

## Is Your Son Struggling In School?

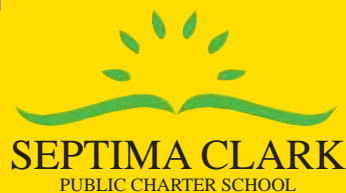
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## Mind In Motion

### Helping Your Hands-On Learner

BY ED-GENUITY CONSULTANTS

**D**o you have a hands-on learner? You know the one – the child who has to touch everything in sight. Who walks down a hall dragging his/her hands along the wall. Who is always running, hopping or twirling – never walking – from one place to the next. Who doodles or taps a pencil when sitting. Who may feel compelled to take your toaster apart to see how it works. And to your relief, put it back together in perfect working condition. These children really aren't trying to annoy you. That's just how they engage their world. Since they are in constant motion, you need some tips to keep their minds on the move as well.

#### Move

Hands-on children like to (have to) use their hands. So they need things to twist, shake, push, bounce, stack, push, pull and squish. They love pull toys, kiddie tool kits, finger-paint, clay or Play-Doh. Ask these children to recite the alphabet or count while clapping their hands. Play with magnet letters and numbers on the fridge or with fingers in the sand to practice spelling and counting. For even more yummy fun, write out letters or numbers in mounds of whipped cream. Cut out letters in sand paper or felt. Shape numbers out of Play-Doh or use their own bodies. Draw chalk words on the sidewalk, and let your child walk the letters or act out the meaning of the words. Let your child act out stories and poems while you read if he/she has trouble keeping still.

#### Touch

Blocks and balls are made for little hands. They come in different sizes, colors, textures and designs. So while your child is playing, you can point to the red ball or practice letters with alphabet blocks. Have your child count the number of blocks in the castle that he/she has built. Use blocks to work on concepts like next to, over, under, behind and on top of. Older children will enjoy Lincoln Logs, LEGOs or robotics and science kits. What could be better than puzzles for a child who wants to take things apart and put them back together? Try 3D puzzles to take the challenge it up a notch. And of course you will want to channel some of that energy into dance, sports or gymnastics. Articles and books on the ballet or favorite athletes will build on your child's interests.

#### Create

If your child has a more artistic bent, flip through old magazines and cut out letters and numbers. Create a collage of all vowels or the number four. Check out crafts like sewing, beading, sculpting or woodworking. Visit the library to find how-to books about your child's favorite crafts. Collect boxes – from shoe boxes to large appliance boxes. Supply some glue, stickers, buttons, yarn, colored paper, old fabric, rope, paper plates and pipe cleaners. Then let your child loose on the boxes with scissors and markers. You may find that you have quite the little architect or inventor on your hands. With a camera and a scrapbook, children can document their masterpieces.

Because actors get to move around in their roles, drama often appeals to these children. Your child doesn't have to be in a formal drama program. You and your child can create a simple prop box.

Gather some old clothes and household items (such as sunglasses, a flashlight or sheets). Throw in some sock puppets for good measure. Lively home productions will flow from your child's imagination. If your child wants to produce digital stories, you might try computer animation.

### Study

Remember that these are the students who learn by doing. So it should come as no surprise that they need to move when they learn new things in school. They need to take frequent study breaks. They can handle about 30 minutes of study followed by a five-minute break. Use a timer, or they may "forget" to come back from break. You may see these students tapping their feet, chewing gum or squeezing one of those stress balls. It may help to study in a chair that rocks or has wheels, so they can move while sitting. Others need to stand up or walk around. Some have even been known to learn their multiplication tables while bouncing a ball. They need to highlight or underline key concepts while they read so that their hands are engaged in the learning process.

Most children – and adults – tend to have a favorite way they learn most effectively. Your child needs to touch, build and move. Your role is to provide learning activities that build on your child's mode of learning. Here are some resources to keep your active child's mind moving forward.

*Ed-Genuity offers a team of education consultants with expertise in areas such as curriculum development, parental involvement, professional development for teachers and counselors, leadership development for administrators and pre-college academic enrichment programs. They have worked extensively with schools, colleges, community organizations and churches. You can e-mail the Ed-Genuity team at [ed\\_genuity@yahoo.com](mailto:ed_genuity@yahoo.com). ★*

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