

## **Preparing the Student to Write**

Students that are exhibiting low energy/activity levels such as slumping in their seat, decreased interest, or appear "sleepy" may benefit from utilizing strategies listed below to facilitate a more stimulating classroom environment.

### **Creating a Stimulating Classroom Environment**

- Visual Stimulation (Use bright warm colors)
- Auditory Stimulation (Loud, fast music and/or use a high or low voice)
- Olfactory Stimulation (Use alerting scents, such as citrus and peppermint)
- Movement Stimulation (Encourage movement breaks)
- Mouth tools- (Tart and sour tastes, crunchy snacks, chewy or sucking objects, gum)

Students that are exhibiting increased or "high energy" levels such as difficulty focusing, staying in seat, and or fidgeting may benefit from utilizing strategies that facilitate a more calming classroom environment.

### **Creating a Calming Classroom Environment**

- Visual (Use cool colors, decrease the use of visual distractions, such as posters, reduce light level)
- Auditory (Seat the student away from windows and doors, speak in slow, even tones)
- Olfactory (Use calming scents, such as vanilla and coconut)
- Movement (Slow rocking)
- Movement breaks
- Mouth tools delete this(if allowed) and replace with-(gum, chewy or sucking objects)

### **Warm-Up Exercises**

- Itsy bitsy spider
- Finger flicks
- Weight bearing activities - desk/chair push-ups

- **Classroom Positioning**
- **Sitting Posture**
  - Trunk should be upright with feet flat on the floor
  - Arms flexed, approximately 2" below desktop
  - Student should be facing the teacher
- **Alternate Writing Positions**
  - Chalkboard activities promote functional hand position, postural stability and fewer distractions
  - Sitting on a ball
  - Lying on stomach on the floor
  - Sitting in a bean bag chair
  - Kneeling at a low table
- **Paper Position**
  - Right-handed student - paper should be tilted 25-30 degrees to the left
  - Left-handed student - paper should be tilted 30-35 degrees to the right
  - Non-dominant hand should assist with stabilization of paper
- **Pencil Grasp**
  - Open web space between the thumb and index finger, various grips are acceptable

## REFERENCE

- Amundson & Weil (1996). In J. Case-Smith (Ed) Occupational therapy for children (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). (p. 536-537). St. Louis, MO: Mosby.
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- Levine-Johnson, Kristin. (1991). Fine motor dysfunction therapeutic strategies in the classroom. Therapy Skill Builders: Tucson, AZ.