

BELINDA NEIMANN
Speech-Language Pathologist (C)
Registered with SPA

Mobile: 0449 180 699

E-mail: info@belindaneimann.com

Address: 9 Acron rd, St Ives

BSB/ACC NO: 082445 799528876



STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL ENTRY 2013

Moving from child care to formal schooling is an exciting but often daunting experience for children. For those who have some extra learning needs around their language comprehension and use and/or their social skills this transition can be facilitated by some general strategies implemented early on in the school year. Student specific strategies are also essential and should be discussed and implemented on a child by child basis.

Here are some general strategies to assist with transitioning into the classroom:

- Consider ways to support managing desk space e.g. pens/pencils/texta's in a tin, glue/scissors in a square container, extra paper/worksheets in a paper tray. Providing visual boundaries as to where to place school belongings can facilitate a more organised approach to individual tasks
- Consider seat and table placement in terms of proximity/access to teacher and needs of fellow students. Many students with additional language needs benefit from being seated in fairly close proximity to the teacher's desk and at a table with fewer students
- Provide instructions in a step by step manner - when possible no more than 2-3 steps at a time. Use visual cues e.g. hand drawn pictures, smart board, models, completed work, to support recall of information and to develop independent work habits. Visual information is less transient than verbal information and can remain in place long after verbal directions have been forgotten
- When asking the student to present newstime or report on an event (written and oral) have visual cues available as often as possible e.g. photos, drawings. Visual cues support expressive language skills and lessen the cognitive load in terms of generating ideas



- Use a visual timer/clock to support completion of work by setting the student a reasonable time limit e.g. 15 minutes. Additionally consider identifying specific steps to be completed in written work e.g. 'finish 3 questions then take a break'. Knowing how much time is required

for a task facilitates task completion as well as a smooth transition from one activity to another

- Provide physical breaks frequently throughout the day e.g. have the student take a message to a teacher, throw something in the bin, move onto floor work. Many students who experience difficulty with language comprehension find it difficult to spend large amounts of time in one place listening to and processing verbal information. Providing them with frequent and appropriate opportunities to move around the classroom room may reduce fidgety behaviour and support improved listening, processing and comprehension skills
- Consider a buddy system within the classroom - buddying up with a highly competent language learner who can provide guidance and support on an as-needed basis can foster positive peer relationships.



- Encourage participation in highly structured turn taking games to develop verbal and social interaction opportunities with a peer. Encourage the student to repeat familiar games a number of times to develop language and social skills. Building repetition and predictability into tasks facilitates improved social interaction, peer conversation and language learning.
- Offer 1:1 support when possible within the classroom routine. Consider a few minutes 1:1 time early on in the day and then again later in the day to identify and clarify expectations around routine and school work
- Provide concrete suggestions for activities during recess and lunch once eating time is finished. Students who struggle with peer interaction and language skills can find this unstructured time difficult to manage. Suggestions for familiar games such as 'hide and seek', 'what's the time Mr Wolf' and 'tip' can be useful as is leaving out specific resources such as skipping ropes, chalk and hoops all of which can make managing this time a little easier.



Wishing you all the very best for your kindy year and beyond!

Regards,

Belinda Neimann MSLP
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