



## Lawns Park Primary School and Nursery **A Quick Guide to Attention &**

### **Concentration Difficulties**

#### **Why might a CYP present with attention and concentration difficulties?**

Every pupil is unique, and it is highly important for key adults to get to know the CYP's strengths, asking curious questions to support with identification of the reasons for attention and concentration being a barrier to learning. Potential questions include: Does the CYP have an underlying neurodevelopmental condition e.g. ADHD, ASC? Has the CYP experienced trauma? Is there underlying anxiety (home/school related), frustration and/ or sensory issues? Is the learning being provided too challenging or too easy? Could there be difficulties accessing the curriculum due to language and memory issues? Physical factors such as lack of sleep, hearing, eyesight, diet, or hunger also need to be considered. Triangulating evidence from observation and parent/CYP voice may help staff to build a holistic picture of the situation and identify potential causes and solutions.

#### **Implications for a pupil**

- Difficulties beginning and completing tasks, taking too long on tasks, forgetting to complete their homework or bring equipment to class and requiring continual prompting are all common.
- The pupil may be highly distractible and not respond the first time you say their name, may forget instructions and often need them repeating.
- Working independently is a challenge and the pupil may be reliant on adult support.
- They may struggle to sit still, be fidgety, chatty, or perhaps daydream.
- There can be difficulties with self-regulation; the pupil may distract others and engage in disruptive behaviour.
- It may affect their emotional state; they may appear moody, irritable, or stressed.

- Relationships with peers and teachers may be affected and the pupil may come to dislike school. Ultimately their learning is compromised.

#### **How to help - top tips**

1. Is the pupil ready to learn? Depending on the reason for their inattention this might include attending to basic needs e.g., hunger, or the completion of sensory activities to aid regulation.
2. Start the lesson with an engaging activity.
3. Adapt learning tasks into small, well-defined steps and present the information sequentially.
4. Keep language simple – instructions should be clear and short. Using simple language such as “do this” to precede a demonstration may increase their ability to replicate actions.
5. Modelling or demonstrating activities will allow the pupil to learn visually and to improve their recall. Expect them to do the activity immediately after being modelled to them.
6. Use visual cues such as visual timetables and “now” and “next” cards.
7. Use the pupil's first name before giving instructions.
8. Give positive reinforcement through praise, attention, and rewards after each step.
9. Use a cue for reminding them to focus on the activity e.g., a special hand gesture, or coloured cards, traffic light system, or thumbs up.
10. Decrease sensory distractions in the environment – consider noise, lighting, clutter etc.
11. Seating arrangements, e.g. sitting at the front of the class to enable good eye contact, and facing the board, sit with positive role model.
12. Offer regular movement breaks.
13. A fidget toy or ‘chewellery’ may be beneficial for some pupils but not all. The use of an air-filled wedge-shaped cushion, which allows the pupil some movement in their seat can also be beneficial.

#### **Further advice and support**

##### **Useful Websites:**

[Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust - Information for Schools](#)

[Attention and Concentration Information  
Sheet \(nhsggc.org.uk\)](http://nhsggc.org.uk)