sugar from going everywhere should it get knocked over.

**Resources needed**

Coloured sand, or  
Sugar and food colouring (see 2<sup>nd</sup> page)  
Small funnels  
Small paintbrushes or small spoon (for moving sand)  
Plastic bottles (avoid glass)  
(Collect Pepsi bottles or similar once the current bottles have been used)

	Plastic gloves for those that don't like mess (sugar art)
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<b>Name of Activity</b>	
Wax or candle painting Family/Team Activity or one to one	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Social interaction Creative Fun	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	
Using either coloured or white paper 'draw' an image with a candle. You need to apply some pressure. Then wash over the paper with water-based paints. The candle drawing will emerge. Write secret messages - or just get creative.	
<b>Resources needed</b>	Candles Water based paint palettes Brushes Water Absorbent paper

<b>Name of Activity</b>	
Pompom making Family/Team Activity or one to one	
<b>Value/ Learning Point for YP.</b>	
Social interaction Co-ordination Patience Fun Creative	
<b>How to deliver activity.</b>	

**Simple activity winding wool around either a large cardboard circle with a smaller circle cut from the centre – or use the plastic pom pom maker circles instead.  
Stop winding wool when you feel the pom pom is full enough.**

**Resources needed**

**Wool  
Scissors for cutting the pom pom shape  
from the cardboard**

**Name of Activity**

**Arrange a cinema treat in your own home**

**Value/ Learning Point for YP.**

**Social interaction**

**Fun**

**How to deliver activity.**

**Cinema night**

**Get your child(ren) to choose a DVD title from a list you arrange.**

**Ask them to make posters advertising the cinema night and also tickets to attend the event.**

**Get them to make popcorn holders out of paper/card.**

**See template – this can be enlarged on a photocopier or google another one!**

**They can colour and decorate their own holder.**

**Resources needed**

**DVD's  
Paper & felt pens to make posters/tickets  
and popcorn holders.  
Pritt stick or similar  
Bags of popcorn**

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