

5 Tips to Help Students with Motor Planning Deficits

Here are 5 tips for students with motor planning deficits:

1. Take a tour. It can be difficult for children with motor planning issues to adapt to a classroom, hallways or obstacles. Make sure the student feels comfortable in the environment by allowing him/her ample time to explore the room by moving through the room. Walk around the desks and chairs, sit down and stand up in the classroom chair and walk to the teacher's desk or exit. By practicing these activities, preferably with no one in the classroom to

start, it helps the student to develop a motor map of the area. Try to do the same with walking to the cafeteria, gym and other rooms.

2. Use the same supplies each day. Many classrooms share supplies but it may help the student to generate automatic motor plans quicker by using the same school supplies every time. For example, if you change the pencil (ie short, long, sharp, dull, etc) you need a different motor plan. If you change the brand of scissors you may need a new motor plan.

3. Use signs and cues. If the student needs visual cues to assist with motor planning, hang up signs to indicate different areas of the classroom or school. You could have the student follow red dots on the floor to the exit door. This will provide an extra visual cue to assist the student in formulating motor plans. Perhaps put a check list on the student's desk for what steps they need to take to pack up their things at the end of the day. These visual cues help the student to complete the skill independently without having to ask for help.

4. Keep it the same. Keep the set up of the classroom the same so that the student is prepared for what objects they need to move around in order to negotiate the classroom.

5. Break large tasks into small tasks. Children with motor planning issues benefit from breaking down large tasks into smaller chunks. For example, instead of completing an entire project in one night spread it out across several nights to complete it. Due to new stressors during back to school or after a vacation, even children who have made great progress in their abilities to formulate motor plans may need to use this technique.

