

Integrated Community Paediatric Services Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service

Worksheet B

Attention and Focus

Area of Difficulty	Strategy	Tick when strategy has been tried and add comments.
Child is distracted by their environment.	<p>Consider where the child is positioned, the quietest and plainest place with the least distractions is recommended; for example, facing a wall instead of facing a window.</p> <p>Keep the child's table clutter free.</p> <p>Consider using a pop up concentration desk barrier to block out distractions during focussed activity.</p> <p>www.tts-group.co.uk</p>	
Child excessively seeks movement.	<p>Allow regular movement breaks particularly prior to and after times in which the child needs to concentrate on an activity.</p> <p>https://www.griffinot.com/sensory-movement-breaks-tips-for-success/</p> <p>@cosmickidsyoga on youtube (Cosmic Yoga movement break)</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/c/GriffinOT/videos</p>	
Child is lethargic / lacks energy and zones out / daydreams.	<p>Children that are lethargic and need 'waking up' will need to complete 'alerting' activities (see "general alerting techniques" information below). Children that are seeking movement and fidgeting will need to complete more 'organising/calming' movements.</p>	
Child struggles to stay on task.	<p>Break down activities into smaller steps. You could use visuals to help prompt.</p> <p>Visual schedules can also aid attention and manage a child's expectations of how long they are required to maintain attentive for. Visual schedules allow inclusion of more than two activities.</p> <p>The child can assist by removing the visuals once the task is achieved to support motivation.</p>	

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	<p>Ensure that the child is sat in the correct position to support attention and focus; refer back to Worksheet A.</p> <p>Engaging in a calming activity prior to completing structured tabletop activities can help a child to attend as supports the body to calm down and prepare to work.</p> <p>Use an 'I am working for chart' (see "I am working for chart" below) as a visual way of showing the child how long is left on an activity.</p> <p>Use a sand timer and prompt the child to refer back to this if they lose focus.</p> <p>Alternatively, use a countdown timer.</p> <p>Offer regular movement breaks to break long tasks up into more manageable chunks.</p> <p>Using 'now and next boards' (see "Now and Next" board below) are a good way to practice building attention during table top tasks using visual prompts. The activities can be adapted to meet the need / ability of the child e.g. two 20 second activities or two 3-5-minute activities.</p>	
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General Alerting Techniques

Daily sensory activities help your child feel calm, alert, and organised so that he or she is ready to play and work. A person needs to learn to self-regulate in order to maintain, attain and change alertness needed to learn or complete a task. When self-regulation does not occur, adults can provide activities and situations that help a child attain the right levels of alertness. The daily sensory activities can be used to calm or alert a child before during, or after activities.

Specific input (such as listening to quiet music, chewing, weight or using a fidget item) should be managed using time limits, as the child will accommodate or "get used to", the sensation. If some type of a sensory input is important to keep a child calm or focused, it should not be withheld to be used as a reinforcer.

These activities can be used to alert a child who is under responsive to stimuli in the environment. They may appear lethargic or require increased stimulation. Always monitor a child's response to the activities as some children may become over active and will then need to be calmed down.

- Use bright lights.
- Encourage frequent breaks during more difficult tasks (march, hop, skip, jump, run on the spot, sit ups)
- Encourage regular outdoor activities such as swinging, running, sliding and climbing.
- Have a mini trampoline available for use during the school day.
- Allow the child to sit on a large therapy ball/move'n'sit cushion while doing schoolwork or homework.
- Allow the child to manipulate hand fidgets, or squeeze a small hand held pliable ball. Keep a lump of blu-tac in a small container that fits in the child's pocket for him/her to use through the day for stretching, pulling, poking fingers in.
- Play loud, fast paced music before a lesson or doing homework.
- Allow the child to chew sugar free gum or suck on a sugar free hard sweet.
- Give the child cold or iced water in a water bottle.
- Have crunchy food available - dry crackers, cereal, corn chips
- Suck sharp tasting liquids through a narrow straw i.e. cranberry juice, lemon squash.

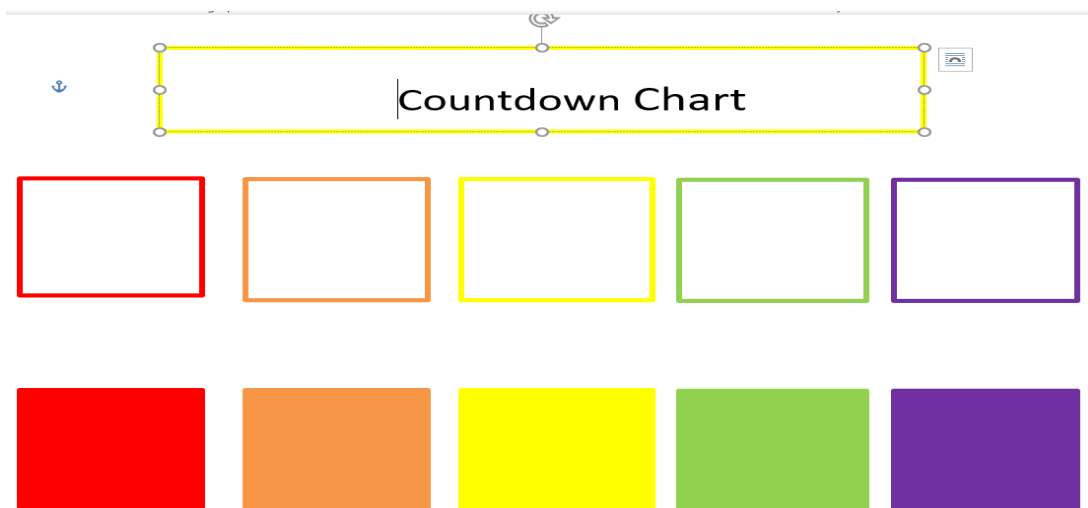
It will be helpful if your child has a box/bag where they can access their alerting toys when needed i.e. vibrating, textured and tickly toys, rainmakers and light up toys.

