



Richard P. Krummel, Ph.D.

Facilitating Classroom Attention

Structure and consistency are essential to the accomplishment of attention in easily distracted children. These children learn best in organized and structured classrooms managed by firm but non-punitive teachers. Daily routines ought to be adhered to as much as possible. Posters of written information ought to display the order and time devoted to each classroom subject. Because these children can be distracted by auditory and/or visual stimuli, the room ought to be quiet and as neutral as is reasonable. To reduce fidgeting and finger-tapping, a small piece of Velcro attached to the side of the child's desk can be used for stroking, a type of "focused movement."

1. Preferential seating near the teacher is often useful so the teacher can monitor attention more closely.
2. Complex instructions and directions ought to be broken down into components so the child can attend to the number they can comprehend without becoming neurologically confused or overwhelmed.
3. Physical contact as well as certain verbal instructions will facilitate attention. Touch them on the shoulder or say "look at my face" while giving them instructions.
4. Some children learn to assume an attentional or "at attention" attitude and position that improves their ability to grasp information. For example, they could be given verbal cues to "be at attention" or "ready, get set, listen."
5. Highlighting of reading material ought to be encouraged so that the color and obvious differences of the highlighted text will more likely be attended to.
6. Directions ought to be given in several modalities including verbally, in written form, and often accompanied by a touch to get attention focused upon the teacher. Repeating is often appropriate.
7. Outlines of material to be presented ought to be given so the student will have a better understanding of the overall topic and will have a context in which to insinuate new material.
8. These students often require more repetition before new skills are completely learned. In this manner, they learn differently from some other students.
9. When possible and when appropriate to the presented material, the student ought to use material such as blocks, sticks or other items to touch and to manipulate so they can more easily learn new concepts such as in math.
10. Practice tests at school and at home will help a student organize their thoughts and help reduce anxiety.