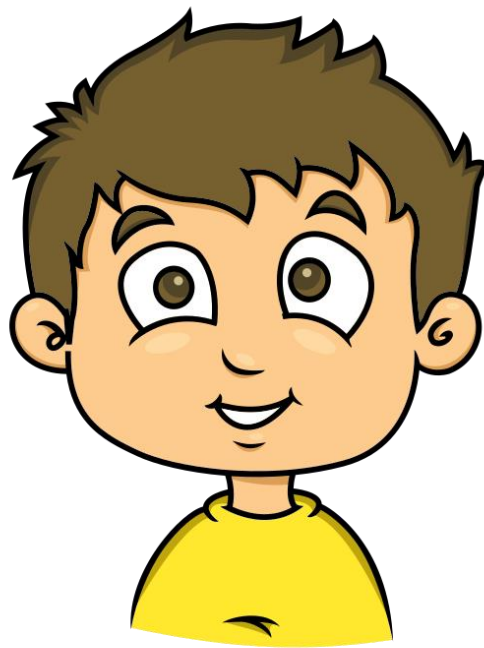


Attention Difficulties Resource Pack



**Reducing the impact of Attention
Difficulties in the classroom and
school**

Acknowledgements page

The following professionals have worked closely to develop and write these guidelines from inception through to their distribution in Lambeth Schools.

Amanda Foster	<i>Occupational Therapist</i>
Dr. Aoife Jenkinson	<i>Educational and Child Psychologist</i>
Dr Sadie Williams	<i>Clinical Psychologist</i>

We would like to acknowledge the work of the following:

- Felicity Jarvis – Administrative Officer – Occupational Therapy
- Riann Alex – Honorary Assistant Psychologist
- Louise Mercer – Assistant Psychologist

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of these guidelines for schools working with children with attention and behaviour difficulties, in particular Perry Savill of Kennington Park Academy.

With special thanks to Judy Archer for enabling this project.

With thanks for generous funding from the Lambeth Clinical Commissioning Group.

This is a practical working document based on the following theoretical frameworks:

- Executive Functioning
- Behaviour
- Emotional Regulation
- Sensory Processing
- Systems Theory

This Pack aligns with the following policies:

- [The 5-Year Forward Plan](#)
- [Local Transformation Plan](#)
- [Futures in Mind](#)
- [Every Child Matters](#)

Introduction to the Pack

This is a resource pack that can be used for children who find it difficult to concentrate, listen and sit still in class.

Do try using this pack before you refer to any child health or education service. This resource pack has been designed with easy-to-use strategy sheets.

How to use the Pack

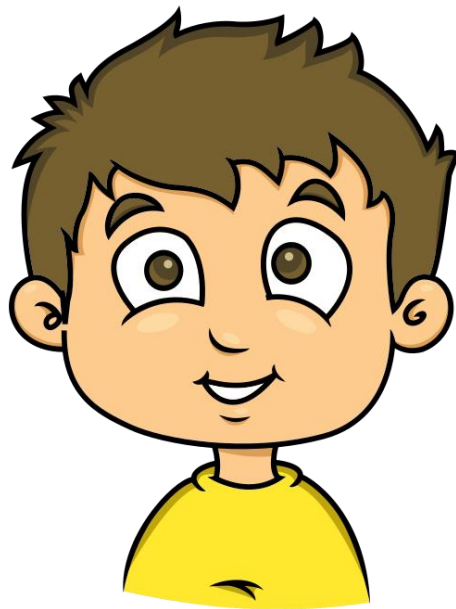
Before choosing a strategy sheet, read and complete the two sheets *Calm, Happy and Ready for the Classroom* and *All About Me*. These will give you relevant information.

The Index lists all the strategy sheets. These can be used in any order. For each sheet, find the relevant strategies you want to use; implement these and record any impact you notice.

Each strategy sheet is divided into three types of strategy: Easy, Medium, A bit more effort.

The table format is designed to allow easy-transfer to a Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) Support Plan.

Calm, happy
and ready for
the classroom.



Calm, Happy and Ready for the Classroom

When children have reduced concentration it can be difficult for everyone. The child with concentration difficulties struggles and the other children can become unsettled. It can be difficult to manage this situation as a member of teaching staff. Stress levels can build in the classroom which can be difficult for staff and for the children.

It is very important that everyone is helped to feel calm and happy. Children with attention difficulties especially need to feel calm as when they feel stressed their difficulties can increase.

When we feel calm and happy we can concentrate and listen better. We find it easier to sit still and to problem-solve. We are friendlier to people around us.

Support for Teaching Staff

It can be very challenging supporting a child with attention difficulties. Children with attention difficulties can be disorganised and it can be a challenge to meet their needs while trying to help the whole class to be calm and ready for learning.

It is essential that you have time to collect your thoughts so that you can plan next best steps.









- Do you have a mentor or colleague that you respect? Can you meet with them to talk through planning and to review how things are going?
- What works for you in the classroom when you are feeling over loaded? Could you....
 - Give the whole class a movement break (**see Appendix 3**)
 - Listen with the class to music or watch a short film
 - Work with a small group only
- Give yourself time to feel calm, and then you will be better at problem-solving how to deal with the situation.
- The pressure of classroom teaching means we often forget to drink water and eat. Sometimes our sleep can be affected too. For both children and adults this has a significant impact on our attention and concentration.

Plotting the Child's Calm/ Happy Times and Stressful Times

Try plotting out on the graph below how your child is doing throughout the day. Three days in one week would make a good baseline.

When is the child you are concerned about calm and when are they struggling? Please see example below, and the *Regulation Chart Appendix 1* for a blank graph for you to use.

REGULATION CHART – example

<p>Very active(e.g. running around)</p> 						<p>Was calling out and sliding off chair</p> 	
<p>Just right and ready to learn</p> 			<p>Worked well in class</p> 				
<p>Low in energy</p> 	<p>Was day-dreaming, looking around</p> 						
<p>Time of day/lesson</p>	E.g. 9am	10am	11 am	12pm	Lunch	2pm	3pm

Using the information you collect, try to work out the following:

