

## **Keep Students On Track**

### **Description:**

Many students with ADHD struggle with sustained attention problems. Even those without ADHD can struggle staying focused. Those students who have problems with sustaining attention cannot sustain interest in one activity long enough to acquire the main ideas of lessons or to complete the requirements of tasks. Materials like sticky notes or adhesive-backed paper like Post-Its, and highlighters are used as support materials because they are present in most educational settings, inexpensive, easy to use, and portable so children can be taught to use similar strategies at home.

### **Materials:**

- Sticky notes
- Highlighters
- School/Home Folders
- Planners

### **Preparation:**

- Have the home and school folders made ahead of time
- Make sure the student knows what exactly the sticky notes are for (not for playing with them, but to mark their tasks)
- Teach students to use sticky notes and highlighters to follow along with teacher-led instruction or with independent work. An example of this is for students to use a sticky note to mark where they stop within an assignment when they take a break.

### **Steps in implementing this intervention:**

**Step 1:** Have students create an order for their completion of tasks in a list form.

**Step 2:** For staying on task during independent seatwork, have students label what assignments attend to first according to their list (e.g., on a sticky note, write a “1st” (first), “2nd” (second), and “3rd” (third)). Students can also use different colors of highlighters to highlight what to attend to first (e.g., yellow) and second (e.g., pink) within assignments.

**Step 3:** Keep students on track. Students can use sticky notes at their desks to remind them what they need to do during a specific time period (e.g., hour, morning, afternoon). Even marking assignments with specific completion times could remind students to stay on task.

**Step 4:** For different assignments, have students place sticky notes at the beginning and end of the assignment so they know how much they have done so far, and how much is left to do.

**Step 5:** For assignments that need to be taken home, have the students place sticky notes in their home folders or planners with reminders of what to take home and what to bring back to school the next day. Take-home and bring-to-school sticky notes could be different colors if that would help.

**Step 6:** Praise the student for their on-task behavior to help reinforce them to continue staying on task.

**Tips:**

- For this to be effective, the students must be old enough to use the materials and need to be able to use this independently to keep them on track.
- Allow freedom for the students to make their lists independently choosing which tasks they want to do first, second, etc.
- It is helpful if the parents are on board with this. If they keep this system going at home, the students could get more familiar with it; reinforcing the use of this system.

**Reference:**

Stormont, M. A. (2008). Increase Academic Success for Children with ADHD Using Sticky Notes and Highlighters. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 43(5)*, 305-308.