

These ideas may also be helpful.

Classroom Suggestions

Many children, even those who do not have sensory processing disorders, will benefit from some of the strategies that are suggested for children who do have sensory processing disorders. Listed below are some things you can try and probably some things you already do. If you decide to implement some of these suggestions, try them one at a time. Chances are the first few days will be difficult but when the novelty wears off, you may see some positive changes. Stick with each thing for at least two weeks and add new ideas slowly.

- Allow children to choose to work while standing, sitting or lying on the floor or in different seated positions.
- If children are not able to finish work prior to recess, require them to complete a vigorous movement activity (running a lap, going hand over hand across some bars, climbing up and down the monkey bars 5 times, etc.) and then return to work. This will help to increase production much more than requiring them to miss recess. Don't you allow yourself a break when you're having a hard time concentrating?
- During instruction, use tactile and movement experiences as well as auditory and visual experiences.
- Base requirements for classroom behavior on the following questions: Is it safe? Is it respectful of myself and others? Is it respectful of property? (Neill, 1991)
- Have one or two quiet areas in the classroom (maybe with some pillows, blankets and/or stuffed toys if appropriate) that children can choose for working or taking a break.
- Include movement in practice activities and in instruction as much as possible.
- Encourage children who have a hard time with writing to practice writing skills on the chalkboard.
- Some children will concentrate better and be less distracted if they can draw or play with small hand toys or wads of clay during listening activities.
- Ask children to bring a sports bottle with a straw to school. These can then be filled with water and used for sipping throughout the day.
- Have on hand a large stack of books or some other heavy items that will periodically "need" to be moved.
- Allow children an opportunity to move quietly around the classroom when direct instruction is not in progress.
- Some children will benefit from listening to music through headphones while working.
- Have a goodie bowl with gum and/or hard candy for children to chew or suck on as needed.
- Use the natural classroom lighting if possible.

Maryann Trott

Child's Name _____

Date _____

**CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM STATE
Classroom and Home Adaptations
FOCUSING ATTENTION**

Purpose

To create a learning environment that helps the distractible child to focus on relevant information

Suggestions

1. Decrease sensory distractions in the environment.
2. Adapt activities.
3. Block out nonrelevant sensory information.
4. Improve communication.

Decrease Sensory Distractions in the Environment

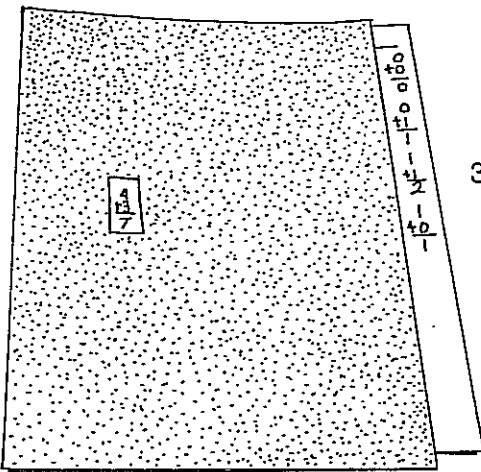
1. Remove posters, calendars, and other visual distractions from the walls around the work space.
2. Keep chalkboard clean. Erase all nonrelevant information completely.
3. Clear the work area of all materials except those which are in use. Keep other materials out of sight in closed shelves, cupboards, or closets.
4. Close doors and windows during work periods to prevent extraneous sounds from entering the room.
5. Seat the child as far as possible from a window or door so that stimulation from outside noise, movement, and sights will be minimized.
6. Carpets on floors and walls can significantly reduce noise levels.
7. Use a study carrel to block out visual stimulation from the classroom. Cardboard shields are available commercially and can be placed around the child's work area, or classroom furniture and room dividers can be arranged to create a visually calm space.
8. At home, locate the child's work area in a den, study, or other quiet room. Do not locate the work area in the bedroom, which contains many distractions and is associated with sleep or play.

