

Sample Return to School Strategies and/or Approaches for Cognitive and Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties

Sample Strategies and/or Approaches for Cognitive Difficulties

Post-Concussion Symptoms	Impact on Student's Learning	Potential Strategies and/or Approaches
Headache and fatigue	Difficulty concentrating, paying attention, or multitasking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure instructions are clear (for example, simplify directions, have the student repeat directions back to the teacher) • Allow the student to have frequent breaks or return to school gradually (for example, 1-2 hours, half-days, late starts) • Keep distractions to a minimum (for example, move the student away from bright lights or noisy areas) • Limit materials on the student's desk or in their work area to avoid distractions • Provide alternative assessment opportunities (for example, give tests orally, allow the student to dictate responses to tests or assignments, provide access to technology)

Post-Concussion Symptoms	Impact on Student's Learning	Potential Strategies and/or Approaches
<p>Difficulty remembering or processing speed</p>	<p>Difficulty retaining new information, remembering instructions, and accessing learned information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a daily organizer and prioritize tasks • Provide visual aids/cues and/or advance organizers (for example, visual cueing, non-verbal signs) • Divide larger assignments/assessments into smaller tasks • Provide the student with a copy of class notes • Provide access to technology • Repeat instructions • Provide alternative methods for the student to demonstrate mastery

Post-Concussion Symptoms	Impact on Student's Learning	Potential Strategies and/or Approaches
Difficulty paying attention/concentrating	Limited/short-term focus on schoolwork and Difficulty maintaining a regular academic workload or keeping pace with work demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate assignments and projects among all teachers • Use a planner/organizer to manage and record daily/weekly homework and assignments • Reduce and/or prioritize homework, assignments, and projects • Extend deadlines or break down tasks • Facilitate the use of a peer note taker • Provide alternate assignments and/or tests • Check frequently for comprehension • Consider limiting tests to one per day and student may need extra time or a quiet environment

Adapted from Davis GA, Purcell LK. The evaluation and management of acute concussion differs in young children. Br J Sports Med. Published Online First 23 April 2013 doi:10.1136/bjsports-2012-092132

Sample Strategies and/or Approaches for Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties

Post-Concussion Symptoms	Impact on Student's Learning	Potential Strategies and/or Approaches
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<p>Anxiety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased attention/concentration • Overexertion to avoid falling behind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the student of any changes in the daily timetable/schedule • Adjust the student's timetable/schedule as needed to avoid fatigue (for example, 1-2 hours/periods, half-days, full-days) • Build in more frequent breaks during the school day • Provide the student with preparation time to respond to questions
<p>Irritable or frustrated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate or impulsive behaviour during class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage teachers to use consistent strategies and approaches • Acknowledge and empathize with the student's frustration, anger, or emotional outburst, if and as they occur • Reinforce positive behaviour • Provide structure and consistency on a daily basis • Prepare the student for change and transitions • Set reasonable expectations • Anticipate and remove the student from a problem situation (without characterizing it as punishment)

<p>Light/noise sensitivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties working in classroom environment (for example, lights, noise) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange strategic seating (for example, move the student away from window or talkative peers, proximity to the teacher or peer support, quiet setting) • Where possible provide access to special lighting (for example, task lighting, darker room) • Minimize background noise • Provide alternative settings (for example, alternative work space, study carrel) • Avoid noisy crowded environments such as assemblies and hallways during high traffic times • Allow the student to eat lunch in a quiet area with a few friends • Where possible provide ear plugs/headphones, sunglasses
<p>Depression/ withdrawal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal from participation in school activities or friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build time into class/school day for socialization with peers • Partner student with a “buddy” for assignments or activities

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Please Note: “Compared to older students, elementary school children are more likely to complain of physical problems or misbehave in response to cognitive overload, fatigue, and other concussion symptoms.” (*Concussion in the Classroom. (n.d.). Upstate University Hospital Concussion*

Management Program. Retrieved from

<http://www.upstate.edu/pm/healthcare/programs/concussion/pdf/classroom.pdf>

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