

What is the reason behind a child being unable to sit still in class?



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Source: School Supervisor's Notes by author Wu Shan-ying

Children may have trouble sitting still in class due to either being too energized or being a gifted student or having ability issue. How do these two situations cause them to be unable to sit still, and how can parents help them?

For gifted students, they need to use two sensory systems at the same time to stabilize their attention. For example, if a gifted student needs to count and write down steps to solve a problem, how can they be encouraged to do so calmly? One method is to listen to music, and in fact, many adults also listen to music while working to calm their minds. When listening to music while working, it occupies two of your senses at the same time, so you don't have spare capacity to command your hands or feet to move, which helps to keep you calm.

Another reason why some children are unable to sit still is due to ability issues. Simply put, if you ask a 3-year-old to do something at the level of a 7-year-old, it is beyond their abilities, but this is a common practice in Hong Kong. As children grow older, their self-awareness will relatively increase.



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As I mentioned earlier with a reading comprehension exercise, a child already said, "This is too hard, I'm just a K3 student." They already know they don't understand, so asking them to do it anyway is meaningless. As a teacher, you should break down the article and teach it in parts to cultivate a child's correct mindset. The child showed me the article and said, "I don't understand even the first sentence." I replied, "Then let's skip it and focus on the main idea first." The child gradually guessed the main idea with one or two understandable words, and eventually understood the content and purpose of the article.

Therefore, as long as a child feels capable of doing something, they will gradually read through the entire article and eventually realize that they are capable of understanding it. You need to determine the reason why a child cannot concentrate. Some are too fast in thinking, some are incompetent, some are unable to hear, even if they concentrate, or they cannot control themselves. All of these reasons need to be identified and addressed.