

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT

Attention and Concentration



To be able to concentrate, we have to block out external stimuli such as noises and other people in the world around us and remain focused on the important information at that time. Having the ability to sustain concentration is vital in allowing us to repeatedly practice actions and develop skills.

Suggested Strategies

- Having a clear routine will help with preparation and focus. Use visual timetables or “now and next” visual to support this.
- Set a timeframe for activities to be completed within. A visual timer can be beneficial to keep on task. Initially the timer may distract, however the novelty will wear off.
- Allow heavy work activities and movement prior to tasks requiring concentration. Activities that encourage a pushing or pulling movement provide feedback to the muscles to help feel calm. For example, chair/wall push ups, marching on the spot, animal walks, jumping on the spot.
- Break down instructions into smaller parts e.g. 1 or 2 parts at a time. Asking an instruction to be repeated to you, is helpful to see what has been heard and if further support is needed.
- Allow regular movement breaks and incorporate these into the child’s day, giving a change of scene to revitalise your child.
- Allow access to a sports cap water bottle to use throughout the day as this also provides heavy work input and important hydration.
- Use different coloured trays, pencil boxes and/or desk tidies to keep belongings organised and reduce the need to search for equipment.
- Trial a small discreet fidget toy to see if this help with concentration: e.g. fidget toys such as a tangle or a key ring.
- Consider the environment to maximise attention e.g. noise levels, where you complete activities that require attention e.g. not facing out of a window or near large visual input.
- Raise self esteem and confidence with praise and encouragement for each task that your child accomplishes or attempts to accomplish.

Together with you, in your local community