

Maintaining Concentration and Focus

Move / Motor

- Schedule periods of concentration followed by a movement activity.
- Encourage 10-15 minutes of physical activity. Go for a walk around the block, shoot some hoops, go for a quick bike ride, etc.
- Avoid asking a child to stay indoors as a negative consequence.
- Ask a child to run errands (deliver a note to office, sharpen pencil, etc)

Oral

- Crunchy foods such as popcorn, carrots, nuts, pretzels and pickles.
- Chewy foods such as raisins, bagels, chunks of cheese, licorice, gummy bears.
- Suck on hard candy.
- Drink from a straw (exercise water bottle).
- Allow gum (if possible) with the rule that “if it is seen or heard, it gets thrown away.” Some children need more than one piece of gum to be effective. If they are pulling the gum out of their mouth or playing with it, they need tactile input – (see ideas under touch)

Touch / Tactile

- Fidgeting and holding objects such as koosh balls, squishy balls, paper clips, flexible straws, or stuffed animals.

Look / Visual

- Consider variations in lighting, color and paper.
- Vary using pen / ink and pencil.
- Limit visual distractions; activity in the room and television.
- Post daily schedule with pictures.
- Use carpet squares or taped area to reinforce personal space in seating area.
- Minimize amount of toys and decorations in the environment.
- Seat child away from windows or doors to minimize visual distractions.

Listen / Auditory

- Limit auditory distractions; work in a quiet environment.
- Allow child to listen to calming music.
- Allow background noise if it is calming to the child.
- Have child wear earplugs/headphones if they are sensitive to sounds.
- Make eye contact when speaking with child.