

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

*Ways to encourage development of attention in your preschooler throughout your day/week.*

ACTIVITY/TIME OF DAY	ENVIRONMENT	INTERACTIONS	GAMES/TOYS
Waking Up	<p><b>Favourite music</b> can be a great way to develop the ability to focus together, especially songs with words, or dancing to a favourite rhythm – whatever way you like to “digest” your music in the morning, it can help!</p> <p>Now is a good time to introduce a <b>visual schedule</b> if your child worries about the day, gets distracted or tends to be disorganized. A Visual schedule has pictures of routine tasks/places that you develop together. Your child checks of the list as they go – this helps to keep them focussed on what they need to do. There are lots of beautiful homemade versions and several commercial ones – just google or visit Pinterest for ideas.</p>		Try a <b>surprise box</b> as a family routine – every morning there is a different toy/game from their selection (or your private stash) that comes out to play to help keep them occupied!
Breakfast	Ensure <b>good seating</b> with solid back and foot support so they can concentrate on eating, chewing and swallowing.	Avoid having your children eat alone – even if it means just have a cup of tea/coffee while they eat. Being social with them will increase the likelihood that they will focus on their meal.	For fussy eaters, fun plates, cutlery and placemats can make mealtimes more enjoyable. Crazy straws can help make drinking fun (and the sucking improves concentration and eye movements!) Mealtimes need to be screen free.
Getting Ready	<b>Organize clothing in drawers and hanging spaces your child can get to.</b> Be consistent with where they are stored, and if you love labelling, try labels with pictures. This will make getting ready for outings/school easier.	Make getting ready fun with songs for each part e.g. “This is the way we...”	Toileting for boys – target shooting cheerio cereal.  Vibrating tooth brushes for children can help with focussing on brushing teeth. Have a step stool so they can see what they’re doing.
In The Car	On long trips, take breaks in places where your pre-schooler can not only to the toilet, but run, swing or climb.	Play the “Traffic Light Game” – how long will it take for the light to change? Let’s count...”	Soft toys for cuddly uneasy travellers.  Favourite music, or audiobooks, through headphones.

		<p>“Spotto” – call out Spotto when you see a yellow car, how many can you find (substitute whatever colour you prefer – just needs to be fairly rare)</p>	<p><b>Chewing gum</b> can help with focus (and settle car sickness)</p>
<b>Late Morning</b>	<p>Before it gets too hot is a good time to get outside for some physical play.</p>	<p>A great time for rough house play – be sure to demonstrate asking permission. Always stop if a child says stop, and reinforce this behaviour in them.</p> <p>If too “wired” by this type of play, make sure actions are more sustained “hug-like” and the movements are rhythmic.</p>	<p>Swings, scooters, climbing frames and slides work the muscles hard and activate the sensory systems that support attention.</p> <p>Ball games of all kinds help develop visual attention</p>
<b>Early Afternoon</b>	<p>After active play and lunch is a good time to concentrate on some tabletop activities either inside or out.</p> <p>Many pre-schoolers still need an afternoon nap (or at least a rest) – this will help with focus, memory and mood. Avoid letting children sleep past 3pm in the afternoon as it can make nightly sleep more challenging to achieve.</p>	<p>Join with your child, avoid telling them what to do with their constructions – instead comment on the size or colour or how hard they’re working on it.</p> <p>Listen and accept their explanation of their creation – this conversation builds trust and confidence in your child, and extends their thinking skills.</p>	<p>Construction toys, jigsaw puzzles and arts and crafts are good at this time. If not preferred, remember the rule of thumb and keep to 4-5 minutes at a time (this means doing something that is easy to finish!).</p>
<b>Early Evening</b>	<p>So often “witching time”! Especially for children who have been away from home all day. Now is the time to set them up for an easy transition to bed.</p> <p>Natural or soft lighting wherever possible. Relaxing music (this might be body music for active children such as “Sacred Earth Drums” or quiet instrumentals such as Baroque for Modulation, Jazz or family favourites.</p>	<p>If your pre-schooler has been away from you all day, they will be wanting your attention. Take 15 minutes to just “be” with your child/children – cuddle, talk and do NO chores. Time is tight that’s true, but this 15 minutes will save you a great deal of grief if you can manage it. Put that music on and pull out something that the children can relax with while you reconnect.</p>	<p>One of our favourites for this time of day is tactile play – have large plastic tupperware containers with preferred tactile materials – this could be rice, sand, dry pasta, Lego, playdough (even aromatherapy play dough) or water beads. <b>Seek &amp; Find</b> Works well here.</p> <p>If you start with your child, after a little while, you’ll be able to leave them happily to play with it to prepare dinner or take care of other things while it does its’ calming magic.</p>

<b>Bath Time</b>	If baths are a quiet, relaxed time for your pre-schooler – it's a good time for story telling, word play and quiet focussed learning/interaction.	Transitions into and out of the bath can be challenging at times. This is where a visual schedule for the afternoon/evening can be helpful. Set the routine up so that there is something pleasant to go to immediately after bath time.	Foam letters, jugs, cups and boats make excellent play things for the bath tub. If you want to get adventurous, then water wheels that adhere to the bathroom wall gives your child an activity to focus on and explore early maths/physics concepts
<b>Bed Time</b>	<p>Time of day is important here. Ideally, pre-schoolers are getting at least 10 hours sleep a day.</p> <p>Screens are off an hour before bed, and lights dimmed.</p> <p>Screens of all kinds are best avoided in bedrooms for best quality sleep. Good sleep is vital for a child to sustain attention during the day.</p>	<p>Quiet activities such as reading together, building or drawing are settling.</p> <p>Being able to get to sleep independently is a reflection of sound self-regulation (like sound attention).</p> <p>Pre-schoolers should be left drowsy but not fully asleep in their own beds with room lights off – gentle lighting from a night light or air diffuser and help nervous children sleep better.</p>	<p>Cuddly toys are a great comfort to children to help them sleep – if using them it's best to use low nap fabric toys that are machine washable.</p> <p>A standing fan is a relatively inexpensive way to provide white noise to cover background noise for children who wake easily to sound. Face the fan away from them outside of the summer months, and work at about level 2.</p>

When making change, it can be tempting to try everything all at once. From experience we know that can be overwhelming!

Instead, just choose 1-2 new strategies/activities to try each week until you've established if it's for you or not. Then add the next change you would like to try. We've included a blank weekly schedule to start with on the next page.

To focus on improving attention with intensity, play the games we've supplied at least 3 times per week for several weeks. Feel free to adapt as you feel your child needs.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to email us at [support@lifespanfundamentals.com](mailto:support@lifespanfundamentals.com) .

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							