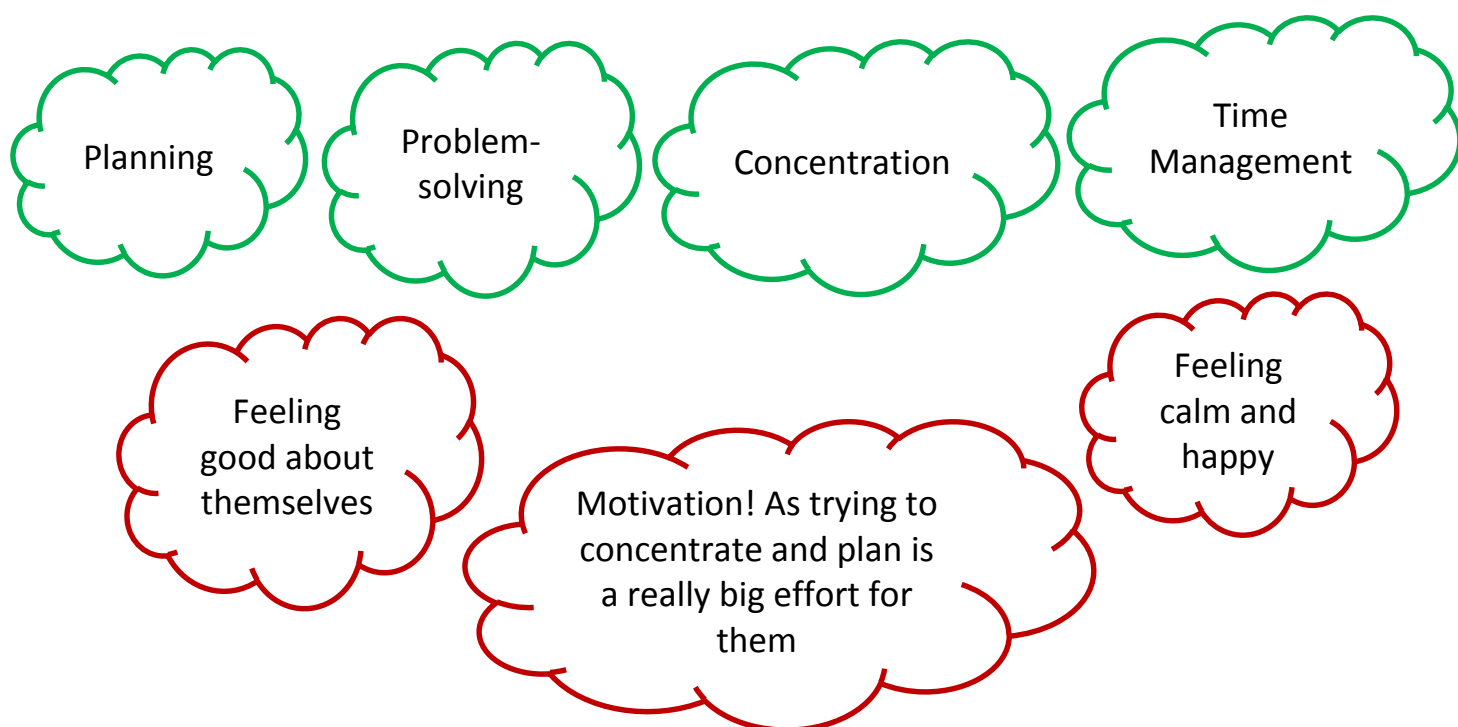
- The times of day that are difficult
- Times of day that are easier
- The lessons that are easier or harder
- Situations that might cause a child upset or to be withdrawn e.g. friendships, feeling a failure, difficulties at home that are upsetting.

The Calm Zone

Children with attention difficulties can quickly feel overloaded and stressed. They need lots of help to stay in the 'calm zone'.

Some children appear to behave badly when they are stressed; some children become withdrawn and less responsive.

To stay in the calm zone children with attention difficulties need help with:



Children with attention problems struggle cognitively with tasks that require planning and problem-solving. They are more susceptible to stress, physically and mentally. Some children appear inattentive because they are struggling with emotional and social problems. Other children may experience both cognitive and emotional challenges.

When children with attention problems become overloaded they need lots of help to be calm again.

We need to help them before they get stressed as well as helping them to calm down if things get too much.

The following sheets are designed to help children feel calm and organised in the classroom. We have included ideas to help with mental effort; the need to move and to feel calm in their bodies and ideas to help children to feel good about themselves.

Before using the strategy sheets, take time to complete the All About Me template on the following page.

Friends

Family

Health

All About Me
Think about the Child and things that may affect their attention

Other Agencies

Learning Ability

Other Concerns

Worries for Child and Family

9. Taking children on a school trip

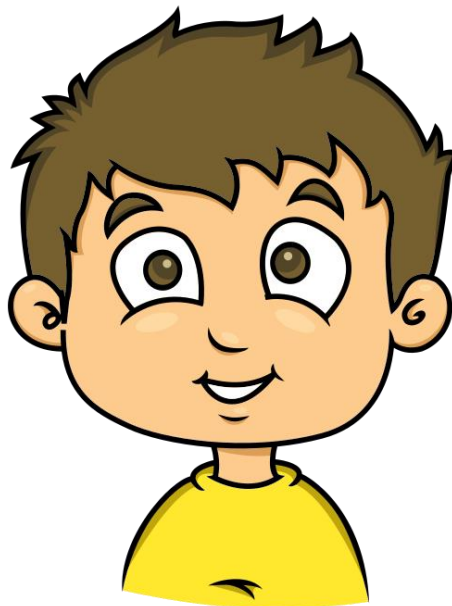
Be sure that you have read and completed 'Calm, happy and ready for the classroom' before choosing a strategy sheet.

1. Good sitting

8. Helping children to cope with strong feelings

Choose a Strategy Sheet

2. Good listening



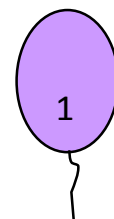
7. Helping children to keep friends and cope with playtimes

3. Following instructions and attending to work

6. Helping children to replace silly behaviour

5. Helping children to avoid calling out

4. Setting rules in the classroom



Good Sitting

Children with attention difficulties often find it hard to sit well in class. A number of things make sitting difficult. They may be distracted by all that is happening around them and this may make them feel disorganised. They may struggle with tasks that require planning and problem-solving. They may be finding it hard to sit still as their bodies need extra movement to help them to feel calm.

There are some children with attention difficulties who are sensitive to the feeling of touch on their skin. They may appear jumpy and upset when others unexpectedly touch them. They may become fidgety when they are asked to touch different textures. They may be distracted as their clothes feel uncomfortable.

If you feel the child has touch or other sensory sensitivities please refer to the **Sensory Sensitivity Appendix 2**

Easy strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the child to discuss Good Sitting in a constructive way – see <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a visual illustrating good sitting. Place this on the child's desk. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give the child a squeeze ball. (See Movement Break- Appendix 3). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put some theraband on the legs of the child's chair. (See Movement Break -Appendix 3). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the child to do tasks in the classroom that require movement e.g. handing out books, taking the register to the office, moving chairs. 		

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give the child a movement cushion. (See Movement break- Appendix 3). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise the child regularly when you see good sitting. You may have to do this quietly. Be clear with your praise e.g. " I really like the way you are sat close to the table". Some children may not respond well to praise (See Rewards and Praise- Appendix 4). 		

Medium strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the child again to discuss Good Sitting positively - review your sheet and change strategies if needed. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a visual illustrating good sitting. Place the visual somewhere discrete but in the child's eyeline, and point to this to prompt the child. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach the child to do movement activities at their desk. These can be done just before a sitting task or more regularly during a demanding cognitive task. (See Movement Break-Appendix 3). Photos of the activities can be laminated as prompts for teaching staff and the child. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the movement activities with the whole class before sitting activities. They can support attention in all children. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise the child regularly, but discretely when that is appropriate. Every time you see good sitting, be clear with your praise e.g." I really like the way you are sat close to the table". Some children may not respond well to praise (See Rewards and Praise- Appendix 4). 		

