



# 10 Ways to Help Kids Focus

It's easy for kids to get distracted. Trying to do more than one thing at a time can lead to a string of half-completed tasks, panic-inducing deadlines, and missed goals. Learning to do one thing at a time, focusing, and finishing something before moving on to the next, are essential skills for school success. And although there may be times when "multitasking" is okay, studying is certainly not one of them. You cannot give one hundred percent of your attention to more than one thing at a time. It's as simple as that.

**Here are ten tips on how we can help children develop the skill of focus.  
Keep your expectations high, and help them learn good habits now.**

## 1. Expect them to pay attention in class.

Much of the muddle and confusion in any class is because someone hasn't been paying attention. "What are we supposed to be doing?" is usually the question of the kid who's just returned from la-la-land. Make sure your child understands the importance of classroom time.

## 2. Expect them to take their time.

Haste makes waste. Racing through something important can be dangerous, and can lead to mistakes. Taking a moment to pause and understand the task at hand can help your child avoid errors such as misreading test directions, or hurrying through a book report and typing "Lard of the Flies" instead of "Lord of the Flies."



### 3. Take breaks.

It's hard for some kids to take their time. Allow plenty of breaks to let them expend energy before getting back to work. Decide together how much time should pass and how much work should be accomplished between breaks.

### 4. Expect them to do one thing at a time.

Better grades, more confidence, enhanced skills, and broader knowledge will eventually speak for themselves. But at the beginning, you're going to have to put your foot down at homework and study time. Random monitoring works wonders.

### 5. Expect them to eliminate distractions.

It's an acquired skill, but organizing themselves helps to get rid of distractions. Expect them to do this at home and in their classrooms.

### 6. Expect them to prioritize.

Learning to place tasks in order from most important to least important will help kids learn to focus on the right things. For example, the optional cover picture on a book report should come after they've read the book and written the report! Going over their assignments and the due dates with them will allow you to guide them.



### 7. Expect them to plan.

Helping them plan their time lets them learn organization and see how it all fits together.

### 8. Expect them to manage temptations.

Learning self-control is never easy, but saying "no" to someone or something today can be what it takes to meet tomorrow's deadline. Besides, it's more fun to enjoy yourself when an unfinished task isn't hanging over their head.

### 9. Expect them to control interruptions.

We can't eliminate all maddening interruptions, but we can help kids control interruptions rather than letting interruptions control them. Insisting on silencing electronic interrupters is a good start.

### 10. Expect them to assess.

"When am I at my most productive?" "When do I learn best?" Assessing their habits, skills, strengths, and attitudes will give your child a sense of self-awareness and the ability to plan their time.



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