

On-Tasker-Masters!

10 Quick Tips to Help Kids Stay on Task

1. Make sure your directions are clear and understood. Kids can't stay on task if they don't understand what it is that they need to do. If you have your instructions written on the board, make sure that students make their own copy of the instructions for their desk. Also, make sure kids can tell you verbally what it is that you are asking them to do.
2. Make sure kids have everything they need in supplies at their desk before they start their assignment, so they don't have to leave their seat and wander around collecting what they need. It helps if you can put all learning supplies in the same immediate area.
3. Make assignments the appropriate length for the time allotted. Take frequently needed work breaks, and plan academic subjects in the AM. Limit screen time, and incorporate physical activity as much as you can throughout the day.
4. Not every child works at the same rate. Set up a jig-saw puzzle or other activity choice in the back of the room, so that kids can have something to do that is both quiet and cooperative if they finish their assignments early.
5. Make sure your wiggly kids have room to "move" during work time without distracting others. Let them fiddle with focus squishies, or even sit on yoga balls. If they become too distracting to other students, set up a "VERB VILLA" in the back of your room. Remember: Working in the "VERB VILLA" is not a punishment, it is a learning opportunity.
6. Try strategically pairing kids up during work time. Sometimes it is easier to stay on task when you are working with another person. Kids can do wonders for each other through peer tutoring.
7. Tell kids what they "CAN" do and be as opposed to what they "CANNOT." Remember... you always get more bees with honey than you do with vinegar. Always offer more positive reinforcements than negative reinforcements. Instead of saying, "I hope you don't have another day like yesterday," say, "Today is a brand new day and I can't wait to see what you are going to do with it!"
8. Set up a point reward system for staying on task and for finishing assignments. Remember... each child you teach has "What's in it for me?" tattooed to their forehead. Most kids have to be extrinsically motivated before they can teach themselves to become intrinsically motivated.
9. Use a timer. Students who struggle with staying on task often also struggle when it comes to time management. Kids tend to work better if they know there is a set time limit put into place. Make sure you allow enough time when using a timer. If you don't give kids a reasonable amount of time, they may choose not to try at all.
10. Walk around your classroom and monitor what is going on. If you are on task with what your students are doing, they will have an easier time staying on task too.