

SELF-MONITORING STRATEGIES FOR KIDS

THE OT TOOLBOX
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One of the big executive functioning skills is the ability to self-monitor oneself. Self-monitoring plays into one's ability to notice what is happening in the world around us and what is happening in our own body. The ability to "check" oneself and monitor actions, behaviors, and thoughts as they happen play into our ability to problem solve. Use the tips below to help kids learn how to self-monitor and problem solve. These self-monitoring strategies for kids are applicable in the classroom, home, sports field, or in social situations.

Self-monitoring is a process of metacognition. Metacognition is the ability to plan for and execute a task, monitor one's actions, analyze a problem, apply a strategy, maintain attention, and evaluate or monitor completion of an activity. Ideally, metacognition should occur naturally and instinctively as we engage in an activity.

WHAT IS SELF-MONITORING?

The ability to self-monitor is made up of two main areas:

Observation/Self-Assessment
Recording/Analysis

1.) Observation- In this stage, a child is able to identify a specific behavior, thought, or action that occurred. This might happen during the action or afterwards. In a child who struggles with talking out in class, they may catch themselves as they are interrupting. Another child may realize they spoke out of turn only after the teacher mentions the interruption. In both cases, the child is able to identify what behavior has occurred through self-assessment. This level of self-monitoring is a real struggle for some students and working on the ability to notice the behaviors or actions that are inefficient or inappropriate for the situation. This stage requires a lot of reflection and the ability to recognize an ideal response or appropriate behavior for a specific situation.

Observation, or self-assessment may require work in order for the child to understand targeted behaviors.

SENSORY COPING STRATEGIES

1. MOVE- GET UP AND RUN IN PLACE, JOG, DO JUMPING JACKS, OR HOP IN PLACE.
2. TALK- TALK ABOUT IT TO A FRIEND, TALK TO AN ADULT, OR TALK TO A TEACHER. TALK LOUD, WHISPER, JUST GET IT OUT!
3. SNUGGLE- GRAB A BIG COZY BLANKET AND PILE PILLOWS AROUND YOU TO BUILD A FORT OF COMFORT! THE PRESSURE FROM THE BLANKET AND PILLOWS PROVIDES PROPRIOCEPTIVE INPUT.
4. TAKE A BATH OR HOT SHOWER.
5. BLOW BUBBLES. THE ORAL SENSORY INPUT IS ORGANIZING.
6. DRAW WITH SIDEWALK CHALK. DRAWING CAN RELIEVE STRESS.
7. SENSORY WATER PLAY.
8. SCREAM INTO A PILLOW.
9. POUND PLAY DOUGH. TRY A HEAVY WORK DOUGH LIKE THIS DIY MARSHMALLOW PROPRIOCEPTION DOUGH.
10. TAKE A NAP.
11. EXERCISE.
12. LOOK AT THE CLOUDS AND FIND SHAPES.
13. DEEP BREATHING.
14. TAKE A WALK IN NATURE.
15. PLAY A GAME.
16. BUILD WITH LEGOS
17. LISTEN TO THE SOUNDS OF THE OCEAN. TRY THIS EASY COPING STRATEGY THAT ONLY USES YOUR HANDS.
18. COUNT BACKWARDS. TRY WALKING IN A CIRCLE WHILE COUNTING OR OTHER MOVEMENTS SUCH AS JUMPING, SKIPPING, OR HOPPING.
19. DRINK A COLD DRINK.
20. DRINK A SMOOTHIE.
21. SQUEEZE A STUFFED ANIMAL.
22. LISTEN TO MUSIC.
23. HUM A FAVORITE SONG.
24. BLOW OUT IMAGINARY CANDLES. TAKE A GIANT BREATH AND WHOOOOSH IT OUT!
25. CHEW GUM.
26. TAKE DEEP BREATHS.
27. TEAR PAPER.
28. SMASH AND JUMP ON ICE CUBES OUTDOORS. JUMPING ON ICE IS A GREAT ACTIVITY FOR INCORPORATING PROPRIOCEPTIVE SENSORY INPUT.
29. JOURNAL. THE IMPULSE CONTROL JOURNAL IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL.
30. GUIDED IMAGERY
31. THINK OF CONSEQUENCES.
32. STRETCH.
33. GO FOR A WALK.
34. WRITE A STORY AND THROW IT AWAY.
35. BLOW UP BALLOONS AND THEN POP THEM.
36. TAKE A TIME OUT.
37. DO ANIMAL WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM. HOW MANY CAN YOU THINK OF?
38. IMAGINE THE BEST DAY EVER.
39. SWING ON SWINGS. SWING AS HIGH AS YOU CAN GO!
40. NAME 5 POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT YOURSELF.

