



## 3–5 Years

### Self-Regulation: Concentration

**WHEN INTRODUCED AND EMPHASIZED:** Weeks 4, 10–11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, and 35

#### BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Concentrating on an Experience
- Concentrating on Self
- Concentrating on Others

## OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

### Concentrating on an Experience

In what ways does the child concentrate on an activity as he/she:

- puts puzzle pieces together (Week 4, Day 1 center activity)?
- puts away materials (any cleanup period after Week 4, Day 1)? Example: attempts to match blocks to the block outline when returning blocks to a shelf
- plays and creates (any free play period after Week 4, Day 1)? Examples: stacks blocks on top of each other; mixes two colors to create a preferred color
- pays attention to and attempts to follow requests in a circle game? Examples: *Orange Circle, Purple Circle* (Week 8, Day 1 or Week 13, Day 2); *The Freeze Game* (Week 9, Day 1 or Week 15, Day 1)

### Concentrating on Self

In what ways does the child concentrate on self as he/she:

- participates in a breathing exercise (Weeks 10, 17, 20, and others)? Examples: watches a stuffed animal/toy move on his/her stomach as he/she breathes; attempts to relax body after scrunching up face or squeezing muscles tight
- calms body for a rest (any rest time after Week 10, Day 1)? Examples: puts hand on tummy; appears to focus on breathing; takes deep calming breaths
- engages in a yoga pose (Weeks 11, 14, 23, and others)?

### Concentrating on Others

In what ways does the child concentrate on others as he/she:

- helps put away materials with staff or other child(ren) in the classroom (any cleanup time after Week 20, Day 1)? Example: Child picks up dolls after noticing another child put away dishes.



- participates in the *Hello Game* (Week 20, Day 1)?
- listens to what staff or other child(ren) say during an organized activity (any large or small group activity after Week 3)?

## FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

### Reinforce

*The following activities are designed to support the ongoing development of concentration skills.*

- Verbally acknowledge children's appropriate behaviors in concentrating on activities, self, and others.

### Concentrating on an Experience

- Encourage a child to describe what he/she is doing to concentrate on an activity. Examples: "How do you figure out where a puzzle piece might go on the puzzle board?" Invite a child to play games that require concentration, such as *Jenga*®. Invite a child to complete an activity that involves concentration, such as drawing a still-life picture or doing a puzzle.

### Concentrating on Self

- Encourage the child to use the book *The ABCs of Yoga for Kids* by Teresa Power to practice various poses.
- During a mealtime, encourage children to focus on how full their stomach feels, the taste of a food item, and how their mouth feels when chewing.

### Concentrating on Others

- Invite a child to participate in an activity in which he/she has to focus on the other child's actions, such as determining how many pennies he/she and another child can put on a boat before the boat sinks.
- Encourage a child to be aware of others by naming classroom children who are absent today or who are playing in a specific area of the room.



## Reintroduce

*The following activities are designed to support the development of concentration among children who find it challenging to concentrate. The activities are also appropriate for all children.*

### Concentrating on an Experience

- Repeat Week 4, Day 1. Remind children what it means to concentrate. Help a child describe how each person is concentrating in the two pictures shown in the activity. Practice one of the activities shown in a picture.
- Provide materials that promote concentration. Draw attention to ways in which a child(ren) is concentrating or attempting to concentrate. Examples: "I see your eyes are looking at the puzzle you are doing." "I see you are taking deep breaths while you work on the puzzle."
- Remember that children are most likely to concentrate on activities that they find interesting and enjoyable. Examples: caring for a classroom pet; building with blocks; drawing; doing puzzles

### Concentrating on Self

- Repeat Week 10, Day 1. Remind children how to concentrate on their breathing to help their bodies feel calm. Help children remember how to quiet their minds and make their thoughts less noisy.
- Encourage children to talk about what they are doing during a yoga pose. Examples: "I am concentrating on taking deep breaths." "I am paying attention to how to hold my pose."

### Concentrating on Others

- Repeat Week 20, Day 1. Remind children what it means to concentrate. Help children think of examples of concentrating on others. Support children as they look at each other and say what color another child's eyes look like.
- Draw attention to how children are concentrating as part of a circle game, such as *Drum Beats*. Examples: "We are concentrating on many different things." "We are paying attention to the drum and to what we are doing with our bodies." "We are making sure we do not bump into anyone."



## EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ENTRIES

We are helping children learn how to concentrate on an activity. I observed Quentin during center time, cleanup, and free play. In each situation, Quentin demonstrated skill in concentrating on an activity. In two activities (puzzle and pegboard), he talked about what he was doing to solve a problem. We are offering Quentin slightly more challenging activities that are of interest to him (especially puzzles) and encouraging him to talk about what he is doing.

We are helping children learn how to concentrate on their own behaviors, feelings, and thoughts. I observed Sarah during a deep breathing activity led by a staff member. She seemed fully focused on her breathing, and on relaxing her face muscles. On three different days in one week, I observed how Sarah gets ready for rest time. Each day she followed the same routine (which included breathing loudly) and then asked for someone to rub her back. We are helping Sarah get ready for rest time by building on her breathing efforts. We are offering verbal guidance on breathing deeply, the same way she does in our breathing activities.

We are helping children learn how to concentrate on others. I observed Youngsung during cleanup and several organized small group activities, during which there were opportunities for children to focus on others. During cleanup, Youngsung put away some toys he had played with but did not respond to an invitation from another child to help put away the blocks. In one small group activity, Youngsung listened attentively to what the staff member said and carried out the requested actions. In another small group activity, Youngsung seemed uninterested in what children in the group were saying. His eyes focused on other parts of the room—not on children in the group. However, Youngsung concentrated on some of what the staff member said and did during this group session. We will continue to provide individualized learning opportunities to help Youngsung develop skills in concentration.