

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Managing Ourselves: Staying Focused

Overview:

Focusing is being able to pay attention even when there are distractions, other things that we might want to look at or play with. If we can practice focusing, we can focus for longer amounts of time. Focusing is important because it is the first step in learning and even practicing good listening skills which is needed to communicate with people around us.

Objectives:

To learn how focusing is the first step in learning

Child Goals:

I can focus and keep my mind on my work

Vocabulary:

Focus
Distractions

Learn- 5 minutes

We pay attention using our mind which is like a muscle. At first you may not be able to pay attention for very long but the more you practice, the more you will be able to pay attention. Paying attention to only one thing might be hard when there is a lot of other things going on around us but with practice you can become better at it. Be kind to yourself about how long you are able to focus

Practice paying attention to something for just five minutes. Here are the steps to follow:

- Look at or Listen to what you are focusing on.
- Keep focusing for 5 minutes.
- If you think of something else, it is ok but bring your thoughts back as soon as you can.
- Keep practicing !

Practice-10 minutes

This activity provides a chance for students to practice their focusing and listening skills.

Begin the game by asking your child to put their head down and that they will be just listening for certain words to know when they will be asked to focus. The word “focus” will be the cue to start to focus. When you say the word focus, your child should raise their hand to show that they are paying attention to you.

The cue to start the focusing game are the following words: “Ready ? , focus”. Help your child practice beginning to focus by saying the words “Ready, focus” 3 times before starting the game.

Say the series of words below. Begin saying them slowly allowing your child enough time to start to focus.

Series of words:

1-hocus, pocus, focus- (your child should raise hand)

2- hocus, pocus, hocus, focus

3- hocus, pocus, hocus, pocus, focus

4- focus, focus, hocus, pocus, focus, focus

You can also change the words and decide to make the cue word that your child has to listen for, something else such as this for example:

Cue word: Ice cream

Cupcake, cupake ice cream

Cupcake, cupcake, cupcake, ice cream

And so on – adding one word to increase the length of words they need to listen to until you say the “cue word”

Note: During school work when you notice that your child’s attention is not fully on their work, suggest a brief 5-minute break away from the work. An ideal break may involve some short physical activity like dancing while listening to a favorite song. Warn your child that the break will be over in one minute and they will have to return to their previous activity.

Deeper Dive: 5 to 10 minutes

Playing a memory game, either one you have at home or by using the attached cards can help children further practice their visual memory skills and strategies for focusing.

Note: Start out with providing a few pairs of cards and then begin to add additional pairs as they become better at the game.

Have your child mix the cards up and place them face down on where you are playing. Then the child should take turns turning over two cards. If the cards match, the child will be able to keep the pair. If they do not match they have to try again on their next turn. The goal of the game is to obtain the most pairs of cards.

Hocus-Pocus: Focus!

Listen.



Focus a
Short Time.



Bring
Thoughts Back.



Look.



Practice.
Practice.
Practice.



Hocus Pocus Cards:





Hocus-Focus: Focus Cards

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Resources:

[Brain Games for Focusing](#)

[How to start SEL at home](#)

[Strategies to Increase Motivation and Focus By Rethinked.com](#)

Literacy Resource:

Llewellyn, Claire (2001) Why Should I Listen.

The boy at the center of this book finds it hard to listen, and as a result he gets into all sorts of trouble. He learns how it feels when people don't listen when he feels lonely and invisible when no one listens to him. At the end of the book, he tries harder to listen, and see that good things can happen when he is able to do so.

A reading of [Why Should I Listen?](#) on youtube.com

