
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES



Helping children focus at school



- ❖ **INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES** is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Written by Judy McDaniel, communications consultant.

Children who can focus at school will learn more and be more successful. There are some things you can do at home to help your children be better able to focus at school.

- ❖ **See that your children get enough sleep.** Set a decent bedtime and make it a habit. Well-rested children are more focused students.

The National Institutes of Health recommends that children and adolescents get at least nine hours of sleep each night. In addition to not being able to focus well, sleep deprived children are more prone to accidents and behavior problems in school.

- ❖ **Make sure your children start the day with a good, nutritious breakfast.** Fruit, eggs, whole grain toast, oatmeal, and low sugar cereal are examples of healthy breakfast foods that will help increase your children's focus at school.

And good nutrition doesn't end with a healthy breakfast. Children need good nutrition all day in order to focus better at school. Make sure to pack your children healthy lunches. If they eat the school lunch, then teach them how to choose healthy foods. Likewise, having a healthy afterschool snack and dinner are also an important part of increasing your children's focus at school.

- ❖ **Engage your children in regular exercise.** A research article in a journal published by the American College of Sports Medicine listed regular physical activity as a factor in improving academic achievement. Additionally, various research studies have shown correlations between regular exercise and decreases in depression, anxiety, and ADHD symptoms, which can often hinder a child's ability to focus at school.

A research digest from The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports reports that regular exercise is a factor in immune health. Children who exercise regularly have fewer colds and upper respiratory infections. Children without nagging sickness will have an easier time focusing at school.

Regular exercise could be as simple as walking to and from school, if the school is a moderate distance and there is a safe walking route. Encourage your children to skate or ride a bike instead of being driven to local places whenever there are safe routes. Assign your children physical chores to do around the house. Encourage physical activity by inviting the whole family to play games like touch football and tag. Buy video games that promote physical activity.