

# Inattentiveness can affect your child's ability to learn

Everybody's mind wanders now and then. But if your child regularly "zones out" at school, it can impact his ability to learn and retain new information. Studies show that younger students who can't focus tend to become older students who can't focus. And that can mean big trouble for your child's education.

To help your child keep his eye on the ball at school, strengthen his attention skills at home. Here's how:

- Break down large assignments. If he has a book report to write, show him how to divide it into smaller steps. "First, think about what you want to say. Next, make an outline of your thoughts. Then, start writing."
- Encourage breathers. Don't force your child to work for long periods of time. Instead, set a timer for 20 minutes and have your child take a five-minute break when it goes off. Frequent short breaks help your child clear his head and refocus on his work.
- Remove distractions. Keep the TV and other screens off while your child works. Keep noise to a minimum. Homework shouldn't have to compete for his attention!

Remind your child to use these tools in class when possible. Even a 30- second break (maybe by closing his eyes and breathing deeply) could help him buckle back down and tackle the worksheet in front of him.

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