

Handy Classroom Modifications

Here are some options for the child who is struggling with their work at school or having difficulties in the classroom. Presenting options to the family for approval and guidance is the first step, discussing the situation with the classroom teacher is the next step. Most of these suggestions require minimal demand for those involved.

Modify the way material is presented

- Break the assignment into shorter tasks.
- Reduce the number of concepts introduced at one time.
- Monitor the rate at which material is presented (does the teacher talk too fast or present too much at once?)
- Make arrangements for homework to reach home with clear, concise directions.

Modify the environment

- Seat child near good student or near teacher's desk.
- Provide opportunities for movement for kids who are hyperactive.
- Alternate quiet and active time, space short work periods with breaks or change of task.

Modify time demands

- Increase amount of time allowed to complete assignments/tests.
- Reduce the amount of work or length of tests (as opposed to allowing more time).

Modify materials

Visual Motor Integration

- Avoid large amounts of written work, both in class and homework.
- Set realistic and mutually agreed upon expectations for neatness.
- Avoid pressure of speed and accuracy.

Visual Processing

- Keep written assignments and workspace free from extraneous/irrelevant distractions.
- Go over visual tasks with students and make sure they have clear understanding of assignment BEFORE beginning.

Language Processing

- Simplify and slow the rate of presentation—keep statements short and to the point—paraphrase material in simple language—keep sentence structure simple—avoid use of abstract language and familiarize student with any new vocabulary words BEFORE the lesson.
- Alert student's attention to key points with such phrases as "This is important—listen carefully".

Organization

- Establish daily routine and attempt to maintain it.
- Make clear rules and be consistent in enforcing them.
- To prevent misplaced assignments, provide student with a place where he can immediately turn in his work.
- Set aside specific time for cleaning desks, lockers, organizing notebooks, etc.

Manage Behavior in the Classroom

- Make expectations for good classroom behavior clear—rules and consequences should be posted.
- Use a prompting cue (visual, auditory, or physical) to facilitate a given response
- (for example, finger to the ear for listening, finger on mouth for not talking).

Please note...

Making changes can be a difficult thing to present. Be respectful to those involved, use non-threatening language, be open for honest communication and be ready to compromise and collaborate. Remember, we're all working on the same goal: to improve the life of the child.

See the Behavior Toolboxes at www.trainingteams.org for more tips.