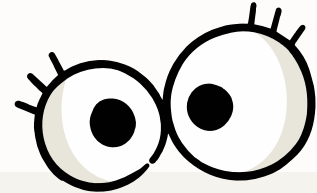


STRUCTURING THE ENVIRONMENT – SOME INITIAL IDEAS



Keep Visual Fields Simple

- Use natural lighting where possible, and reduce glare on boards or glossy paper. Be mindful of sunlight at different times of day.
- Minimise visual distractions—keep the area near the child's desk and between their seat and the board free from decorations. Clean blackboards/whiteboards regularly.
- Highlight or underline key information on the board. Use plain borders to help isolate relevant content.
- Seat the child in the front row, directly facing the board for a clear view. Avoid side or back-facing positions.
- Support desk organisation—teach the child to clear away unneeded items and use colour coding and set storage spots for materials.
- Design worksheets with minimal visual clutter. Present only essential information.
- Pair visual information with auditory cues for better comprehension.



Reduce Auditory Overwhelm

- Allow use of quiet fidget tools or chew items during instruction.
- Encourage the child to repeat instructions aloud to themselves or the teacher.
- Provide instructions visually, e.g., as checklists they can tick off.
- Use a workspace corral (e.g., from a cardboard box) to reduce surrounding noise.
- Permit use of earplugs or unplugged headphones during independent work.
- Use attention cues before speaking—e.g., clap, bell, whistle, or standing nearby.
- If possible, use a Sound Field System in the classroom to support auditory clarity for students, especially those with attention or working memory challenges.

STRUCTURING THE ENVIRONMENT – SOME INITIAL IDEAS

Simplify Language



- Reduce the amount of material to be remembered/completed
- Keep new information or instructions brief and to the point, and repeat in concise fashion for as needed.
- Increase the meaningfulness and familiarity of the material, relate it to something to with which they are familiar, and if possible link to physical experience – hands on learning helps greatly.
- Use simple visual reminders of the steps needed to complete a task. A visual schedule helps your child become organised and also can become a habit of thinking over time – however you will need to teach your child how to use it.
- Provide information in multiple ways: speak it, show it, and create opportunities to physically work with it or model it.



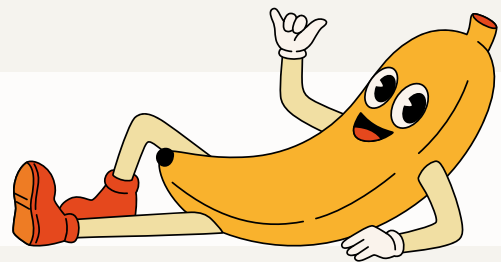
Organise the Space & Materials

- Place-keeping and organisational strategies e.g. a laminated list for their school bag that you teach them to check off in the morning and afternoon as they pack and unpack their bag; a laminated sheet for their drawer at school that has a place for all their bits and pieces.
- Labelling their toy cupboard, bookshelves and workspaces and attaching photos of what belongs in each spot along with a written label

STRUCTURING THE ENVIRONMENT – SOME INITIAL IDEAS

Consider Seating

- Experiment with different seating options, allow Child to sit on a swivel chair, to stand up at a bookcase or sit on a large gym ball (right height). Also allow him/ her to lie on tummy on the floor and work. These will give movement options while working.
- Limit the length of time that Child is expected to sit still in one position. Intersperse sitting activities with physical activities whenever Child is looking low, bored and unmotivated. (The vestibular system has a fairly immediate effect on the nervous system, and for some children, physical activities can make desk type work much easier.)
- Provide a variety of sensory experiences that involve rapid horizontal, vertical and rotary (circles) stimulation). Wake up activities that include jumping up and down on the spot, running around, shaking heads and bodies can help prepare for deskwork. (These can be incorporated into whole class activities).
- Provide appropriate supportive seating with the desk and chair at the right height for Child.



Chill Out Zone

- Provide a space at home and at school where they can withdraw to regroup and recover with resources and tools that assist in the process – this is not to be used as a punishment or a reward, but encouraged as a way to practice self regulation. For more information about how to set this up you can review [this video](#).

