

STUDY SKILLS - ADDRESSING ATTENTION PROBLEMS

In terms of attention, medical reasons should be ruled out, then behavior addressed. Positive rewards for doing well (praise, limited treats) work better than punishment. Sometimes negative consequences (time out, no TV, loss of privileges) are needed.

The body has memory. This allows us to repeat actions without thinking about them. Doing the same thing, at the same time, in the same place, each day, reinforces body memory and makes the task easier.

Time:

Whenever possible, schoolwork/homework should be done at the same time each day. Be aware of student being tired and breaking-up activity periods.

School – each activity should last 10-15 minutes for elementary students, 20-25 minutes for High School students. Change of activities keeps students attentive and interested. It also allows students the opportunity to learn in their best mode (visual, kinesthetic, audio).

Home – homework should be done at set time everyday – after getting home, before dinner, directly after dinner – NEVER just before going to bed! Taking into account the student being a morning, day, or night person...the optimal time would be right before or after dinner. This allows for play time with friends. Homework should allow for brief breaks in time...especially for younger students.

Place:

Whenever possible, homework should be done in the same place every day.

This should be:

- at a desk
- in a bedroom (with open door), home-office, or quiet place out of the 'traffic' and distractions of the house.
- remove all distractions – TV., computer, radio, iPod, etc.

Parental Supervision:

Parents should not do homework for student, but helping (especially with younger students) and showing interest improve student attention and student performance. Statements like: "show me how you do that", "let me see how you got that answer", or "I'd like to review the work when you are done" are helpful.

These are suggestions. They should be flexible and adapted to the individual and his/her family. Age is an important factor. Older students are able to and benefit from working together in groups.