Adapt Activities

1. Break up work periods or assignments into smaller segments so that the task of attending to the entire assignment does not appear impossible. For example, instruct the child to copy a letter five times (instead of completing an entire row of copies), then take a short break before copying it five more times. Increase the amount of work required between breaks as the child's ability to attend improves.
2. Increase intensity or attractiveness of the stimuli that you want the child to attend to.
 - Bright colors and interesting movement patterns can attract and maintain attention. For example, a child might find it easier to attend to a design-copying task when using brightly colored pipe cleaners or a Lite Brite® box with pegs that light up, rather than pencil and paper.
 - Bright-colored chalk can increase attention to the chalkboard, and bright clothing can attract attention to the teacher.
 - Outline pictures with a bright marker, to assist the child in focusing on and coloring within line boundaries.
 - Incorporate music into activities.
 - For some children, listening to a teacher reading a story or giving instructions through earphones is helpful. The voice can be magnified and other sounds blocked out.
3. Provide worksheets that are clear and visually uncluttered.

Block Out Nonrelevant Sensory Information

1. Encourage the child to close the eyes and focus on the feel of movement patterns or sound.
2. Block out competing sounds with earplugs, cotton, earphones, or sound masking when the child is attending to a visual or motor activity. Use recordings of the sea, wind, or white noise to mask distracting sounds in the environment. To make a white noise tape, record a TV channel that is not receiving programming.
3. Make cutout frames from cardboard or poster board. Use them to cover worksheets so that only the relevant problem, paragraph, or picture is visible. Move the frame to reveal the next item to be attended to.



Improve Communication

1. Seat child near the teacher. Use a cue for reminding the child to focus on the activity.
2. Avoid unnecessary words when giving directions. Use clear, specific language, and ask the child to repeat the instructions to be sure the child focused on what you said and knows what is expected.

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Use of these activities should be directed by a qualified therapist.

Pre-referral Interventions for Classroom Difficulties

The following interventions should be attempted for several weeks (4-6) before referring a student for an occupational and/or physical therapy evaluation.

Attention (relates to Hearing, General Intelligence, and Motor Abilities domains)

- Decrease environmental distractions by minimizing clutter in the classroom (such as cluttered walls and bulletin board).
- Keep materials out of sight by placing them in closets, cabinets, etc.
- Close the classroom windows and doors during work periods to decrease outside noises and movement.
- You can also have the child sit away from windows and doors to minimize outside noises and movement.
- Have the child sit close to the teacher so the teacher can cue the child when he/she needs to focus on a task.
- When giving verbal directions, use simple cues and less verbiage. Ask the child to repeat your instructions to ensure he/she understands the directions that were given.
- You can also stand close to child when giving instructions. To ensure the child has your attention, you can place your hands on his shoulders and give slight downward pressure through the shoulders, then give your instructions.
- Carpeting the floors can decrease noise levels.
- For children who are distracted visually, place a carrel (some are made of cardboard) around the child's desk.
- Allowing the child to wear headphones while the child is doing concentrated work may help block out extraneous noises.
- Give the child small increments of work with breaks in between to help child remain focused.
- The child may need movement breaks (you can send child to office with blank message to "deliver" to the office or to another teacher, be the teacher's helper within the classroom and pass out papers, etc.).
- Incorporate music into activities, whenever possible.

SENSORY ACCOMMODATION SUGGESTIONS

STUDENT'S NAME _____ GRADE _____

TEACHER _____ SCHOOL YEAR _____

Please check below as appropriate for this student.

THIS CHILD'S LEARNING STYLE IS:

Visual

Auditory

Kinesthetic

HIS/HER SENSORY STYLE IS:

Seeker

Bystander

Avoider

TO MAKE DESK WORK EASIER

- Provide desk closest to teacher
- Provide alternate desk away from group activities
- Assign desk at front of class
- Adjust desk to child's height (correct placement is child's feet on floor/stool with elbows resting on table)
- Provide rubber band around chair legs for child's feet
- Use alternate seating options; ball, knee chair, move-and-sit, disc-o-sit or air cushion
- Allow child to stand
- Allow child use of weighted lap pad
- Allow frequent breaks

