

Creating A Learning Environment That Enhances Attention

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Children with attention disorders demonstrate specific types of distractibility when placed in a learning situation. The chart below describes some common forms of distractibility and describes their components. Suggestions of how to create a calming learning environment are given. When a distractible child is placed in a calming learning environment, attention can be enhanced. For more information on the effects of calming learning environments on attention disorders, call us and ask to speak with a therapist. Therapists work with children who have difficulty learning for a variety of reasons. Therapy can help children with attention disorders to organize themselves, learn better study habits, and process information more effectively.

Form of Distractibility	Description	Suggestions
Visual	Child stares, looks around aimlessly, focuses on irrelevant sights, notices things no one else notices	Reduce sensory stimulation: remove posters, calendars and other visual distractions from walls around the work space.
Auditory	Child shows weak sustained listening, focuses on background noises, requires verbal repetition often	Create a workplace that is calm and quiet: close doors and windows during work periods to shut out extra sounds.
Tactile	Child can't resist things that have the potential to be handled, fingers constantly exploring, touching.	Clear the work area of all materials except those that are in use. Keep other materials out of sight in closed shelves, cupboards, or closets.
Future-oriented	Child is constantly looking ahead to what is coming next or happening tonight or next weekend.	Set up a regular schedule and keep a copy in sight. If changes have to be made, discuss them in advance.
Social	Child has trouble "filtering out" peers, keeps watching, possible provoking others.	Break up work periods into smaller time spans, randomly reward child when focused during these short periods