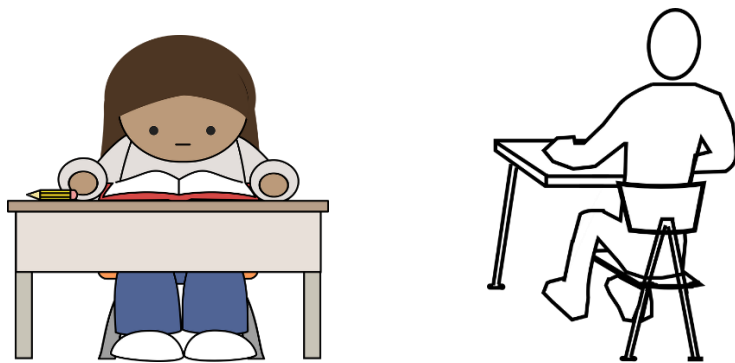
A bit more effort.....

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Regulation Chart Appendix 1 to get an idea of challenging times of the day. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using what you learned from the Regulation Chart, meet the child to discuss what might be happening at tricky times of the day. Use a new <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet to support these times particularly (see following page). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If effective, allow the child stand at the desk when working independently. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure that adult and child do the exercises together, take planned, intensive movement breaks away from the desk 3 to 4 times a day (start of day, mid-morning, lunchtime, mid-afternoon- See Movement Break -Appendix 3). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise the child regularly, every time you see good sitting, be clear with your praise e.g." I really like the way you are sat close to the table". Use rewards/tokens. Some children may not respond well to praise (See Rewards and Praise Appendix 4) 		

Good Sitting

Sometimes children find it hard to sit still in class. Even when they want to, sitting still can be really tricky. Some children move about in their seat and fiddle with things. Some children keep getting out of their seat. When children keep moving about it is difficult for the teacher and the class to concentrate. When children find it hard to sit still they get into trouble and then they don't feel happy in class.

My teacher would like me to do good sitting. Good sitting looks like this:



My teacher said that they are going to help me with good sitting by:

My teacher would like me to do this:

Child can stick on or draw a picture of good sitting.

Good Listening

Children with attention difficulties find it hard to listen well to their teachers. They are easily distracted and overwhelmed by things that are happening around them, for example other children moving and noises happening inside and outside of the classroom. They can find it hard to remember instructions with a number of steps. Children with these difficulties respond better if information is provided in a number of different ways. If the child finds it hard to understand the task they may opt out or behave disruptively to cope with feelings of anxiety and failure.

Easy strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit him/her at the front of the classroom, facing you. Check that you have the child's attention before you speak. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruct the whole class in the activity. As usual, write the points on the board in sequence. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise the child for good listening. Be descriptive- "I know you are listening as you are looking at me". Praise regularly when good listening occurs. Some children may not respond well to praise (See Rewards and Praise- Appendix 4). 		

Medium strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give the child some individual time, using the <i>Talking with the Child Sheet</i> below, to develop helpful strategies together. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure the child has had a movement break before sitting and listening. (See Movement Break- Appendix 3). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit the child on a cushion that will provide movement. (See Movement Break- Appendix 3). 		

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above, break verbal instruction down into steps written on the board. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separately summarise the main points again to the child. Emphasise key words and make sentences short. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give one piece of information at a time. Ask the child to read the board and to repeat back the instructions to you. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that you use a variety of teaching mediums. Have you considered: demonstration using real life items; role play; multi-sensory activities, IT, video? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use your voice in different ways, make it go up and down, try being a bit louder and softer. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise the child for good listening. Be descriptive- "I know you are listening as you are looking at me". Some children may need more discrete praise (See Rewards and Praise Appendix 4) 		

A bit more effort.....

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the <i>Regulation Chart</i> to plot the times the child listens well and the times they find difficult. (See Regulation Chart-Appendix 1). Look at the form to see if there is a pattern. Consider: Are there lessons that are easier than others, why is that? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the <i>Talking with the Child Sheet</i> together with the completed Regulation Chart, think of strategies that will help in particularly challenging lessons. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach them how to listen e.g. looking at the speaker. When they do not understand something encourage the child to ask an adult to explain again. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to use the listening strategies above. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During lessons give clear praise and tokens/rewards e.g. "Good listening, you are looking directly at me". Give praise regularly and quietly if appropriate. Praise the other children too. (See Rewards and Praise -Appendix 4). 		

Good listening

Sometimes children find it hard to listen to their teacher. It can be hard to hear when other children are talking or moving around the classroom. Sometimes children forget what is being said. Children may worry that they are going to be told off for not listening.

My teacher would like me to show good listening. Good listening looks like this



My teacher said that they are going to help me with my listening by:

My teacher would like me to do this:

Child can stick on or draw a picture of good listening.



Following instructions and attending to work

Children with attention difficulties can find it hard to concentrate on their work for any length of time. They may find it difficult to plan ahead and to hold different ideas in their head at once. Children who also struggle with handwriting are not as motivated to keep working independently.

For Handwriting refer to the Lambeth and Southwark Occupational Therapy Resource Pack (<http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/our-services/community/community-occupational-therapy/resources.aspx>)

Easy strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit him/her in a quiet area of the classroom. Tell them you want them to concentrate so that they can produce good work. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set them a goal "I will concentrate on my work for 5 minutes". (You could make the time shorter, depending on the child's capability). Use a timer. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise the child regularly as they attend to their work- "Well done you are concentrating well". (See Rewards and Praise Appendix 4). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of 5 minutes go over to the child and praise them. Help them to check their work for mistakes. Give them a sticker. (See Rewards and Praise - Appendix 4). Explain that you are giving this to them as they concentrated well-describe the behaviour you saw e.g. "You were working quietly and you completed your task". 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set another task for 5 minutes and repeat the above. 		

Medium Strategies to try in class

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a conversation with the child as on the <i>Talking with the child</i> sheet to develop helpful strategies together. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print a simple version of the task instructions and give to the child. • Only include 2 to 3 manageable steps, using a two column table- Instructions one side and a space for the child to write in on the other side, or tick when done. • Use pictures to illustrate the tasks you would like completed, as visual cues can be easier to understand. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the child to focus on one task at a time. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the child to put up their hand when they have finished the first task. • Go over to the child and praise them. Help them to check their work for mistakes. Give them a concrete rewards e.g. a sticker. Explain that you are giving this to them as they concentrated well- describe the behaviour you saw e.g. "You were working quietly and you completed your task". (See Rewards and Praise- Appendix 4). • Show them the next task on the sheet and repeat the above. 		

A bit more effort.....

