

Strategies to assist in Focusing on Tasks:

1. When giving instructions or directions to the student, first establish eye contact. Limit instructions to one or two steps.
2. Avoid seating the student near distractions such as noises in the hallway, an open door, noisy clocks or air conditioner vents, activities outside a window, the pencil sharpener, high traffic areas, etc. Allow headphones to eliminate distracting sounds.
3. As much as possible, establish a schedule or predictable routine for the student. The resulting increased structure helps many students focus on the current task rather than wonder what will happen next. The student should be forewarned of deviations from the schedule.
4. Do not give the student a wide variety of choices to make. Instead, have him/her choose from two or three options.
5. So long as it does not interfere with classroom management, allow the student to make minor modifications to the environment. Consider seating the student at a study carrel that he/she can decorate.
6. Inattentive students sometimes have perceptual difficulties. Make certain that all written material is written clearly and legibly. Consider enlarging assignments on the copy machine for the student.
7. Use proximity techniques to help the student stay on task.
8. To help the student manage the pace of work, regularly announce how much time is left to complete an assignment, and how far along in the assignment the student should be.
9. If the student becomes restless, find an opportunity for to get up and move around. Send him/her on an errand, make a delivery, clean out the pencil sharpener, water plants, etc.
10. As much as possible, involve several of the student's senses when presenting information. Typically, this will involve speaking while presenting information visually, but do not overlook the senses of touch, taste, and smell. Present information in an active and involved manner rather than a passive manner.
11. Consider using humor to increase the student's attentiveness.
12. Teach to the student's strengths.
13. Relate lessons to activities or interests that the student easily identifies with.
14. Use informal behavioral contracts to encourage sustained effort. For example, after working continuously for a certain amount of time, the student will be allowed to engage in a favored activity for a short while.
15. All students become inattentive when they are upset, agitated, or physically uncomfortable. Allow the student to take appropriate measures to increase both physical and emotional comfort levels.