



THE DANGERS OF DISTRACTION



Suitable for children in Grade 3-6

Distraction is one of leading causes of road accidents – whether it is distracted pedestrians, motorists or cyclists. The following activity will help your child understand how distraction affect concentration and focus, and therefore paying close attention to what is going on around them while walking or biking about their neighbourhoods is important for their safety.

DEFINITIONS AND DISCUSSION

Start off having a discussion with your child and going over some basic definitions. Ask them the some of the following questions to prompt them:

- What do you think the words focus and concentration mean? (paying attention to something.)
- What are some things that you need to focus or concentrate on? (i.e., homework, watching a movie, playing a game, reading)
- What do you think distractions is? (a thing that prevents someone from giving full attention or focus to something else)
- What are some things that distract you?
- What does a distraction do to your focus/concentration? (It breaks your focus and makes it hard to concentrate - takes your focus and full attention away)

DEFINITIONS

Focus: Pay particular attention to.

Concentration: The action or power of focusing one's attention or mental effort.

Distraction: a thing that prevents someone from giving full attention to something else.

MATERIALS



- 2 puzzles (that are relatively easy to complete – recommend using two 12 piece puzzles that your child is not familiar with completing already)

- A timer

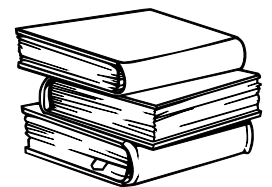
- A TV/tablet (something you can play a video they like on)

- A bouncy ball

- Background music (i.e., the radio or a favourite soundtrack of theirs)

- A favourite book

- A snack they like



PART 1

1. First have your child(ren) complete the first puzzle in total silence and time them using a timer.
2. If you think they may take a while to complete the puzzle – you can let them know that you are giving them 5 minutes to do it but they can put their hand up to indicate they are done if they are before 5 minutes is up.
3. Record the time that it takes them to finish the puzzle OR once 5 minutes is up, have them stop and count how many pieces they have left and record that.

PART 2

1. Next — turn on the background music, queue up the video and get their snack ready for them to eat.
2. Have them begin the next puzzle. Let them know they can watch the video and/or eat their snack while they are doing the puzzle but that you are still timing them and see if they can beat their previous record.
3. While they are completing the puzzle etc, every 20-30 seconds have them get up and do one of the following things before they can go back to completing the puzzle:
 - a. Sing with the music while doing the puzzle.
 - b. Stop and read a page out of their favourite book out loud.
 - c. Stop and tell you what they like about the video that is playing.
 - d. Stop and get up and bounce the ball 10 times.
 - e. Stop and look around the room for three things that are blue.
 - f. Stop and get up and do 10 jumping jacks.
 - g. Keep distracting them every 20-30 seconds until 5 minutes is up and/or they have completed the puzzle. Ensure that you note how long it took/how many pieces they have left.

DISCUSSION: DISTRACTION AND ROAD SAFETY

- How far did you get with your puzzle the first time when you did it in quiet and then the second time when there was lots going on? Did you finish it/how many pieces did you have left over compared to last time?
- What was I doing the second time you were completing your puzzle? Creating distractions.
- Why do you think the distraction caused you to complete the puzzle more slowly? Kept taking our focus away.
- This is what distractions do to your focus. They slow your senses, brain and reaction time down and they make it harder to focus on the task at hand. They also make you react slower to unexpected things you might encounter in your environment.
- What are some things that could distract you as a pedestrian? Have them come up with a few examples.
- What can you do to be safe from distractions while walking? Have them come up with a few examples. (i.e., Put away books/mobile devices, take off head phones, keep attention on surroundings.)
- What can you do to be safe while walking near distracted drivers? Have them come up with a few examples. (i.e., Make eye contact, being visible, giving drivers lots of time to see them before they cross, ensure driver are slowing down before they cross the street.)