

OT Suggestions/Tips For the Classroom:

Homemade lap buddy:

- Make student a lap buddy out of a tube sock and some rice or beans.
- Put the rice or beans in a Ziploc Baggie- maybe double bagged so you can take in and out to wash sock buddy.
- Make it kid friendly- maybe get some different stuff for student to decorate with- unless decorations will be too distracting- keep it simple.
- Lap buddies can be utilized to assist student in calming and staying focused during seat work.

Transitions-

- If student is antsy and has a hard time remaining still and focusing during transition time, have student carry a filled two liter water bottle- making sure lid is tight and securely closed.
- Give student a two liter Bottle(filled with beans, rice, water, etc.) ask student to carry it to the place he/she is transitioning to(activity, lunch, classroom, etc.) this will give student the sensory input he/she is seeking upon coming into the classroom- if he/she appears fidgety/difficulty with transitions. ***Make sure to hot glue cap on***
- Make this fun- personalize the transitional item- if bottle add food coloring, glitter, add beads, etc.

Attention help/Motivation tips/hints:

- In order to get student to sit and complete table work give student a set time and let student know how long and what you will do- prepare student for activity, set/give expectations.
- Give student a tangible visual schedule somewhere close to them so he/she knows what he/she will be doing next.
- Task completion-tell student once he/she does the activity/ work you have for student then he/she can play with the sandbox in your classroom, or something he/she only gets for special occasions. This will motivate student to want to complete his/her work. Then move on to next activity.
- Setting boundaries and expectations allows student to know what comes next and what is expected of he/she.
- If he/she needs a timer and doesn't complete activity in a timely manner then get a timer so he/she has the visual and auditory reminder.
- Build up whatever you're going to do so it's exciting and fun for student and not just work.

Get up and move(gross motor/heavy work):

- When students begin to get restless while sitting they may be needing to get up and move- allow student to do one gross motor activity-(bear crawl, crab walk, wheel barrel, wind mills with his arms, crosswind mills- touching opposite foot, etc.)
- Before allowing student to get up and move, verbally instruct student of what's expected and introduce activity.
- Complete gross motor activity then tell student it's time to come back to finish your table task.

Coordination/Fine Motor activities:

- Incorporating coordination/ fine motor activities within the classroom schedule daily can/will assist in the development of core skills required for independence in the classroom- (handwriting, tying shoes, buttoning/snapping/zippering articles of clothing, coloring, etc.)
- Think about each task a child must complete throughout the school day within and even outside of the classroom. What do they do that requires the utilization of their hands/hand eye coordination?
- During work stations, centers or even independent work, provide students with a variety of different activities they may work on at their desk or in work station such as: Tongs- utilizing tongs and placing small objects in a container; small or large pop beads; play doh- finding small objects in play doh; popping bubbles with a bug catcher, buttons, snaps, zippers, Velcro fasteners; any sort of container with a lid- make holes in lid and put pipe cleaners/small pompoms through holes, etc.
- Pinterest has tons of ideas that are really cost efficient and fun- just type in fine motor skill activities, or sensory activities, or dexterity activities.

Scissor skills:

- Cutting play doh or toilet paper rolls/thick paper will increase his/her hand strength and give student something different to do. Just be creative with it.
- Continue to work on boundary awareness- cutting and staying on designated lines.
- If student struggles with boundary awareness make outlines thicker so they're easier for student to see and remain on.
- Make sure he/she is cutting different shapes. If this is too difficult just have student cut thick vertical and horizontal lines across the paper, then once he's mastered that, curves- waves, etc.
- Begin with smaller pieces of paper that are easier to manipulate using bilateral hand use and work up to full size sheet (8x11).

Handwriting:

- When it comes to writing letters and numbers I think Handwriting without Tears is one of the most consistent writing curriculums; students need consistency and repetition.
- This will meet those needs and assist the child in learning the correct way to form his/her letters and numbers.
- Handwriting without Tears will also assist student in learning his/her letters/numbers, which he/she is having difficulty with and we have to think logically, if the student doesn't know his/her letters why would he/she want to write them? What's the purpose of writing if you don't even understand what you're writing?
- If the student becomes restless/bored, then move to another task.
- Utilizing smaller pencils (golf pencils are about the same size as the handwriting without tears pencils), broken crayons, smaller markers, etc. Normal size crayons, pencils, and other types of writing utensils can often times be too big for the student to write with comfortably and may contribute to awkward grasp patterns. Smaller writing utensils will facilitate the correct developmental grasp.
- Donorschoose.com is a wonderful way to raise funds for curriculum in your classroom.

Encouraged:

- Sensory (could be a book nook) corner in room, that student can go to and take a break.
- Have a rug, bean bags
- Sensory bins
- Light covers, area can be shaded/dimly lit
- Fidgets

******Avoid:**

- Loud colors or patterns along the walls and inside the classroom (bulletin boards, posters, etc.) as this can be overstimulating and even distracting to some students. Personalize your room however you please, it's your room, it needs to be how you want it, just keep in mind while you're decorating it, these tips, and always, always think of the students.
- Loud, over stimulating music. It is okay for students to engage in movement activities that may include fast rhythmic type music/sound as long as it's meaningful/purposeful. ****

Include these tips/ strategies into your classroom schedule as they apply.

Thank you for all that you do! If you have any questions don't hesitate to ask your OT.

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