



Promoting Self-Control Tips, Tools, and Activities to Promote Focus & Attention Skills in Young Children

Course Objectives:

- Label a game or activity that promotes attention skills in young children

Self-Control Defined

"Any effort by a human being to alter its own responses. Self-control prevents your normal or natural response from occurring and substitutes another response or lack of response in place. It includes the ability to stop, change, substitute, and start behaviors" - "Losing Control" by Roy Baumeister

Executive Functions

“
Handle our attention,
our emotions, and our
behavior in order to
reach our goals.
Ellen Galinsky
Mind in the Making
”

- The manager of the brain that helps us reflect, analyze, plan, and evaluate
- EF skills, like muscles can grow stronger (or weaker) depending on what we do
- Similar to muscles—the more we work them, the stronger they become



Video Reflection: What is "self control"? What are some activities and adult responses that can promote it?



Reflection: What is important so far for you to remember?

Focus and Attention

Focus: Being able to concentrate, remain alert and oriented for a period of time despite external and internal distractions.



***What helps you focus? What do you need to do it well?**

***What gets in the way of maintaining your attention?**



Tips, Tools, and Activities to Promote Focus & Attention Skills



1

Promote Focus and Attention Skills

*Children also have difficulty focusing because their brains are still wiring and early experiences are training their brains over time.

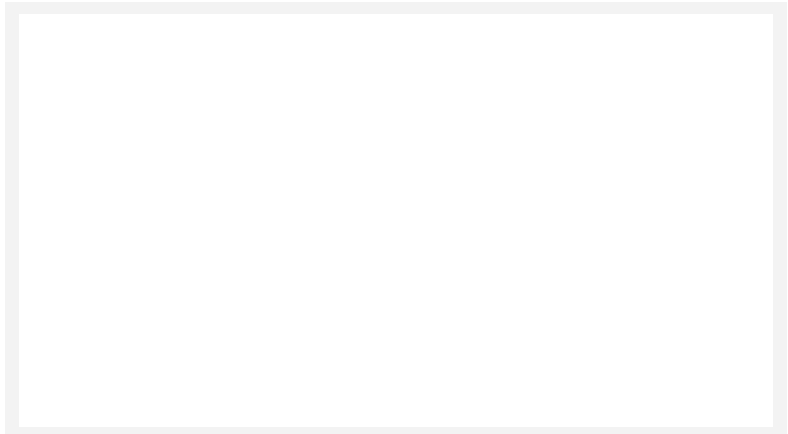
*Research: "Attention has been found to be a highly malleable quality and most directly influenced by the environment in which it is used."

*What you do and the strategies you use will make a difference!

Why is the child having difficulty with keeping focused and attending to the task?

- Sleepy →
- Hungry or insufficient nutrition →
- Increase in stress hormone →
- Developmental stage →
- Highly distractible temperament →
- Highly active temperament →
- NOT interested in the content →
- Different agenda or goal than you →
- Focus/attention fatigue →

What strategies might help this child increase skills in this area?



2

Do activities and games that build the skills

Children learn through ✓ What is reinforced ✓ Automatic Development ✓ Observation ✓ Imitation

More senses involved in the learning, the better!

Plan fun games!

- Stop-go activity
- Teacher Tipster: Bubbles. *Remember to bring the "lesson" from implicit to EXPLICIT.
- Make it fun and model exactly what you want (as in the video "Follow Mrs. Karen")
- Red-light, green light. Then, do the OPPOSITE!
- Use puppets
- Day-night task
- Toe-tapping game
- Simon says, do the opposite.
- Self-control builders such as puzzles, "the feather", and others
- Make anything a self-control game!



3

Choose adult responses that bolster the "impulse-control muscle"

Example: Antsy while waiting *Use strategies that build the "waiting muscle"

- Let children have many experiences where they need to wait
 - "Just a minute" – growing with child's age
 - Set a timer or use sand timer
 - Slowly increase the amount of time children to wait, considering time and ability
- Play waiting games to "build the muscle"



Your takeaways: A game or activity you will use to promote attention skills in young children?

