

Helping Our Young Children

**Focus, engagement and
concentration.**

*A calm, practical guide for
parents and carers.*


10.2.2026

What Does Focus Look Like?

- . Focus may look **different**, not wrong
- . Some children focus deeply on one interest
- . Some focus better while moving or fidgeting

Still focus — just a different style

Why Is Focus Hard Sometimes?

- Sensory overload
 - Anxiety or uncertainty
 - Language processing difficulties
 - Too much information at once
-  Often overwhelmed, not behaviour

Sensory Overload

Trying to focus while:

- Noise feels too loud
- Lights feel too bright
- Clothes feel uncomfortable
- Not knowing what's happening next
- This can be everyday life for some children



Realistic Expectations

- Focus may be **seconds, not minutes**
- Sitting still is *not* the goal
- Regulation comes before concentration
- Small wins matter

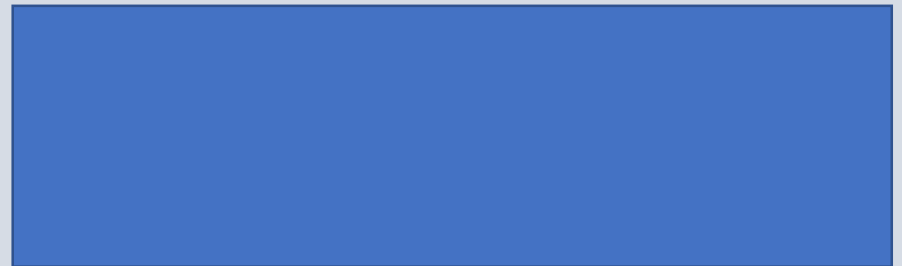


Creating a Sensory-Friendly Environment


- Reduce background noise
- Use calm lighting
- Limit visual clutter
- Use the same space for activities

Visual Supports Help

- Visual timetables
- Now / Next boards
- Task management board
- Timers or sand timers



Movement Helps Focus

- Fidget toys
- Rocking or standing
- Wobble cushions
- Movement breaks
-  Still listening, still learning

Follow Their Interests

- Use favourite topics (e.g. trains, animals)
- Join their play
- Turn interests into learning
- Motivation improves attention

Keep Activities Short

- 1–5 minutes is enough—
chunking tasks
- Same activity, same order
- Stop before overload
- End on a positive note

Transitions Are Hard

Help by:

- Giving warnings (“5 minutes left”)
- Using visual timers
- Having a clear ‘next’ activity



Physical sensory tools

- **Wobble cushions** – promote core activation and help children who need to move while sitting.
- **TheraBands on chair legs** – quiet, unobtrusive movement for fidgety pupils.
- **Weighted lap pads** – grounding for children who become dysregulated.
- **Fidget tools** (quiet: tangles, stress balls, putty) – offer controlled sensory input.

Environmental tools

- **Noise-cancelling headphones** – reduce auditory distractions during independent work.
- **Desk dividers / study carrels** – help pupils who are overwhelmed by visual noise.
- **Visual timers** (Time Timer, sand timers) – support time awareness and reduce anxiety.

Movement & Brain-Break Resources

Short, structured breaks improve attention—especially for KS1.

- **GoNoodle, Just Dance, BBC Super Movers**
- **Yoga cards**
- **Brain break jars** (teacher or student choice)
- **Sensory circuits** for morning regulation
- **Calming corner or regulation station** with mindful tools (breathing cards, glitter timers)

Task boards

My Work Board

To do

Finished

Task Planner

Task: → What equipment do I need?

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>
4	<input type="text"/>
5	<input type="text"/>

I will be finished when: ○

Hometime

I need...

coat

bag

lunch box

book

 paste	 read	 cut
 colour	 read worksheet	 do worksheet

My Work Board

Get ready
Find these things

Go
Do these things

Stop
Finished

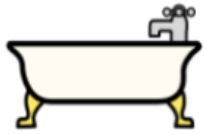
Now / Next Board



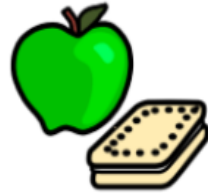
Now



Next



Bath



Snack

Now



Next



Visual Timetables

Morning Routine

twinkl.com

complete



get up

complete



get dressed

complete



eat breakfast

complete



clean teeth

complete



brush hair

complete



go to school

Practical Resources

