

Sensational OT Tip of the Month

Distracted Child

Do you know children that ...

1. seem to miss what is going on in class?
2. tend to daydream or drift off during instructional time?
3. notice everything going on around them, even what others do not notice?

These children are may be distracted by internal or external stimuli. Their thoughts, others actions or the environment can limit the ability to focus.

Sensational Ideas for Distraction

1. Modify placement in room to decrease distraction during group or individual work times for the child that notices everything. Evaluate the sensory environment of the room – too visually busy, too noisy?
2. Give heavy work or movement breaks such as wall pushups or stretches between tasks to help activate the child that drifts off.
3. Have the child repeat instructions to ensure that they were engaged during the explanation of a task.
4. Confirm that basic needs have been met such as eating and sleeping and the child is not sick. This is especially true if it is a new behavior pattern.

Ask the occupational therapist at your school if you are interested in more information about the variety of reasons a child may appear distracted and possible sensory strategies to help with focus.

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