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Regulation Chart Appendix 1 to map times of day that the child maybe more restless. Have a conversation with the child as on the <i>Talking with the child</i> sheet. Make a plan together to help them to concentrate. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of staff and the child carry out a movement break together before starting the activity. (See Movement and Break- Appendix 3). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the child, read through the table of simplified instructions, subtly checking their understanding as you read. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join them at their desk occasionally throughout the task. Reassure them and chat to them about their work. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use praise and a rewards/ token system to reinforce the child regularly. (See Rewards and Praise Appendix 4). 		

Concentrating on My Work and Following Instructions

Sometimes children find it hard to concentrate on their work. It can be hard to do careful work when concentration is difficult. Sometimes it can be hard to sit still, or to write nicely on the line.

My teacher would like me to get better at concentrating on my work. Good concentration looks like this:



My teacher said that they are going to help me with my concentration by:

My teacher would like me to do this:

Child can stick on or draw a picture of good concentration.



Setting Rules in the Classroom

It's hard to remember lots of things at once, and that makes following rules difficult.

Children with concentration difficulties cope better when they are given a maximum of 4 rules. Decide which 4 rules you are going to emphasize with your class (see **Appendix 5: Golden Rules**).

Easy Strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using slow-paced, simple language, read the rules to the class. Give a demonstration for each one. (See Golden Rules Appendix 5) for suggestions. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every rule is a positively-phrased instruction. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a visual image to each rule. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the understanding with the child. Focus on a maximum of 4 rules to be followed. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reiterate the rules at regular points in the day and point to the visual cues. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise the child when you notice that they have followed the class rules. Some children may not like praise (See Rewards and Praise- Appendix 4) for guidance. 		

Medium strategies to try in class

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the rules before each playtime and activity. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask children to give you examples of what they think the rules look like when they are following them. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewards the child with a token or sticker, with verbal praise, when you notice that they have followed the class rules. (See Rewards and Praise Appendix 4) for guidance. 		

A bit more effort.....

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet to talk about the class rules. Agree how you and they will try to remember the rules. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice if the child is not following the rules and gently remind them using the prompts agreed on the <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree a reward for the child to work towards using e.g. tokens. Always praise the child verbally along with the token. (See Rewards and Praise- Appendix 4). 		

Setting Rules in the Classroom

Sometimes the classroom can seem like a confusing place. Everybody is going about their work, and seems to know what they should be doing. But you aren't always sure what it is you must do, or what you must not do.

My teacher would like me to understand the classroom rules better.



My teacher and I have discussed that the rules are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

My teacher said that they will help me follow them by:

Reminding me Showing me a picture/symbol

Showing me what the rule looks like

Or/and _____

Helping Children to Avoid Calling Out

Children with busy minds often want to share their ideas, even when the situation means it's inappropriate. If they are feeling upset about something or with someone this may also cause them to call out, and not be able to listen to what's being taught.

Trying to ask children to keep these thoughts and feelings bottled up is not good for their concentration or learning. Instead, we can help them to let them out in a way that causes minimum disruption to the class and their learning.

Easy strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit the child in the position where they are the least disruptive during teacher-led session /carpet time. This may be next to an adult who can calmly redirect them. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the child to whisper their ideas/answers to you; give them a thumbs up or a wink (any non-verbal sign) that you have heard them but don't interrupt your teaching. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise them aloud, at an appropriate time, for their focused attention and ideas. (See Rewards and Praise-Appendix 4). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the calling out is off-topic and/or emotional (they are excited or upset), suggest they draw a picture now, and after the teaching an adult will discuss it with them. 		



Medium strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss calling out with the Child (see <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet below). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show the child how to make notes or doodles on a whiteboard, which they use to record their thoughts instead of shouting out. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seat the child next to an adult so they can whisper to the adult rather than call out to the teacher. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the class and you are feeling overwhelmed, ask the child to take a few minutes break to sit in the Book Corner or Quiet space with a book or picture story (comic). Be sure you and the child have agreed this strategy beforehand so they don't feel excluded. (See Quiet and Calm Space Appendix 2) 		

A bit more effort.....

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Regulation Chart to identify times of day or lessons that result in more calling out. Using the Regulation Chart discuss helpful strategies with the Child (see <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet below). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit with them after the teaching session to listen to their thoughts. Before every teaching session, remind them that they will have this time with you afterwards so they don't need to call out to you. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Together with the child, take a movement break to reset their energy level and improve concentration. (See Movement Break Appendix 3). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always use a soft volume to your voice, so children replicate this. Even when calling out it can be done in a whisper. Use short sentences, and allow space and silences when teaching. 		

Calling Out

Sometimes children find they just call out their ideas when they think of them. Even if the teacher is speaking, it can be hard to keep thoughts inside and not call out.



My teacher said that they will help me to reduce my calling out by:

My teacher would like me to do this:

Child can stick on or draw a picture of themselves doing something in place of calling out (e.g. Writing on a whiteboard or whispering to a buddy rather than calling out).



Helping Children to Replace Silly Behaviour

Children with attention difficulties are frequently told off or corrected. One way to save face with their classmates is to use silly behaviours to make their friends laugh. Motivating them to change the silly behaviour will work if a child feels they are going to gain their classmates' admiration in a different way. Once the Teacher – child allegiance grows the child values fun with you as well as peers.

Easy strategies to try in class:

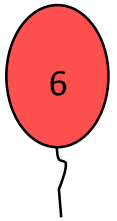
Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a chat with the child using the <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet below. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise the child aloud for being a good role model frequently, as soon as any 'good' behaviour is seen. Do this discretely where appropriate (See Rewards and Praise Appendix 4) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All adults completely ignore the silly behaviour. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seat the child at the side and slightly out of sight of most children so it's tricky to catch their classmates' attention. 		

Medium strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put the child in charge of a job to do before lessons begin – giving out pencils/books/arranging the coats etc. When they sit down they can be praised with a smile from the teacher and/or aloud. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give stickers/ticks to all children for doing good listening in Assembly or teaching sessions; ensure the child is one of the first to be commended. (See Rewards and Praise- Appendix 4). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow the child be a Work Buddy to another child who needs help; give them 2 minutes at the end of the lesson to share why they worked so well together with the class. 		

A bit more effort.....

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a conversation with the child using the <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet to agree what behaviours you and they want to see. • Together, list all the things that make him/her a good friend and classmate. • Agree a system of reward. (See Rewards and Praise-Appendix 4). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each time a 'good classmate' behaviour happens (being helpful, sharing, waiting) praise it specifically (privately or aloud to the class). Reward with a token. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a specific flashcard with the child or agree on a secret signal; when the teacher shows/does it during lessons, it means they will stop that behaviour and swap it for another e.g. 5 mins quiet work or putting a hand up for help. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put him/her in charge of a board game or wet-play activity or job; when they do it well praise their maturity and responsibility to the class. If a class reward system is in place, add a token/star to this. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whenever drama activities or Assemblies happen, include him/her as much as possible and praise their willingness to perform in front of others. 		



Being a Good Learner in Class

It can feel really great to get on well with my friends in class. But when it's time to learn, silly behaviour stops everyone getting on with the lesson.



