

Learning in the Classroom

DESCRIPTION

Many children can find being in the classroom environment difficult. They may be affected by sensory information such as sights and sounds and movement finding it difficult to achieve the correct level of attention and arousal. These things can affect the child's ability to learn.

HELPFUL HINTS

Arousal Levels:

- For the student who becomes over aroused by the classroom environment provide quiet, "time out" spaces to help the child to regroup and become organized such as a reading corner behind a bookshelf, under a table with pillows, or a bean bag chair in a quiet corner.
- For the student who finds it difficult to sit still provide regular movement breaks throughout the day.
- For the student that seems less alert, include rolling, swinging or twirling in physical education activities (ropes, tire swings, merry-go-rounds). Jumping on a mini-trampoline or bouncing on a therapy ball can also help regulate alertness.



Sensitivities:

Touch

- Allow the child to stand at the end of the line.
- Arrange the classroom seating to minimize the risk of being jostled and bumped by classmates (i.e. have the child's desk either near the teacher or at the back of the room).
- When planning an art activity be aware that materials such as glue, finger paints, clay, paper maché, etc, may cause the child to have an aversive response). Using tools (i.e. hammer, paint brush, etc) may help the child participate more fully.

Sounds

- A classroom with a rug or carpet will help decrease extraneous noises.
- A quiet area with headphones may enable the student to concentrate. This area may also need to be free from visual distraction.
- When giving directions wait for quiet before details are given to allow all children to focus.



- Some children need a question or instruction broken down to help them focus. After saying the student's name, wait for eye contact before giving the next short instruction or information. Ask the child to repeat the instruction.
- Verbal and written directions for task may be beneficial.
- Try to forewarn the child of any loud noises before they occur (i.e. bells/fire alarms).
- Have the child sit near the classroom teacher to facilitate the child's ability to attend to directions and tasks.

Visual

- Keep visual (e.g. art projects on the wall, bulletin boards, hanging projects), and auditory distractions (e.g. chatter), to a minimum to help facilitate the child's attention to classroom instructions.
- Commercial screens are available but classroom furniture may help to provide quiet areas to work. These spaces should have a work surface and chair at the right height for the child with side screening to minimize distractions. These may also be used as 'time out' areas from the busy classroom when your child is over loaded with auditory and visual information.
- Reduce visual distractions around and on the child's desk, e.g. bright posters or mobiles. Minimise equipment in work area.
- Keep whiteboard information clear and concise.
- Use highlighters/ to draw attention to key points.
- Try a frame or window to cover all unnecessary information on a page when the student is practicing copying or reading.
- Enlarge the print the child is copying, provide a desktop copy as needed.

