

Cognition and Learning

What you might see:

You might see a child who:

has an inability to attend to a conversation for an expected amount of time.

Is unable to get rid of irrelevant information or focus on the important part of a task.

Finds it hard to focus on a given task for an age-appropriate amount of time.

lacks or quickly loses motivation.

Attention and Concentration

What you can try:

- Review the learning environment using a sensory or distraction checklist; reduce visual clutter and background noise.
- Chunk text or tasks into short, achievable sections with clear stopping points to sustain engagement.
- Present information visually (e.g., comic strips, diagrams, manipulatives).
- Review seating and proximity to minimise distractions and maximise adult support when needed.
- Use movement or sensory breaks strategically to support self-regulation and focus.
- Build in variation and interactive elements – short bursts of activity, practical tasks, or opportunities for pupil choice.
- Explore underlying factors (e.g., tiredness, hunger, anxiety, hearing or vision issues, ACES) that may affect concentration Use 'Working / Not Working' charts with the pupil to explore motivation and barriers.
- Link learning tasks to interests to boost intrinsic motivation and sustained effort.
- Use positive reinforcement and specific praise for on-task behaviours rather than focusing on inattention.
- Use the child's first name to cue child into a conversation.
- Use prompts such as task boards, checklists, reminder apps.