

## **Sensory strategies to improve student's attention during writing tasks**

### Oral Input

- Suck water through a sports bottle with a straw.
- Chew or suck on gum, candy or food (such as crunchy pretzels) making sure first that the student can safely handle the particular food item in his or her mouth.
- Have the students all blow whistles or other blow toys and/or sing a favorite class song very loudly prior to working on writing tasks. This improves respiratory function and facilitates better trunk control for sitting endurances.

### Tactile Input

- Provide the student with an appropriate pencil grip if holding the pencil is uncomfortable.
- Place a pencil topper on the pencil that has interesting tactile qualities (such a troll's hair) for the student to fiddle with while gathering his thoughts.
- Provide the student with a stress buster to keep in his or her desk to play with when a short break from writing is needed.

### Alternative Positions

- Allow the student the opportunity to perform some writing tasks at the chalkboard, such as copying spelling words.
- Allow student to perform short writing tasks while lying prone (on stomach) on a carpeted area or mat.
- Give student an air filled cushion or T-stool to sit on. These seating devices have significantly improved the attention span of many students.

### Movement Activities

- Precede classroom writing tasks with basic stretching and movement activities such as jumping in place, wall or chair push-ups or animal walks.
- Give student an errand to do prior to engaging in writing task such as delivering a note to the office or pushing the recycling or library cart in the hall.
- Schedule writing tasks after recess, gym or music.

### Auditory Input

- Eliminate avoidable auditory input. Place tennis balls on legs of chairs, place student desk away from hallway and windows.
- In severe cases, introduce "white noise" in the room such as an electric fan or allow student to listen to white noise on headphones.
- As a last resort, student may benefit from a listening system which allows the teacher to speak directly into the student's ear via radio headset.

### Visual Input

- Position student's desk away from visual distractions such as windows, doorways or exciting bulletin boards.
- Make sure student has good storage system for books and supplies to keep area uncluttered.
- Have the student sit at a desk with study cubicle to block out visual distractions.