

## Auditory Strategies for Attention

Some children need more **auditory** input to attend. These children may miss important details or instructions that are presented verbally. They may not respond when the teacher calls on them, or they may find ways to generate their own noise to stay focused (humming, singing, tapping, and making strange noises). For these children, try:

1 || Making up songs or rhymes to bring attention to a task (e.g. instead of telling a child to get dressed and then brush his teeth, make up a song to grab his attention and help him remember what he's supposed to do; make up songs and rhymes to help the child learn and remember academic concepts)

2 || Having the child repeat instructions or important information back to you

3 || Including breaks throughout the day with **active movement songs** and music

4 || Sensory breaks using **musical toys**

5 || Exposure to games and apps that teach concepts using music and sound

6 || Use your body to build sound into learning (e.g. clapping out syllables of words, stomping feet to count out the days on the calendar, snapping fingers while counting by 10s)

## Visual Strategies for Attention

Some children need more **visual** input to help them attend. They may miss instructions that are written on the page or barely notice the visual details in their surroundings. They may lose interest and focus on visual activities like reading. For these children, try:

- 7 || Using learning materials that are bold, bright, and colorful
- 8 || Working or playing on a brightly colored surface
- 9 || Highlighting or using color to draw attention to important details on worksheets and in books
- 10 || Work and play on the computer or tablet using programs and apps that incorporate movement and color
- 11 || Visual cues like sticker charts, picture schedules, and checklists
- 12 || Visual learning activities like: word searches, hidden picture pages, color by number pages, word scrambles
- 13 || Learning activities that incorporate visual discrimination (sorting, finding which one is different)
- 14 || Learning activities on a light table
- 15 || Sensory breaks with visual activities like sensory bottles or seek and find bottles filled with dry rice and small objects to find

## Tactile Strategies for Attention

Many children are best able to pay attention when their **tactile systems** are engaged. These kids are hands-on learners who love to touch and be touched. For these kids try:

- 16 || Learning and play with manipulatives and hands-on materials rather than pencil and paper (e.g. building with Legos for math, stringing beads to learn about patterns, adapting worksheets to make them into a cut-and-paste format rather than written)

17 || Combining learning materials with tactile bins (e.g. digging for math flash cards or letter magnets in a bin filled with sand or dry rice)

18 || Incorporating vibration with tools like ARK's **Tran-Quill**

**Writing Kit**. This is a textured, vibrating writing utensil that draws kids' attention to writing, drawing, and coloring by providing tactile feedback. It comes with pen, pencil, and crayon attachments as well as **Bite-n-Chew** tips for kids who also need some extra oral sensory input during learning activities.

19 || Adapting learning materials to incorporate texture. Try tracing over text using puffy paint or a hot glue gun. Cut letters and numbers out of textured paper or sandpaper for little hands to touch.

20 || Tactile sensory breaks that provide deep pressure (bear hugs, smushes with pillows or beanbag chairs) and **play with tactile materials like play dough and shaving cream**

21 || **Fidget toys** for kids to hold and play with in their hands when they have to listen or pay attention for extended periods of time

## Movement Strategies for Attention

Many, if not most, children need to MOVE to attend and to learn! It's one of the main messages we preach here at The Inspired Treehouse. Children were simply not built to sit for extended periods of time, so the best way to engage little minds is by moving little bodies! For children who benefit from extra movement throughout the day, try:

22 || Offering frequent changes in positions. One method is to move children through work stations in the classroom to complete a task at each station. Allow children to complete classwork or homework while sitting or lying on the floor with a clipboard, sitting on a beanbag chair, or even lying under the table with their work taped to the

underside of the table!

23 || Offering different seating options that provide movement such as inflatable seat cushions, rocking chairs, ball chairs, etc.

24 || Building movement into learning whenever possible. Set math fact flashcards out on the floor and make it a relay race to run, skip, jump, or gallop to pick one up and give an answer! Use body movements to help kids remember **letter sounds**. Tape sight word cards at various heights on the wall and have the child jump to touch them as you read them one by one.

25 || Including **movement breaks** regularly throughout the day and **during transitions**. Try movement breaks with **vestibular** activities like swinging, rolling, **balancing**, and rocking or **proprioceptive** activities that require movement against resistance (heavy work).

## Oral Sensory and Olfactory Strategies for Attention

Some kids are able to attend better when they receive sensory input that appeals to the **oral sensory** and **olfactory** systems. Certain smells, tastes, and textures have been associated with more attentive behavior in children. For kids who benefit from oral and olfactory input, try:

26 || Chewing tools like ARK's **Y-Chews**, or **Grabbers**, which also come in scented versions to target the oral sensory *and* olfactory systems at the same time!

27 || Adding chewing accessories to pencils, like ARK's colorful and durable **Krypto-Bite Chewable Pencil Toppers**.

28 || Wearable chewing tools to make it easy for kids to get the oral

sensory input they need whenever they need it. Try ARK's **Krypto-Bite Chewable Gem Necklace** or the cool **Brick Stick Textured Chew Necklace**.

29 || Snacks! Chewy snacks and treats like bagels, gum, and fruit leathers are typically associated with calmer, more attentive behavior in children. Sucking against resistance can also help children focus and organize themselves. Try sucking a thicker liquid like a smoothie through a straw or drink out of a sports bottle. Crunchy, cold, and sour snacks and drinks like orange wedges, grapefruit, or lemonade can help to promote more alert, active behavior for kids who appear sluggish or tired. Learn more about **oral sensory snacks** here.

30 || Incorporating smells using oils, scented doughs, scented sensory bins, and other **activities to explore the olfactory system**. Stronger smells (e.g. peppermint) often correspond with more alert and active behavior while softer smells (e.g. lavender) are usually associated with calmer, more relaxed behavior.

Have you ever wondered about the **difference between a sensory diet and a movement break**? These terms are often used interchangeably, but they are definitely not the same thing! Learn more and grab the free handout at the link above!

[https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/paying-attention-30-sensory-strategies/?utm\\_id=8%2F6%2F25](https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/paying-attention-30-sensory-strategies/?utm_id=8%2F6%2F25)