My teacher said that they will help me to stop any silly behaviour by:

My teacher would like me to do this instead:

Child can stick on or draw a picture of the things they do that impress other children, other than acting the 'Class Clown' or being silly.

Helping Children to Keep Friends and Cope with Playtimes

Some children find social interactions challenging. They may get upset and angry easily, which may lead to others being hurt. Or when playing they may be boisterous and accidentally hurt others. When this happens repeatedly, other children start to refuse to play with that child. Even apologising after the event, when the child is calm, may not be enough to maintain a friendship. The rejection of a child by their friend/s is immensely upsetting and hurtful.

Some children with sensory sensitivity find the open playground overwhelming. **You may find the *Sensory Sensitivity Appendix 2* useful for helping these children.**

Easy strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the child to play games in the playground that don't usually lead to arguments (e.g. Chase, not football) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the whole class, talk about what playing kindly looks like, before going onto the playground 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise, in front of the class, any reports of kind or good play after break and lunch times 		

Medium Strategies to try in class

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before playtimes, an adult sits with the child and fills in the <i>My Feelings Right Now</i> chart. (See Appendix 7). Together they make a choice about what a sensible game might be to play, and with whom, based on their emotion level. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make time for the child to have a movement break just before playtime. (See Movement Break- Appendix 3). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An adult in the playground reviews the rules of the apparatus or game that the child is playing on that day, with the group of children at the start of playtime. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All playground adults are aware of the expectations of 'good playing' and reward the child when they see him/her behaving in that way 		

A bit more effort.....

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a conversation with the child using the <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet. Make a plan together to help them to make choices and give apologies when they need to. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have an assigned adult on the playground to notice and step in when things are going wrong, and to praise when the child does well. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise a system of who to go to when there is an incident and the child is upset. Make time after playtime to talk about the incident with the child and their friend. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach all children that being angry is not a bad or 'wrong' emotion, but that we must show it without hurting others. Practice what we can say and do in situations that make us angry. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the child is calm and happy again, talk with them about how they can make it up to their friend. 		

Making and Keeping Friends

All children get into arguments with their friends. They feel sad and angry when their friends do or say upsetting things. But sometimes the anger and sadness makes them hit or hurt their friends.



My teacher said that they are going to help me with friendships by:

Using my Feelings Chart with my Teacher before playtime

Drawing comic strips together about things that happen at playtime

Using role play to understand what happens at playtime

Or/and:

My teacher would like me to do this:

Move away when I'm angry Say, 'Stop, I don't like it'

Look for an adult Take one deep breath and count to 3

Or/and...

Child can also make a list of the ways they might like to make it up to their friend when things go wrong.

Helping Children to Cope with Strong Feelings

Children with attention difficulties and impulsivity can often feel frustrated. When they want to concentrate, they can't; when they try to co-ordinate themselves it can often misfire, and lead to messy work. Feelings of disappointment in themselves can lead to anxiety. They become sensitive to others' comments or teachers' requests, and soon all the anxiety just spills out as anger. Once they are at this point in their anger, it is too late to rationalise with them. In the argument that follows, teachers and peers can be hurt. Avoiding reaching this point is important in helping children keep good relationships and self-esteem.

Easy strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When work looks messy, take over or help them to quickly start again. Don't make a fuss over it. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, allow them to work in pairs with another child. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise, specifically, good attention or any positive effort the child makes. Assume that they are trying, as much as they are able, to comply. (See Rewards and Praise Appendix 4). 		

Medium strategies to try in class:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet, have a discussion about what to do when they are upset. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and agree the use of a Quiet Area (See Quiet and Calm Space Appendix 2). 		

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the playground, notice when they are becoming upset and ask them to leave the game to do a job for you. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the playground when you notice they are upset, encourage them to play next to others rather than in turn-taking games e.g. climbing on a frame, rather than playing football. 		

A bit more effort.....

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the Feelings Chart together, and check how the child feels at the moment (see My Feelings Right Now Appendix 7). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check in with them after playtimes using the Feelings Chart. If they are feeling strongly, help them choose a strategy to wind down. Praise them for sharing their feelings and coming up with a plan. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow them take five minutes out of class to just sit in a quiet place (See Quiet and Calm space Appendix 2). Ensure they use a time-out token (you can limit the number they have during the day). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do a movement break with them (see Movement Break Appendix 3) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about anything that might have upset them or a fear they may have about the upcoming lesson/going home. Offer them opportunities to speak about their feelings at points of the day when they appear to be highest. Use the Regulation Chart to identify these times. 		



Coping with Strong Feelings

Children can get upset and feel worried; sometimes this turns into anger. When the anger takes over, children feel out of control. It can be hard to feel calm again.



My teacher would like me to notice when I'm starting to feel upset. Some signs of this are...

Inside feelings: My tummy hurts I feel hot My head hurts

I need the toilet Other feelings: _____

My teacher said that they will help me with keep me control my anger better by:

My teacher would like me to do this:

Child can stick on or draw a picture of how they feel when they are angry (e.g. The Incredible Hulk) and one of when they are calm. They could also use a colour-coded thermometer displaying calm to angry.

Taking Children on a School Trip

Children who have difficulty with concentration and are easily distracted can become overwhelmed by lots of noise and colour and activity outside of the structures of the classroom setting. This can make it hard to listen to important instructions and so some children may not be able to follow the rules. When planning a school trip with your class you may wish to consider one of the following types of strategies.

Easy strategies (whole class strategy that is usually carried out)

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When explaining the school trip, ensure that the child is giving the teacher their full attention. Use a photo or visual for each stage, e.g. a picture of a coach, of the aquarium etc. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With all children, agree 4 rules to be followed when out on the school trip (4 is maximum, any more is too hard for the child to keep in mind- See , in the classroom strategy sheet. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the <i>Talking with the Child</i> sheet, re-state the 4 rules and explain what is expected during the day. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the start of the trip and at key points in the day, re-state the rules using clear, simple words. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every time the child follows the rule give subtle praise, e.g. a thumbs up. 		

Medium Strategies

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the child, create a simplified itinerary of the day (see <i>School Trip Itinerary- Appendix 6</i>). Ensure there are visual symbols for each step. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the child the group leader who is in charge of the itinerary. After each activity is completed, ask the child to tick off the activity and tell everyone what is happening next. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create visual symbols for each rule and display throughout the day, e.g. on a lanyard around the Leader's neck, or attached to children's rucksacks. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If its age appropriate, give the Child a badge designating them as Group Leader for the day. Otherwise, give verbal praise throughout the day (see <i>Rewards and Praise- Appendix 4</i>). 		

A bit more effort.....

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some children need more sensation to help them concentrate. The child might benefit from a crunchy snack e.g. carrots, an apple, or sucking water from a hard-to-suck water bottle 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combine the above strategies with more time spent on praising and checking understanding. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If age-appropriate, a token rewards e.g. sticker, and praise, will be given after each stage, after the activity is completed. 		

On a School Trip

It's hard to follow school rules. Especially when we are on a school trip as it is exciting and there are lots of things to look at.



My teacher would like me to remember the following rules on the School trip.

