Primary school strategies for children and young people who have difficulties with impulsivity, hyperactivity and attention

Please note that these strategies are just ideas – they will need to be trialled and tested to find what suits and benefits both the school staff
and the children and young people you are working with.

When providing instructions…

- Use **Now-Next** sentences (e.g. Now we're reading a book, next we're having a break)

- Provide **worksheets** - give one worksheet at a time, cut apart single worksheets into strips and break longer pieces of work into a series of smaller "chunks". It may help to underline key words and instructions or draw borders around the parts of the page that you want to emphasize. You could have them underline these words as you read the instructions out to them.

- After you've provided a task or instruction, ask them to **feedback and paraphrase** what the teacher has said. This will increase their comprehension and provide an opportunity to check for understanding.

- Promote **time on task**, rather than time off task. Having a visual timer on their desk will help them to understand how much time has passed. Let the child set their own time for how long they think a task would take and then get them to race against the timer.

When they're learning…

- If possible, **schedule** the most attention demanding tasks to be completed during the morning.

- Emphasize that part of the task is to **"check your work"**. This can help them to pause rather than completing the work and immediately handing it in. They may need instruction in how to check their work- if possible, have someone practice this with them.

- In assignments that require creative writing, it may help if they can dictate the words to someone rather than writing it down, or if they could present it in a **non-written** way.

- **Scaffold** the first few questions, by helping them to start with and then letting the child take over the rest by themselves. It may help to read out the first few questions to them to start with.

- **Minimize waiting times** - give them an activity to do whilst they are waiting for something, such as modelling clay, Lego, crosswords or colouring.

- Take **movement breaks** – You may want to do this with certain students, or with the whole class. They could: do jumping jacks, stretch their arms and legs, look out the window while seated for 30 seconds to see how many birds they can see, wiggle their toes for 20 seconds etc.

- Have **a place to unwind** and reset during the school day. This could be a place for sitting alone, using the computer or lego, taking a short walk, drawing, or modelling with clay. After they have taken the time to unwind and reset, they will be more likely to attend to their work.

- If they're trying to learn social skills, **break up social times** into ten minutes of activity, a ten minute check in with the teacher/playground supervisor, then another ten minute activity period.

- Assign a **classroom job** to build self-esteem and allow for activity breaks - Speak with the student(s) you want to assign jobs to and emphasize how important the job is and how much you'd value their involvement. This can be a great opportunity to give a lot of positive praise and attention and can help to build class cohesiveness, support and pride.

    For instance:

    Class Helper: completes odd jobs around the classroom

    Messenger: takes notes to the office or runs errands

    Librarian: keeps book shelves organized.

    Technician: turns on and shuts down lights

    Equipment Manager: keeps track of playground equipment

    Meteorologist: gives daily weather report to the class

    Mail Person: passes out notes to go home with students

    Classroom Cleaner: erases the board, cleans erasers etc.

    Line Leader: leads the class to lunch, specials, assemblies, etc.

    Substitute: performs jobs for absent students

When managing behaviour…

- Have **classroom rules** on display and refer back to these often.

- If a certain behaviour is unwanted, **being specific about the behaviour** and what its impact is can help them to recognise and understand why they should or shouldn't do it again – this conversation can be a huge learning opportunity! For example, instead of "You didn't play nicely with Tom earlier", specify the behaviour by saying "When you took the toy off Tom, did you see that he became upset?" Then, specify the behaviour you want them to do instead, such as "Next time, please can you ask Tom if you can play with his toy."

- Provide **small and immediate rewards**. If a student engages in a valued behaviour spontaneously during the day, they could receive a 'point' which can be accumulated and "cashed in" on a reward menu (e.g. for extra computer or social time, or to play with lego or clay). However, do remember that a nod, wink or smile can be incredibly rewarding and help to build their self-esteem!

- Some students respond to a **prearranged cuing system** with the teacher. In this system, the teacher gives a secret signal (e.g. stretches their arms in the air) or gives a phrase ("Remember, I'm looking for good listeners") when a specific unwanted behaviour occurs. This can remind the student of the wanted behaviour without having to directly call them out in front of other students.

- A **'share book'** that is passed between school staff and family can be a great tool. However, keeping this for positive behaviours only (however small) is vital for keeping the student engaged and motivated. Any unwanted behaviours that you want to share with the family can still be shared – but not in the share book.

When setting up the classroom…

- Some students find sitting at a **desk** constricting, which can result in defiance and a decrease in engagement. Changing their position or view can act as a 'reset' for their energy level, interest, and motivation. Could they do their work whilst standing, or sit down and use their chair as a desk? Or could they do their work in a separate section of the classroom, rotate their desk, or sit on the other side of their desk for a while? If they do want to move out of their seat, you could agree this boundary with them - e.g. they could walk to your desk and back, or walk around their desk, but they can't wander around the classroom.

- Experiment with their **seating** location. If you notice that your student is easily distracted by auditory or visual inputs, they may benefit from being seated near the back of the classroom, or with their back against the wall. That way they're able to watch and listen, but whilst still facing the teacher at the front of the class.

For more resources and videos, search for 'Cardiff and Vale Resilience Project' on YouTube and subscribe to our channel or follow this link:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK7a2I3twVLDZuis53tpUoQ

If you have any other questions you can contact the Resilience Project by email:
resilienceproject.CAV@wales.nhs.uk
or by contacting the Resilience Worker linked to your school.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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