



Paying Attention

Alerting strategies

Increasing attention plays an important role in a child's success in the classroom. Attention allows children to "tune out" unrelated information, background noise and visual distractions. By doing this children are able to concentrate and focus on the important information being given by parents/teachers. The overall goal is to make all learning experiences full of sensory information so that there are maximum opportunities to notice and respond to the cues in the environment, as well as teaching a child to pay attention.

Increasing Attention Hints and Tips:

- Structure the classroom effectively, arrange desks in a way that allows all students to equally be able to focus on the teacher
- Go for a walk before class begins
- Sitting students with reduced concentration skills near the front of the class helps to promote engagement and attention
- Call the child to get their attention before giving them an instruction
- Use animated (or sing song) tone of voice to make it more alerting/interesting when explaining something
- Ask the child to repeat instructions back to you to ensure they have been paying attention
- Make the activity 'alerting', interesting and engaging e.g. use of bright colours, visual and tactile stimulus etc.
- Research shows that the more senses used during a learning experience, the more likely the child will retain the information, therefore provide learning in a multi-sensory manner- use of smells, sounds, visuals etc.
- Provide opportunities for movement and change to alert the senses. Change position in class, i.e. move to a different chair, or change body position i.e. sitting at a table, lying on their tummy on the floor, sitting on a carpet, use an air filled cushion, etc.
- A child may require direction to move or change position as they may not realise they need to move or seek this for themselves
- Remind children to take off their jumper in a warm classroom, and utilise opportunities for fresh air
- Provide contrast between items in the environment to make it obvious to see. Therefore reduce clutter and make things stand out
- Provide activities to prepare for a task (e.g. handwriting warm ups / play dough) before writing and break tasks up with an activity in-between, to keep it interesting and less predictable



- Fidget tools may help some children by keeping their hands busy while they are listening e.g. stress ball, koosh ball, rubber band. Fidget tools can be used on a key ring to make them more discreet
- Be mindful of distracting noises such as overhead lightning, clocks ticking, fans, and corridor or hall noises
- Develop a secret signal between you and the child, showing them that you want them to concentrate on their work, and another one so that they can ask for help