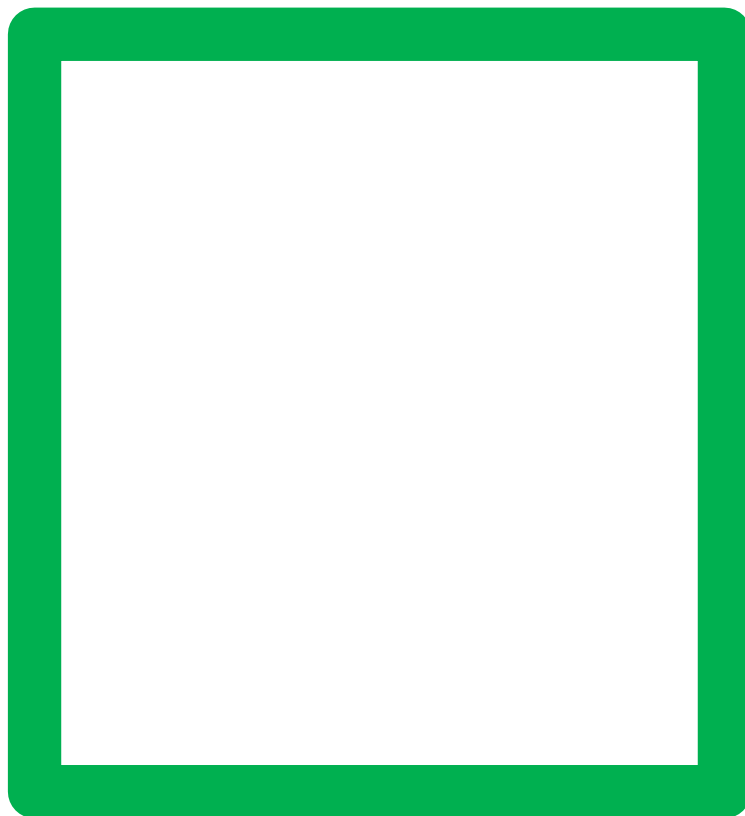
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I am working for chart

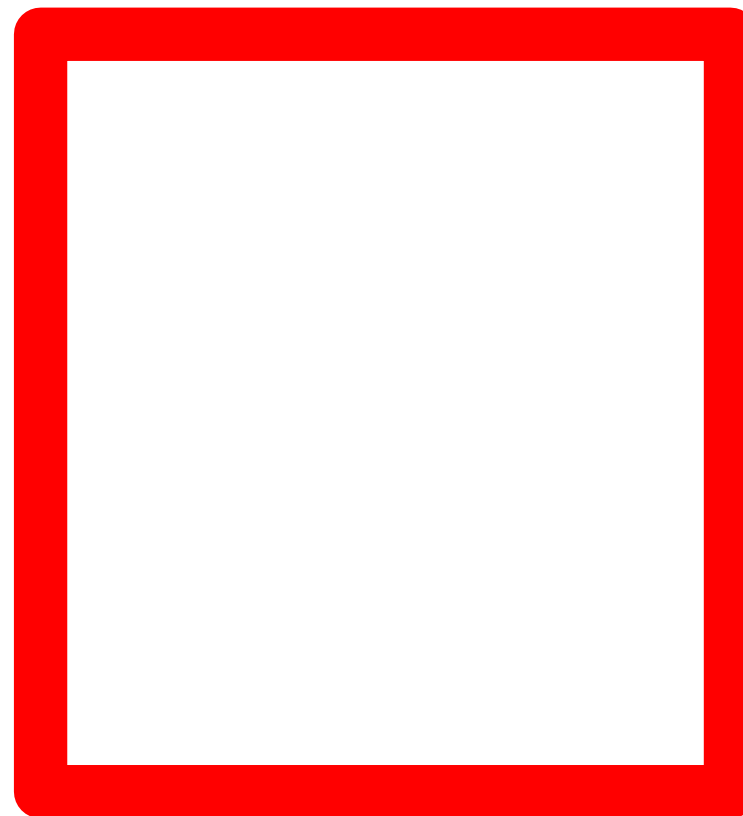
This visual countdown timer has been created to support your child (or a child you are working with) to transition under an adult's lead. It can be used for a number of transitions throughout the day such as finishing playing, finishing in the bath, or finishing a meal at the dinner table.

- 1) Remove the Velcro tabs from the A4 sheet to start.
- 2) Calmly tell the child the activity they are doing will finish when all the stickers have been stuck onto the sheet. Alternatively, tell them what activity is coming next. For example: 'When all 5 stickers are on, it's time to wash our hands for lunch'.
- 3) The adult can then replace the stickers as slowly or quickly as needed.
- 4) Each time a sticker is placed on, say to the child '4 stickers left, then we will finish playing. 3 stickers left then we will finish playing' etc.
- 5) You can use limited language if needed. For e.g., '4 stickers then finish', '3 stickers then finish'.
- 6) When the last sticker is placed back onto the timer, the activity comes to an end.





NOW



NEXT