Clothing Sensitivity "Red Flags"



- Prefers a specific clothing material (e.g. only cotton or only lightweight fabrics)
- Child is bothered by seams
- Is bothered by tags
- Dislikes sleeves hitting wrists
- Dislikes hems of pants hitting ankles
- Wears only shorts even in very cold weather
- Wears only pants even in very hot weather
- Prefers clothing without buttons/snaps/zippers/ties
- Sensitive to collars hitting neck
- Unable to tolerate shoes
- Prefers only certain socks or shoes
- Dislikes when socks slide down in shoes
- Prefers feet to be totally uncovered or totally covered
- Unable to tolerate a belt or tight waistband
- Dislikes underwear or prefers only a certain type of underwear
- Bothered by seams in underwear
- Bothered by length of underwear
- Prefers tight clothing
- Unable to tolerate jeans
- Hates coats
- Prefers heavy layers of clothing
- Complains of "itching skin" with certain materials or types of clothing
- Complains of clothing tickling the skin
- Has meltdowns when it's time to get dressed in the morning



FREE Classroom Sensory Motor Ideas

- Movement breaks and brain breaks
- Toss a ball
- Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes and other movement rhymes
- Paper clip chain fidget toy
- Water with a straw
- Quiet corner
- Toss large pillow
- Move desks
- Carry stacks of books
- Pushing a loaded cart to other rooms in the building
- Carry a bucket of lunch boxes back from the school cafeteria after lunch
- Help move gym mats or other equipment
- Cutting through card stock for bulletin boards
- Staple bulletin boards to decorate each month
- Place chairs on desks at the end of the day
- Pulling chairs down from desks at the start of each day

SENSORY PROCESSING RED FLAGS



- ___My child has specific behaviors during his/her day.
- ___My child has strange tendencies.
- ___My child seems different in many ways than other children his/her age.
- ___My child has trouble "switching gears".
- ___My child has trouble with transitions.
- ___My child seems "off" during outings such as the grocery store, church, or doctor's offices.
- ___My child has trouble in social situations such as holiday get-togethers, birthday parties, or classroom free time.
- ___My child doesn't seem confident.
- ___My child prefers certain textures, sounds, sights, tastes, scents, positions, or movements.
- ___My child avoids certain textures, sounds, sights, tastes, scents, positions, or movements.
- ___My child doesn't act like other kids.
- ___My child gets upset by confined spaces.
- ___My child gets upset by certain sounds like lawnmowers.
- ___My child is difficult to calm down at times.
- ___My child wakes up at "full speed" and doesn't stop all day.
- ___My child can not control the volume of his/her voice.
- ___My child can not stop jumping/spinning/bouncing/crashing.
- ___My child strictly avoids jumping/spinning/bouncing/crashing.
- ___My child is drawn to specific repetitive motions or activities.
- ___My child strictly avoids specific repetitive motions or activities.
- ___My child seems to have a problem that is difficult to pin point.
- ___My child seems to struggle to keep up with other kids.
- ___My child has no fear.
- ___My child has extreme fears.
- ___My child seems withdrawn at times.
- ___My child doesn't seem to notice details.
- ___My child seems overly preoccupied with details.
- ___My child doesn't seem to notice when they fall and get hurt.
- ___My child doesn't notice dangerous situations (age-appropriately).
- ___My child avoids certain food textures.