



How to support children with Developmental Delay

Behaviour Handling

How to help children who are inattentive during training?

There are many reasons for children's inattention. Parents can consider the following factors when helping your children:

- Children with developmental delay may have weaker attention control when compared to typically-developing children, thus parents should have a more realistic expectation on them.
- Children will have difficulty in concentrating on tasks that do not match with their developmental level, e.g. there are too many tasks or the tasks are too difficult.
- Sometimes children are not cooperative during training because of their current states, e.g. they are too tired or they are in the midway of playing, which affect their attentiveness and willingness to participate.

To sum up, training activities should be designed and tailored according to the children's ability and attention level. When the training tasks are designed to progress from easy to difficult, are interesting and fun, and carried out at an appropriate time with proper reinforcement, the training would be more effective.



What should be done if children are uncooperative and lose temper frequently?

- There could be various reasons for children's behaviours. To help children manage their emotions, parents need to do some observation first. Parents can take note of the antecedents (e.g. who was involved, where and when it happened, what has happened) and the consequences (e.g. parents' handling) of children's temper tantrum. After sorting out the triggering and maintaining factors of the children's behaviours, parents can try to change some of these factors in order to modify their behaviours.
- Parents have to be cautious if their handling may accidentally reinforce children's behavioural problems. For instance, if children manage to get some positive consequences (e.g. the play time is extended or they are given a new toy) or avoid some work/ activities that they dislike (e.g. training, homework) after losing temper, they will be more likely to throw tantrum to get what they want in the future. Parents should teach children appropriate ways to express their needs and emotions, and avoid compromising to their requests after their temper outburst.
- When children are uncooperative or lose temper, it may be a signal that they are facing some difficulties (e.g. they do not know how to react when other children take away their toys, or they are unable to complete a difficult training task). Children with developmental delay have limitation in ability, hence they may not be able to solve their own problem or express their emotions appropriately. Parents should try to show more understanding and find out their limitations. By teaching and encouraging children to express their emotions in words, it can help to minimize their temper tantrums.
- When children are cooperative, parents should reinforce them with immediate praise or reward. However, when they are uncooperative, parents should give them logical consequences. For instance, if children lose temper and cast toys around, parents should take away the toys and resume the playtime only after they have calmed down. It is important to make good use of both positive reinforcement and logical consequence when coaching your children. Parents should avoid resorting to scolding or physical punishment when managing children's behavioural problems.



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