

How to use the blue breaks for homework

1. Find out what subjects you have to do
2. Write a schedule of the homework you have to do:
 - Decide with your child which subjects he/she want to do first. If this is an issue (only wants to do the subjects he/she likes etc) you will need to decide the order
 - Write the subjects in order
3. Now draw in or stick blue break symbols with blu tak between the subjects. Start off with a blue break to prepare the body and mind for work (attain a calm alert 'just right' state needed for focus and concentration). Schedule a blue break at the end and a favoured activity after that.
Note: blue breaks are not the motivators or rewards for completing work: they need to be carried out regardless of work performance).
4. Have the pictures and descriptions of the blue breaks which are suitable for your child.
5. When it is time for a blue break, either show your child the activity or give him/her a choice of 2.
6. Breaks can be at the table or away from the table. They need to be short (1-5 mins max), and structured, so the child gets the sensory benefit (i.e. regain focus and concentration) and not distracted from their homework. If there is structure it will be easier to get back to work.
7. As the blue system is implemented, your child may begin to ask for a blue break. **This is to be encouraged**, as it is an essential part of self regulation. Remember you are still in control of the breaks: you can say 'Ok, it's great that you could ask for a break: chair push ups or push 5's'? When children realize they cannot go off and play their favourite computer game etc, they will begin to ask for blue breaks for genuine reasons, i.e. they are tired, overloaded, not able to concentrate etc. If you think they are genuinely escaping from the task at hand and don't actually need a break, you can say something like: 'I'm glad you asked; you can have one when your maths is finished'. But more often than not, when a child asks for a break, they should get one.