FOR SITTING IN A GROUP

- Allow child to sit on a carpet square
- Mark child's spot on carpet with tape
- Allow child to use chair or beanbag
- Seat child closest to teacher
- Seat child at edge of group
- Seat child at back of group
- Seat child at front of group

- Allow use of handheld fidget toys/manipulatives
- Allow child to sub-vocalize
- Allow child to change position as needed (from knees, to straight legs, to criss/cross, etc)

FOR WRITING

- Provide a pencil grip (specify kind _____)
- Provide angled writing desk or slant board
- Always provide lined paper or specialized paper
- Provide visual instructions for common written tasks
- Assist with brainstorming for written work
- Help organize thoughts for long writing tasks
- Give extra class time to finish
- Allow the option to finish at home without penalty
- Provide a list of common words and their correct spelling at desk
- Allow dictation to a scribe
- Allow assistive technology (specify kind _____)
- Allow child to dictate ideas into a tape recorder, then scribe his/her own words later or at home
- Warm hands up with proprioceptive work, such as manipulating clay or hand exercises, before writing begins (good for whole class)

FOR READING

- Allow child to read out loud
- Give child a book mark to hold place and help to follow along while reading
- Minimize visual distractions on the page
- Allow child to move/change position/take breaks

FOR CLASSWORK

- Allow child to move to a quieter area/out in hallway
- Repeat instructions to child 1:1
- Allow child to take work to Resource Room
- Provide visual instructions
- Cover page to show only 1-2 problems at a time

FOR HOMEWORK

- Allow extra time to complete assignments
- Give modified assignments that require less writing
- Give modified assignments that require less reading
- Give option of drawing in lieu of writing
- Allow work to be typed
- Allow work to be scribed
- Allow work to be modified at the parent's discretion
- Decrease amount of work required

FOR TRANSITIONS

- Prepare student ahead of time verbally or with a timer
- Follow schedule as accurately as possible
- Allow child to bring a "transition toy" with them
- Give child something to carry with them
- Have child be the "door holder"
- Have child be the "caboose" (last in line)
- Have child be the "leader" (first in line)
- Remind child to keep his/her hands to themselves
- Remind child about "personal space bubble"

FOR RECESS

- Do not take recess away for mis-behavior in class
- Offer good proprioceptive options such as monkey bars, rock wall climbing, or digging

FOR HEAVY WORK (*Push/Pull/Lift/Carry = "Heavy Work"*) – REGULAR ACCESS ALL DAY

- Allow child to re-shelve books
- Allow child to rearrange chairs/desks
- Allow child to open and close doors
- Allow child to hold signs
- Allow child to wear weighted back pack
- Allow child to pull the lunch wagon
- Allow child to push adult in a wheeled chair
- Allow child to wipe down tables
- Allow child to carry books to/from the office/library
- Allow child to carry Xerox paper to/from copy room

FOR SENSORY BREAKS

- Make child "classroom messenger"
- Allow child to pass out papers
- Allow child frequent trips to the bathroom or drinking fountain as needed
- Sing songs that encourage movement
- Encourage whole class stretching
- Allow child access to sensory tub, sand, beans, rice
- Do chair pushups or tailor sit pushups as a class

TIPS FOR GENERAL SENSORY SUCCESS

- This child is very sensitive to smells
- This child is very sensitive to touch: Please DO NOT TOUCH HIM/HER
- Allow modifications to art activities with possible use of tools to increase participation if sensitive to touch

- * Keep visual distractions in the room to a minimum
- * Play calming music in the background
- * Give child warnings before a fire drill or other bells
- * Explain false alarms to child when applicable
- * Provide 'Quite Chill' out space, under a desk, in a corner where they can be alone and safe
- * Allow noise-canceling head phones
- * Allow gum chewing, hard candy, or other food
- * Allow water bottle w/straw at desk or other chewy
- * Allow fidget toys
- * Post visual routine in classroom

Please share this child's 504 with all para-educators in contact with this child

This child is on a special diet, you can support this by:

This child needs a modified dress code as follows:

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