

## **Attention and Concentration Strategies to Support Primary School Children**

This advice sheet provides strategies to support primary school pupils with Attention and concentration difficulties, helping them improve organisation skills and achieve academic success.

### **Classroom Arrangements:**

- Decrease sensory distractions in the environment – consider noise, lighting, clutter etc.
- Keep classroom furniture arranged in a clear and consistent manner. Try not to make changes too often.
- Wiggle Seats: Provide flexible seating options such as wobble cushions/ TheraBand to allow for movement while sitting. It can help the child channel their excess energy and improve focus.
- Seat the child close to the teacher's desk but be certain this is seen as an opportunity for the child rather than a punishment. Position the child beside a peer with good attention to tasks and a settled approach to work (i.e., avoid children who tap or fidget being beside those that display similar behaviours).
- Quiet Corner: This minimises both visual and auditory distractions and provides a peaceful space for students to retreat to when they feel overwhelmed or need a break. Make sure the area is free from visual clutter, such as posters or busy decorations and ensure it's located in a quiet part of the classroom away from noise. This allows students to recharge and refocus without additional sensory stimulation.
- Transition Support: Use visual schedules, visual timers, or auditory cues to signal transitions between activities or locations, offering extra time for transitions or using transitional objects like a sensory item or a special keychain to provide comfort and familiarity during changes. Provide clear instructions and prepare children in advance for upcoming transitions to reduce anxiety and facilitate smooth transitions.

### **Classroom Organization and Learning:**

- Visual Supports: Use visual aids such as visual schedules, graphic organisers, visual cues and “now” and “next” visuals to support understanding, organisation and understand and anticipate the sequence of activities. Visuals can help children follow instructions, remember steps, and stay on task.
- Visual Daily Schedule: Develop a visual daily schedule using pictures, icons, or written cues to outline the sequence of activities throughout the day. Display the schedule in a prominent place in the classroom where children can easily refer to it. This visual representation may help the child understand and anticipate the structure of their day.
- Task Box or Stations: Organise learning materials and activities into labelled stations. Each station can contain all the necessary materials and instructions for a specific task or subject, making it easier for children to access and focus on one task at a time.

- **Color-Coded Organisation:** Assign specific colours to subjects, materials, or tasks. For example, use blue folders for math, green notebooks for science, and yellow labels for homework. This color-coding system helps children quickly identify and retrieve the correct materials for each subject or task.
- **Personalised Checklists:** Provide individualised checklists or visual reminders for daily routines, assignments, or classroom responsibilities. Tailor the checklists to each child's specific needs and preferences, ensuring they can easily follow and track their tasks.
- **Interactive Learning Tools:** Utilise interactive learning tools, such as educational apps, digital games, or online platforms, to support engagement. These tools can provide immediate feedback, interactive exercises, and adaptive learning experiences that cater to individual needs.
- **Fidget Toys:** Provide the child with appropriate fidget toys specifically designed for primary school aged children. Examples include squishy animals that can be squeezed or manipulated and stretchy bracelets that can be twisted or pulled. These toys offer tactile stimulation and allow the child to engage their hands and fingers, promoting focus and attention during classroom activities.

### **Curriculum Modification:**

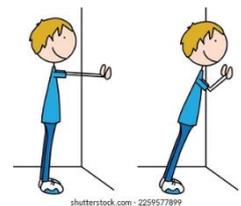
Reduce amount or volume of work as necessary to ensure completion of tasks and quality rather than quantity.

- Allow extended period for completing work.
- At the start of new learning experiences, allow for a lower accuracy rate and increase expectations with time.
- Focus on effort rather than quantity of work production.
- Determine with parents a reasonable time commitment for homework.
- Modify tasks that involve significant inherent distractions. Fewer items on the page or use a cardboard cut-out overlay to allow better focus on a single item at a time.
- Break down complex tasks into small steps and present one at a time.
- For complicated or lengthy tasks, present only one component at a time.

### **The Importance of Movement:**

Movement breaks can be helpful for a child who has difficulty concentrating. Try to incorporate these in a regular, structured way, the teacher could suggest a movement break while he/she sets out the next part of the child's work. This can be repeated as often as required by the child.

- **Movement Breaks:** Integrate short movement breaks throughout the day to help the child release energy and improve focus. For example, after completing a coloring activity, encourage the child to stand up and do ten jumping/ wall push up before starting the next activity.



**Self-Organisation:**

- Personalised Organisation Systems: Help children develop their own organisation systems based on their learning style and preferences. This could include using folders, binders, or digital organisation tools to keep track of assignments, schedules, and important materials.
- Time Management Strategies: Teach children time management techniques, such as using timers, setting goals, and breaking tasks into smaller steps. Encourage them to prioritise tasks, plan their schedules, and allocate sufficient time for each activity.
- Self-Monitoring and Reflection: Guide children in reflecting on their own organization and time management skills. Encourage them to identify areas for improvement, set goals and monitor their progress. Regular self-reflection promotes self-awareness and empowers children to take ownership of their learning.