

# Thoughtful Parenting: Helping your teen with ADD/ADHD

Michelle R. Raz/For the Steamboat Today

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People with attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder generally have deficits in executive functioning skills: the ability to think and plan ahead, organize, control impulses and complete tasks. That means the daily demands of school can be daunting and often leave them feeling unsuccessful. Their self-esteem often adversely is affected. In fact, they are students labeled “at risk” by educators.

## Thoughtful Parenting: Youth Services



This weekly column about parenting issues is written by area youth-serving professionals. It publishes on Mondays in the Steamboat Today. Read more columns [here](#).

Here are a few sobering facts to consider about the impact of ADHD on a student's success: According to a research study done in 2010 by the Edge Foundation, high school students with ADHD are four times more likely to drop out of school than the general population. More than a third of ADHD students won't graduate at all, and those who stay in school will suffer from lack of confidence, higher risk of substance abuse and subpar grades (on

average, a C- or D+). Lastly, only 22 percent of students with ADHD enter college, and even fewer will graduate.

Skills set areas with which people with executive functioning deficits struggle daily:

- Goal setting
- Time management and scheduling
- Organization, prioritizing and persistence

What can you do as a parent?

Help by becoming their executive leader and coaching the student through their areas of weaknesses in the above skill set, help that is needed for them to be successful academically. The relationship is similar to the way an athletic coach boosts athletic performance. The coaching focuses on the student's strengths and gives guidance for the student to create self-awareness tools and strategies to navigate through areas of weakness.

Here are some systematic techniques widely used in the academic coaching field:

- Create a weekly block of time for individual goal setting and follow up.
- Develop individual strategic tools and management systems such as anti-procrastination worksheets, the but-rebuttal method ("But I can't ...") and visualizing success.
- Create an action plan and track successes.
- Celebrate the small steps along the way.

In my client-led sessions with high school and college students, we take a look at ways to develop action plans based on individual academic and life goals. As a team, we might break down each individual's main struggles and then categorize their talents and goals to make positive changes in their lives. We

brainstorm small daily action plans through which clients can find immediate success and track them through a personalized online planner. We meet weekly via Skype or face to face with follow-ups throughout the week.

I profoundly am surprised how quickly small achievement affects the students' academic behavior in a positive way. The momentum it carries fuels more successes as they demonstrate great enthusiasm about small triumphs. These accomplishments quickly build their self-esteem, and success in life begins to take shape, empowering them.

*Michelle R. Raz, M.A. Ed., is a professional executive function coach and educational consultant in Steamboat Springs and nationally. She is a member of CHADD and ACO. Learn more on her website at [www.coachingacademics.com](http://www.coachingacademics.com). Raz is a member of the Routt County Youth Services Coalition, whose website can be found at [www.youthinroutt.org](http://www.youthinroutt.org).*