

ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

Incidence: 3-6% of the population is affected by ADD/ADHD

Description: ADHD is described as high levels of non-goal directed activity.

Characteristics include: inattention, impulsivity, and Hyperactivity (in some cases).

Strategies:

- Make sure the student is completely attentive when directions are given.
- Cue to attract attention
- Have student report directions back to you.
- Break complex directions into uncomplicated one or two-step tasks.
- Establish eye contact
- Place the student away from distracting stimuli: windows, doors etc.
- Understand and don't dwell on student's need for physical movement such as: getting out of their seat, chewing on a pencil, and/or doodling.
- Put a hand on the student's desk or shoulder to gain and hold attention for orally presented materials.
- Use concrete and visual material to help the student attend to the task at hand.
- Give unmistakable cues to identify and emphasize important information.... "This is important information."
- Require the student to provide periodic status reports for long-range projects.
- When assigning homework, list materials needed for the next class session.
- Keep extra supplies of pens, paper and textbooks.
- Replace one long class activity with several short ones.
- In order to help the student sustain attention encourage "talking" through a problem.
- Develop organizational skills.
- Develop an individualized plan for short and long-term goal setting.
- Make sure the lesson has a clear "real life" connection (i.e. establish relevance).
- Be sure to state the purpose of the assignment or lesson before you begin teaching.
- When students come into class allow time for them to organize their notebooks, pencils and paper. Base this time allowed on the child that takes the longest.
- Allow breaks for refueling. Refueling could be the need for praise, movement, food, liquid, and/or rest.
- When giving a homework assignment it is good to remind students of the materials they will need to complete the project.
- Help student's practice concentrating by creating focusing opportunities. These opportunities might include reading in small groups, working with a parent or reading alone. Make the practice time short and set a timer to indicate the completion of a focus practice session.

- Create a syllabus indicating the date of upcoming assignments, including test and quizzes.
- Allow student to move while working. Encourage student to move one part of their body to get the energy out enabling them concentrate. (Chew gum or listen to music with earphones.)
- When working on handwriting start with large motor skills on an oversize pad or board, and gradually work down to small motor skills of holding and writing with a pencil.
- Using a keyboard will help students having trouble with their mind moving faster than their hand.
- When giving directions, read directions twice to ensure children have heard them. Have student repeat directions back to you.
- For children that are highly distracted, working in groups can be very frustrating. Provide opportunities for these students to work independently.

For more information on this topic visit the following web site: www.chadd.com

Students with Attention Problems need:

- Set routines – lots of structure
- Enough sleep
- Good breakfast
- Predictable consistency

Focusing

Students with attention problems often find themselves so overwhelmed with their surroundings that they appear to be confused or “out of it”. Because these students often don’t seem to have a working filter system to help them know what to attend to, in the frenzy of activity that bombards their senses they tend to disengage and tune out. There are simple ways to help students “stay tuned” that can be used in the classroom with effective results.

Suggestions:

1. Make sure the student is completely attentive when directions are given.
 - cue to attract attention
 - hand on a shoulder
 - tap on a desk
 - have student report directions back to you
 - break complex direction into uncomplicated one or two step tasks
 - establish eye contact
 - use a sound or noise that reminds individual that they need to look up
2. Keep the student near the teacher or in front of the class and away from distracting stimuli. Sitting up front should never be used as punishment.
3. Assigning an assistant to remind the student what to attend to.

4. Make sure lesson has a clear real life connections i.e. establish relevance.
5. Give unmistakable cues to identify and emphasize important information; "This is important information."
6. Be sure to state the purpose of the assignment or lesson before you begin teaching.
7. In order to help the student sustain attention encourage "talking through" a problem.
8. Replace on long class activity with several short ones.
9. Use concrete and visual material to help the student attend to the task.
10. Understand and don't dwell on the student's need for physical movement.

Executive Functioning recommendations:

- use preferential seating,
- maintain a highly structured classroom,
- make the classroom as distraction free as possible,
- give fewer problems/questions on worksheets,
- give frequent breaks to help with attention,
- use visual organizational tools to help with organizational skills,
- use graphic organizers,
- use picture schedule to help with planning and predictability,
- organize work space,
- minimize clutter,
- color code materials, notebooks, dividers,
- use checklists and "to do" lists, estimating how long tasks will take,
- break long assignments into chunks and assign time frames for completing each chunk,
- use visual calendars to keep track of long term assignments, due dates and activities,
- write the due date on top of each assignment,
- use rehearsal strategies for memory,
- teach self regulation skills.

Many of the strategies mentioned above are just part of effective teaching and would benefit ALL students (e.g., explicit instruction, instructional match, scaffolding, graphic organizers, mnemonic strategies, breaking longer assignments into chunks, step by step strategies, modeling and demonstration, performance feedback, opportunities to drill and practice to strengthen skills, student "talk through" activities, periodic reviews, progress monitoring, study skills instruction, etc). Here is a great article on effective teaching practices:

<https://www.aft.org/pdfs/americaneducator/spring2012/Rosenshine.pdf>

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