

# The Science of Learning Well...



## Remote Learning - Parent Tip #1: Improving **ATTENTION**

We all know that being able to pay **Attention** is essential for learning. However, it is easier said than done, especially when students are learning remotely, and don't have the guidance of their teachers to keep them focused. Drawing on evidence from the science of learning, you can support your child to:

- i) be more **ALERT** during learning tasks;
- ii) **ORIENT** their focus to important detail and information; and,
- iii) **CONTROL** their attention and behaviour to make learning more efficient and effective.



Being physically comfortable, well rested, having access to required materials, and adequate light all help to make it easier for your child to pay attention. Where possible, try to set up a space in the house where they can learn and be comfortable. If they are losing focus, let them have a short break - stretch their legs, grab a snack, play with the dog.



Movement, light, colour, and sound all attract our attention. When your child needs to pay attention to their learning task, they need to be encouraged to remove anything that may distract them through these different senses. Encourage them to switch off their phones and other devices not required for learning, close all unnecessary tabs on their computers, and be away from other distractions that might surround them.



To block out background noises, your child could use headphones to help them to focus their attention to the lesson. If they enjoy listening to music, they could do this when they are working on their own: some music can be very helpful for blocking out background noise, increasing their motivation, and making learning more enjoyable. However, it should be music without any lyrics, and then is not loud or distracting. See Tip Sheet #2 for more information.



Setting goals or writing a to-do or to-learn list at the start of a learning activity is a very good way for your child to focus their attention on the task or lesson. Maybe ask them to tell you what their goals are and how they plan to achieve them. Encourage them to also write themselves some questions about what they hope to learn - or maybe you could set some questions that you would like to know about the topic. These sorts of priming questions at the start of a lesson will help to focus your child's attention to important ideas.



Paying attention can sometimes be difficult because your child is trying to keep too many things stored in their short-term memory. Doing focused tasks for short periods of time, followed by opportunities to think about and apply that tasks in different ways helps to move that knowledge into longer memory storage systems. Chunking tasks, activities or skills is much more effective than long periods of unbroken focus. These small chunks need to be visited again each day or every few days to help make them 'stick'.



Linking new learning to something your child already knows, or to a real-world experience will help them to see the importance of it. It will also help them to remember it later on. Ask them questions about their learning, and ask them how they can link it to something in the daily life.