1.

2.

3.

4.

My teacher will help me to follow the rules by:-

Child can stick on or draw a picture of the things they do that helps with the following instructions.

Regulation Chart- Appendix 1

 <p>Very active (e.g. running around)</p>									
 <p>Just right and ready to learn</p>									
 <p>Low in energy</p>									
<p>Time of day/ Lesson</p>									

Appendix 2: To help children who are sensitive to touch and other sensations

Some children with attention difficulties can be sensitive to sensory information. They can be very distracted visually if there are a number of things to look at in the room. They can find some sound too much; they may cover their ears or look anxious if there is too much noise around them. Some children complain of strong smells. There are a number of children who are sensitive to touch; they react if others touch them or they are expected to touch different textures. In the previous sheets we have included general tips to remind you to reduce distraction/ stimuli around the child. However some children need more than this.

If you notice that the child you are working with is becoming overloaded by all the activity around them e.g., noise, visual stimulation, other children moving, changes in routines, They may benefit from planned timeout space. A quiet enclosed or secluded area in the classroom can provide the child with space to calm in readiness for learning again.

Tips to plan a quiet, calming time-out space:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a screen as a boundary to create a quiet, safe, contained corner. Tent like structures can be created with cloth. (This can be in a quiet area of the classroom; an older child may like a space elsewhere) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pull the blinds down if possible. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lay a soft mat on the floor. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put large cushions in the space so that the child can squish him/ herself between them if this helps. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put some fiddle toys and books in there. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child can complete movement breaks in the space. Give the child visuals of the movement breaks that they can do in a small space, to prompt them (see Movement Break - Appendix 3). 		

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide with the child when they can use this space- use conversation sheet attached Can they let you know when they are feeling overwhelmed? Can they use it at planned times e.g. busier times of the day? Come up with a plan together. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the child with a card that they can hold up to you when they feel they need quiet time. 		

Some children are **sensitive to touch**. This can be very alarming for them and can make them feel anxious and stressed. Please try the following ideas:

Strategy plan to help	Tick when done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use firm pressure when touching the child. Never use light touch. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not touch the child from behind. Make sure that they can see you before you give instructions. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that the child goes first or last in line. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the child wear their jacket or a tight jumper as this can help them feel more secure. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the child decide where they sit at carpet time. You could make a clear boundary on the floor for them. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan use of timeout space- see previous strategy table. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give the child regular movement breaks. Heavy work which gives stretch and pressure to the joints is particularly calming. Activities such as carrying books, lifting chairs. Also see Movement Break - Appendix 3. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for activities with added touch sensation e.g. getting changed for PE; messy play; cooking. Ask the child what would help or adapt the activity. 		

If you feel that the child is struggling to process sensory information and you are not seeing improvements please contact the Occupational Therapy department to discuss possible referral

Appendix 2: Sensory Sensitivity- Conversation with Child

Sometimes children feel stressed and fidgety when there are lots of things going on around them. Sometimes too much noise and busyness can make it hard to concentrate and to stay calm. My teacher would like to help me with this so that I feel more settled.



My teacher said that they are going to help me feel calm by:

My teacher would like me to do this:


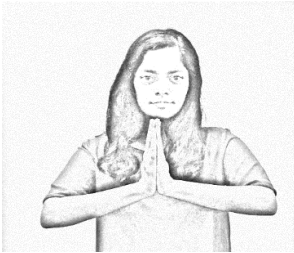
Child can stick on or draw a picture of a child looking calm and happy.






These picture will be provided as a separate sheet or the child can draw something if they like

Appendix 3: Movement Breaks

Children with attention difficulties can benefit from movement breaks. Movement can help them to feel calm and organised and ready for learning. This appendix includes movement activities that can be done at your desk and more intensive movement breaks for the children who need more. Please use this appendix alongside the Good Sitting strategy sheet.

Movement Activities that can be done at the desk:

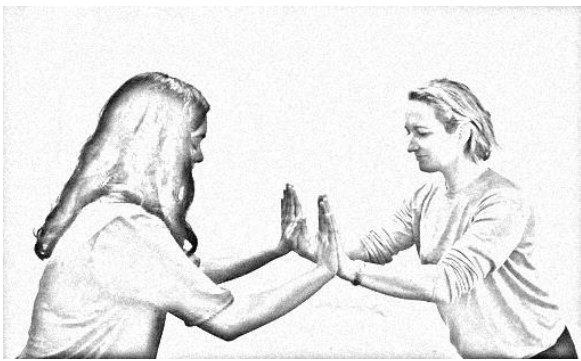
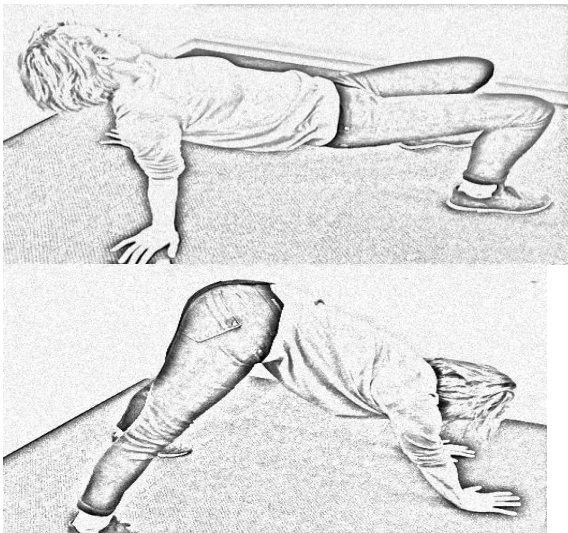
Action	Picture
Standing up and pushing down forcefully on the desk, as if you are trying to push the table into the floor. Count to 10.	
Push hands tightly together. Count to 10.	




Action	Picture
<p>Chair push-up- Put your hands on the side of your chair and push yourself up, taking your weight through your arms</p>	
<p>At break times you may find it helpful to eat crunchy or chewy snacks. This gives movement feedback to the face and it can feel organising</p>	
<p>Squeeze a squeezey ball</p>	
<p>Tie a piece of TheraBand™ between the two front legs of the classroom chair. You can then kick against this if you are feeling restless.</p>	
<p>Try a Move 'N' Sit cushion. This will give you some movement while sitting sensibly</p>	

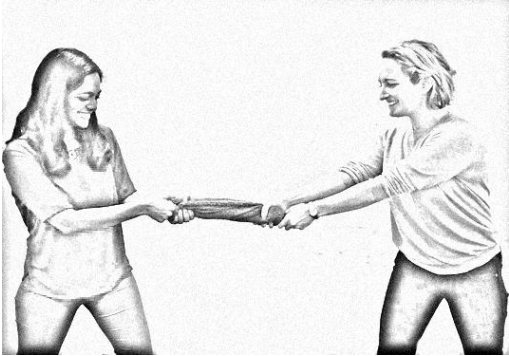

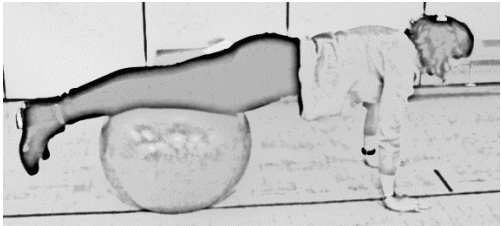
Movement Breaks that will need one-to-one support:

These activities will give more intensive feedback to joints and muscles. Experiment. Some children will require longer movement breaks; some activities may be more helpful than others. Watch the child and see how they respond. Do they seem more calm and alert and ready for learning following certain activities?

