

## Impulsivity and Distractibility

1. Don't be upset if he **hyper-focuses on something** (pay deep attention to things that interest them) and then the next minute he can't remember what you said (tunes you out).
2. Remember to **stay positive**. Watch your words. Pay attention to your angry words and calm words. Are you giving more angry words than calm directions. Are you down grading your child or giving directions? Discipline is training a child in the direction you want him to go. It takes time.
3. **Be specific and crystal clear**. Don't give too many directions at one time. Don't say too many words at one time. Their attention is gone after the first sentence. Give directions in steps. After each step is accomplished, give another one. RULES should be exceptionally clear and simple and repeat them when the situation changes or the child needs redirected to obey the rule.
4. **Remind often with verbal or visual cues** (words, pictures, checklists, brief notes, a list tacked on the door) if your child becomes distracted easily. A child will have trouble finishing a job or task because they are easily distracted and lose their focus. You can redirect their focus by asking him to continue working or ask what the next step is. Example: On the way to the bathroom to brush his teeth, he becomes distracted and starts doing something else. Simply remind of the task and repeat the direction. Doing tasks and activities together will help because you can remind and redirect often.
5. **Retrain thinking patterns. Teach drills to control impulsivity**. Your goal is to teach him to think before he acts. Start by asking him why he did the behavior in question. Ask him what he supposed to do or what was he told or asked to do. Ask him to tell you what the good behavior should be. If he can't tell you what the correct behavior is, tell or show him and ask him to do it. Hugs and kisses are given for good thinking. Explain to him that he is to think about what he is doing and what will happen next. He may still suffer the consequence for his actions, but he did good thinking. He is to learn to think about the consequences of his action. You are to repeatedly train him to think about what he is doing and plan a correct action. Before he does something, he is to count to five and imagine what will happen if he does it. Then say it when you catch him in the act. Tell him you will be reminding him to think when you catch him doing something or not following directions. When he does the wrong behavior, say, "HIS NAME! What did I just tell you to do or not to do?" "What should you do?" Or, "Are you suppose to be touching that?" If he says, "No." You will say, "Then what should you do?" Or, you will be saying, "Before you throw the toy, count to five and then imagine what might happen." . You eventually will be saying short versions such as, "Count to five." Or "Think what will happen." Or "Think about it." Or "Think about the consequence." The goal is that the child will eventually use the drill himself.
6. **Remind** your child of the behavior that is acceptable and behavior that is not. Catch your child being good and reward with compliments, hug and kisses. This reminds him of the behavior you want. Compliments, hugs and kisses will help him want to feel good about his behavior and about pleasing you. Having more successes than failures will help a child feel good about himself. Feeling good about himself is your goal because it can motivate him all of his life. Let other kids be a role model so the child can see proper behavior.
7. **Rewards** should be used to motivate him to good behavior, not bribe to stop bad behavior. Rewards that take your time and attention are often very desirable for a child. Example: If you pick up your toys, I'll read you a book or I'll play a game with you.
8. **Separate tasks or homework into steps**. A child can make up his own steps if possible. Direct the child to do one step at a time. He is to report when each step is done and plan the next step. Example of

cleaning his room. A. Make bed. B. Pick up toys. C. Pick up trash and put in a bag. D. Sweep the floor. HOMEWORK: A. Start with the hard problems first or vice-versa. B. Start at the top or bottom of the page. C. Set his own timer and plan a reward when all is finished. D. Ask parent to help start the homework with him. E. He picks how many he thinks he can do by himself and how many he needs help with. See if he is right at the end of the homework.

9. **Timers and counting to a certain number are fun for kids.** Set a timer to see if he can get a problem done before the timer goes off. Adjust the time to make sure he is successful. You can count to a certain number to see if he can get the problem done before that number. Plan a reward (hugs ,kisses, snacks) for accomplishing what you have assigned.
10. Eliminate distractions. If your child can not pay attention to work or what you are saying with the TV or Radio on, shut them off. **Try to find a spot that is quiet, well lit, and comfortable for homework.** Check often to see if he is doing the work and what helpful hints you can give to get him back to working.
11. Help your child with **organization.** Have certain places for things that are necessary for his success. Label these places. Remind your child often to put things in its place. Example: Is your coat hung up? Is your homework and books back in the book bag? Did you pick up your clothes? Set up routines. Always (as much as possible) do homework at a certain time. Always eat at the same time. Always go to bed at the same time. Set a routine for necessary activities such as bed time: brush teeth, bathe, and put on pajamas.
12. **Plan your day** so you are doing things that require attention or good behavior when your child will cooperate the best. If he acts up in the afternoon, go shopping with him in the morning. If he listens better before supper, do homework.
13. Find activities that will **keep your child busy.** Bored kids act out more often. When shopping, think of things the child can look for (cans, labels, colors, boxes) and be in charge of putting them in the cart.