





**Integrated Community Paediatric Services
Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service**

Worksheet D



Attention and Focus

Some children struggle to sit still due to difficulties with attention and focus. Some people need to move regularly to maintain their arousal levels and help them to stay focussed. Others are easily distracted by their environment or find it hard to suppress the urge to fiddle with objects or get up and explore the room. Children will struggle to initiate and/or stay on task when the activity is too difficult, they feel unable to achieve or they do not understand what to do.

For more information on how **sensory processing difficulties** may contribute to a child's struggling to sit still and maintain focus, please contact sensoryot@wsh.nhs.uk for information on the school **sensory workshop and resource pack**.

Area of Difficulty	Strategy	Tick when strategy has been tried and add comments.
Child excessively touches objects	<p>Allow access to a box of fidget items e.g. tangle toys, squeeze balls, putty. The child may be more able to attend to the task whilst manipulating these items. Fiddle toys should not be visually distracting.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://www.sensorydirect.com/behaviour/concentration/fidget-toys - https://www.griffinot.com/top-five-tips-fidget-toys/ 	
	Remove all unnecessary materials from the child's work area.	
Child is distracted by their environment	Consider where the child is positioned in class, aim to move them away from the window and towards the front of the class room/whiteboard.	
	Keep the child's desk clutter free. Make sure only relevant information is on the white/chalk board.	
	<p>Consider using a pop-up workstation to block out distractions during focussed activity.</p> <p>https://www.tts-group.co.uk/pop-up-concentration-desk-barrier/1004416.html</p> 	

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<p>Child excessively seeks movement</p> <p>Child is lethargic/ lacks energy and zones out/daydreams</p>	<p>Allow regular movement breaks particularly prior to and after times in which the child needs to concentrate on an activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://www.griffinot.com/sensory-movement-breaks-tips-for-success/ - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5uIZ2KOZZeQDQo_Gsi_qbQ (Cosmic Yoga movement break) - https://www.youtube.com/c/GriffinOT/videos - Children that are lethargic and need 'waking up' will need to complete 'alerting' activities. Children that are seeking movement and fidgeting will need to complete more 'organising/calming' movements. 	
	<p>Consider the use of a Move & Sit cushion which will provide sensory feedback whilst seated. See advice sheet for details</p>	
	<p>Consider weighted items to help calm and focus. See advice sheet for details</p>	
<p>Child doesn't always pay attention to, or follow instructions</p>	<p>Check that the child has listened to your instructions, and understands what to do, by asking them to repeat the instructions back to you.</p>	
	<p>Break down activities into smaller steps. Write down instructions or use simple visual schedules to help prompt. The child can tick the tasks off as they complete them.</p>  <p>The image shows a 'Going Home Checklist' with the following items: school bag or bookbag, my homework, lunchbox, water bottle, reading book/library books, P.E. kit, and any letters to take home. Each item has a checkbox and a small illustration.</p>	
<p>Child struggles to stay focussed on a task</p>	<p>Consider using a 'Now and Next' board. See advice sheet for details https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-s-111-now-next-visual-aid</p>	
	<p>Break down activities into smaller steps. You could use visuals to help prompt.</p>	
	<p>Offer regular movement breaks to break long tasks up into more manageable chunks.</p>	
	<p>Make sure the task is set at the 'just right level' to enable the child to achieve and experience success.</p>	
	<p>Use a sand timer and prompt the child to refer back to this if they lose focus.</p>  <p>The image shows a yellow sand timer with a clear glass body and a yellow top and bottom.</p>	

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Child struggles to complete tasks on time	Repeat instructions and use visual cues to reinforce understanding. Ask the child to repeat the instructions back, gradually increase the number and complexity of instructions given	
	Break task down, the child may need a step-by-step approach, either through written instructions or picture symbols	
	Highlight key information on a worksheet/written instruction	
	Use 'fill in the gaps' answers rather than the child having to organise a whole piece of work. When the child is ready slowly increase the amount of work the child needs to organise	
	Encourage the child to verbalise the steps needed in a task with questions such as 'what do you need to do first' and 'what materials do you need'	
	A child may benefit from the use of a clock or timer to help them understand how long they have to complete each step of the task	