Make sure that the activities are carried out in a controlled manner, at a steady pace.

Action	Picture
<p>Push on hands</p> <p>Stand opposite the child and push against each other's hands. This can be playful, trying to move each other. It can also be done quietly. Some children like eye contact and smiles, others like to look down.</p> <p>Encourage the child to make a long drawn out breath, hissing like a snake, as they push</p>	
<p>Bear and Crab animal walk</p> <p>Animal walks give lots of feedback to joints and muscles. Some children may find these difficult if they have co-ordination problems</p>	

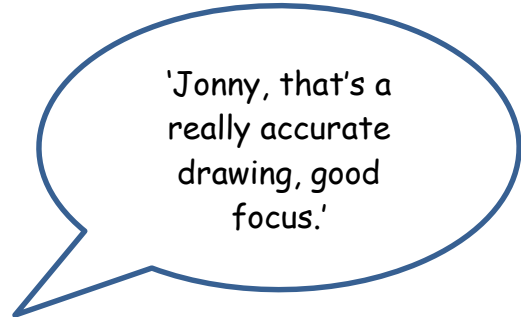
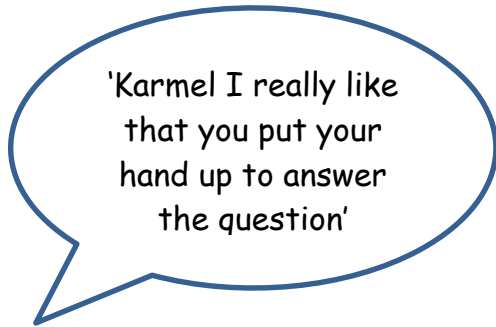
Action	Picture
<p>Marching with arms swinging</p> <p>Stand opposite each other and march taking arms and knees high. You could count or sing a song with the child</p>	
<p>Push out walls</p> <p>Ask the child to push hard on the walls, to pretend that they are pushing the walls out.</p> <p>Encourage them to breath out as they do this, hissing like a snake</p> <p>You could stand next to them if they like this, or you could push out the wall next to them. Try counting as they push</p>	
<p>Jumping</p> <p>Jump up and down on the spot. If you can jump with them- opposite them or near to them, see what they like. Some children like eye contact and smiles.</p> <p>It can be helpful to count out loud together</p>	

Action	Picture
<p>Tug of war</p> <p>You can use a scarf or a rope (beware of friction burns)</p> <p>Pull and let the child succeed, after some effort, in pulling you over the line.</p> <p>Chant 'heave ho'</p>	
<p>Some children find it helpful to bounce up and down on a therapy ball. Make sure that it is the right height for the child so that they can stabilise their feet on the ground. Hold the ball steady for them, so that they don't bounce across the room.</p> <p>Some children can find this activity too exciting, so check the child's response</p>	
<p>Some children like to roll backwards and forwards over a therapy ball. Encourage them to do this rhythmically and in a controlled manner</p> <p>Try counting or singing</p>	

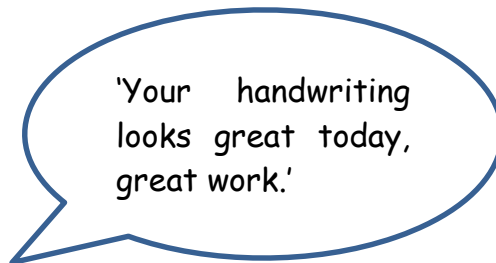
Appendix 4: Rewards and Praise

Descriptive verbal praise

When giving praise, we should describe the behaviour we have seen that we really like. See the examples below.



Do add an encouraging remark, but make sure the specific behaviour is praised first.



Adding a Reward to reinforce verbal praise

Descriptive praise can be made more memorable for the child if you couple it with a one off tangible or concrete reward e.g. stickers, tokens, extra golden time

The golden rules of Praise and Reward:

- Always use descriptive verbal praise.
- Give descriptive verbal praise with the tangible reward
- If you and the child decide to work towards collecting a number of smaller rewards leading to a larger reward then you need to make this manageable for the child to be able to achieve.
- Never take any rewards away.

Sometimes it may be helpful for a child to see how a number of smaller rewards can build up to a larger reward. You can use the template on the next page to negotiate how and when rewards are given. Do use the star chart or something similar so the child knows how much progress they are making and stays motivated.

Remember: The number of stars coloured in before the child receives the overall reward is dependent on how able they are to delay gratification and stay focused. So, for a child with poor concentration you may decide, with the child, that you are aiming for say, 2 stars before additional golden time is granted.

Appendix 4: Rewards and Praise

For children who don't respond well to praise

All children want affirmation and affection. But not all children accept it the same way. There are several instances when direct, public praise makes them very uncomfortable, and should take on a different format.

Teacher's Praise	Child's Response	Amended Praise
<p>- Teacher offers subjective praise.</p> <p>'I like your handwriting just there Jonas.'</p>	<p>- Anger, mistrust</p> <p>'I know my writing isn't nearly as good as the others'; the Teacher is lying, he can't think that.'</p>	<p>- Allow them to judge themselves when presented with objective evidence.</p> <p>'Jonas, check back to last term's work, and let me know if there is any progress in your handwriting.'</p>
<p>- Teacher is showing warmth and kind regard.</p> <p>'Wow Kyle, you're doing outstanding work here.'</p>	<p>- Shame; their self-believe is that they aren't deserving of kindness.</p> <p>'I'm not outstanding, I'm rubbish.'</p>	<p>Descriptive praise without overt emotion; factual in its content.</p> <p>'That sentence has an adverbial phrase in the right place; that is correct'.</p>
<p>- A class has a strong 'us vs. them' ethos towards staff</p> <p>'Aimee you're showing great focus, good work ethic.'</p>	<p>- Fear of being excluded from peers</p> <p>'I like you but you can't show that you like me or they'll laugh at me.'</p>	<p>Whole class system of targets and concrete rewards, not individual praise.</p> <p>'So far I see several productive workers - a few more like these and I can move the class up the ladder'</p>
<p>Even better than praise....Off-Topic Talk</p> <p>Talk with the child completely off the topic of school, about something they are interested in. This helps them become calm, regulates their emotions and will usually result in improved concentration and focus when they return to work.</p>		

