

Attention on Teacher

At lesson, teacher wins child's attention

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Parents' pull on children's attention is powerful. Children monitor their parents' attitudes constantly. At lesson, the teacher needs to win the full attention of the children, keeping it through the lesson. This may take repeated tries, with different approaches. Children can learn when their attention is focused in close observation of the teacher, watching and listening. How can parents help this to happen?

Parents can help this to happen when they themselves take a lesson-observing role, with their own attention on the teacher. Parents become observing students, part of the learning group, Peaceful, contented, quiet. Parents are paying close attention to the teacher. Their example is powerful.

Before entering the lesson, parents enter their student role. This allows the children to relax their parent-monitoring attention, so at lesson they can shift their attention to teacher. Students become all eyes and ears toward teacher.

When the child first enters is teacher's best chance to capture the child's attention for the lesson, to reach to the child's focus and to gather it along throughout the lesson. Parents' reports on home practice can come later when the teacher chooses the moment, after teacher has gotten the lesson moving with the child already engaged.

Parents occupy their silent supportive space while they watch the lesson. This dependably satisfies their children's need for security in parent's approval. The child's focus is now able to stay with the teacher.

(Even a slight comment from the parent can break the child-teacher focus, as parent is the most powerful and constant force in the child's life. If parents stay quiet, the teacher can gain the child's compliance in requests. If, when the child does not comply with teacher's requests, parents instead, hoping to help, repeat the teacher's instruction, the child's attention goes back to the parent rather than learning to stay on the teacher! To help the teacher, the parent can remember the main need is to let the teacher stay the focus of the child's attention. Let the teacher win the child's attention, however long it takes, however many strategies it takes, and let the child's attention learn to stay with the teacher. The teacher can always ask the parent for specific help if needed).

Parents can help the lesson by becoming all eyes and ears, just as the children can help their own learning by becoming all eyes and ears toward the teacher.