

# Additional Adaptations for Students with ADHD

**Mari McGrady**

**T**he tips offered here provide the art teacher with adaptive management strategies that have been tried and tested in the art classroom. For more adaptive techniques, see the article on page 30 in the January issue of *SchoolArts* magazine.

## Try these management techniques:

### 1. Timer

I use timers for all of the timed portions of my classes. If students have twenty minutes to work before cleanup, I set the timer and tell the class, "The timer is set for twenty minutes." ADHD students will respect a timer more than a teacher's voice.

### 2. Chewing Gum

Gum can do wonders in helping a student focus. Keep sugar-free gum in your desk. Request it from parents. Get permission from the administration if necessary.

### 3. Headphones

ADHD students benefit from having all the senses engaged. Once students are clear about the instructions, and it is time to get to work, allow ADHD students to wear headphones to listen to music while they work.

### 4. Name Cards

I depend heavily on name cards. I use them to call students into the room and to engage them in discussions. Using name cards to elicit student responses to questions eliminates the need for raising hands, which is distracting.

### 5. Chore Chart

The chore chart is made with pockets that hold cards with the names of students. The names can be rotated weekly in a systematic way so that every student has a turn with the various classroom responsibilities—one chore per week. The chores I typically list include re-directing, cleaning sink, washing paintbrushes, sweeping floor, holding door, monitoring restroom, running errands, repeating instructions, washing tables, organizing materials, passing materials, collecting materials.

### 6. Highlighters

When giving instructions from handouts, I always give the ADHD students highlighters to help them follow along. I stop and cue along the way, "Okay, highlight the part of your paper that we just talked about." As the lesson begins, I tape the instructions to their desks. I also use highlighters so that when we are reading together out loud, students can follow along with the highlighter. A highlighter is also used to indicate points I would like for them to work on or redo.

### 7. Restroom Routines

When students must use the restroom, they must quietly sign out on a restroom chart on the wall, and they must be back within four minutes. The timer is set. If the timer goes off, and the student has not returned, the restroom monitor goes to check.

### 8. Modeling Behavior

Often, ADHD students have no clue as to what their bodies are doing. Modeling is used for physical behaviors that are as simple as holding brushes correctly, wiping tables, opening and closing cabinet doors, sitting, standing, walking, etc.

### 9. Sharing of Artwork

Students love to see each other's artwork. Either I call the student to the front of the class (using the shuffled name cards) to share his or her work, or I have three people at a time walk around the room to observe what their peers have done. An important rule is that no more than three people should be out of their seats at any given time.

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**With minimal effort and reinforcement, these tips will help both you and the ADHD students manage time and energy toward productive ends.**