Appendix 4: Rewards and Praise

Negotiating Rewards

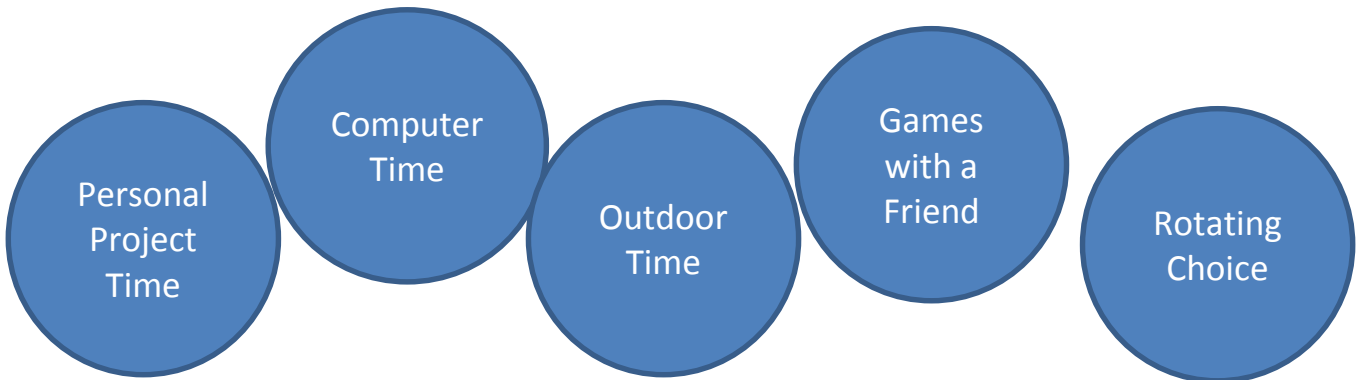
My teacher asked me to do this:

Each time I do this, I will get 1 token.

When I have tokens, I will get my reward.



Ideas for Rewards:



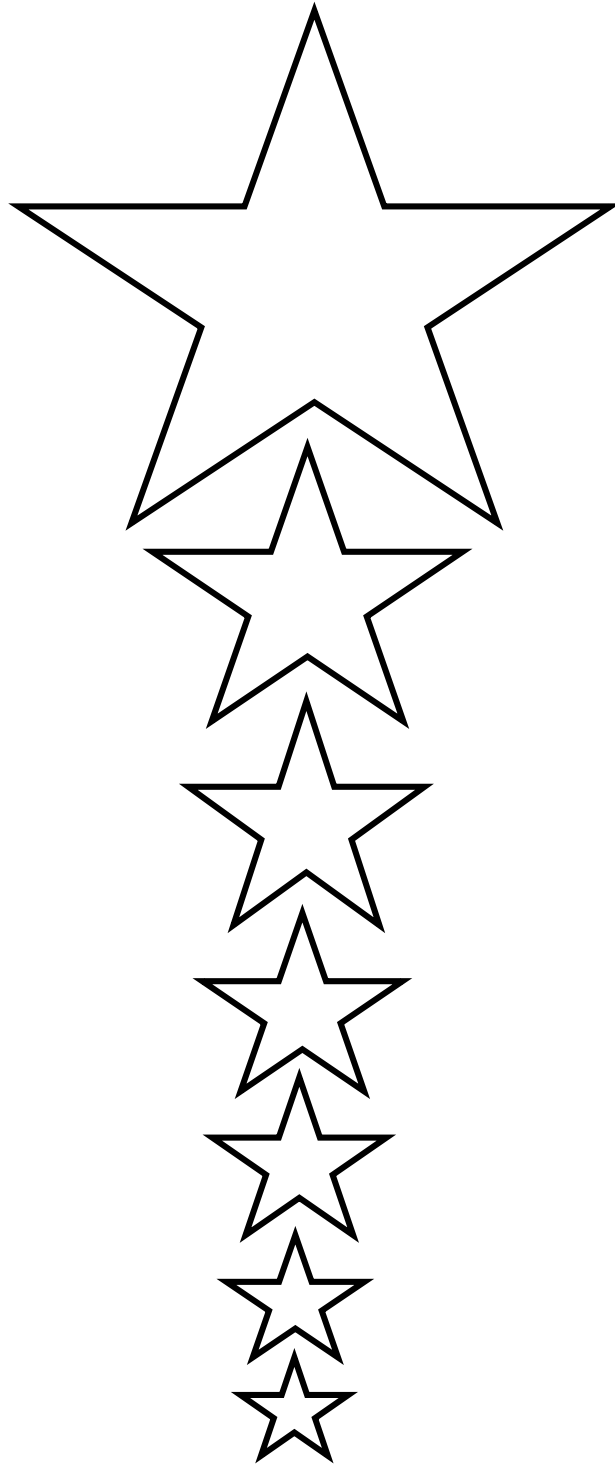
Notes:

See previous guidance on using tokens and descriptive praise before starting this sheet.

Appendix 4: Rewards and Praise

Star sheet

Colour in the stars from smallest to biggest...



Appendix 5: Golden Rules

Example rules; try to have a maximum of 4. Always state the rules positively.

1. Listen when others are speaking.



2. Work carefully and quietly when doing work in class.



3. Put my hand up when I want to speak.



4. Tidy up any materials I have used after I finish my work.



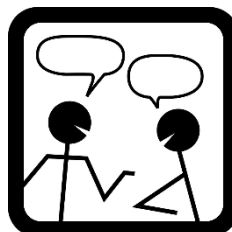
5. Ask permission before going to the toilet/water fountain.



6. Use hands kindly, and never to hurt others.



7. Speak calmly and quietly.



Appendix 6: School Trip – Simplified Itinerary

This strategy would include the above strategies but also a simplified itinerary of what is expected for the school trip. (See example below)

The teacher will discuss this with the child to check understanding of the rules and the group leader, named adult and child will have a copy of the itinerary to refer to at regular intervals during the school trip.

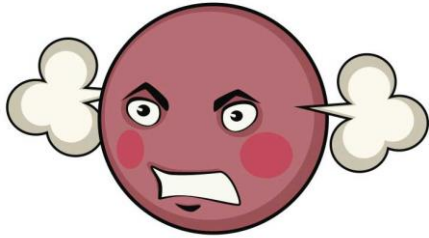
For each instruction followed, the child is praised. The group leader is responsible for noticing good behaviour and praising this when they immediately see it.

Itinerary – an example: a trip to the museum

Time (insert visual/picture)	Activity	Tick and reward when done
09:15	Line up with partner	
09:25	Await instructions to get on the school bus	
09:30	Line up	
09:45	Get on the school bus	
09:50	Sit next to partner	
10:30	When the bus stops get off the bus when asked to	
10:35	Line up	
10:35	Move to the museum with your group	
10:45	Look around the exhibitions as laid out by your group leader	
11:45	Fill in the forms to answer the questions about the exhibitions	
12:00	Move with your teacher to the dining area and have lunch	
After lunch	Look around the remaining museum with your group	
14:00	Line up and get back on the bus.	

Appendix 7: My Feelings Right Now

Tick the box under the face which represents how you feel right now...



ANGRY



SURPRISED



HAPPY



WORRIED



SCARED



CONTENT



SAD