

Spacing Out!

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Summary: Hunter loves to read about space, draw pictures about space, and imagines himself soaring through the atmosphere as an astronaut some day! But his day dreams are interfering with his ability to get his work done in class. With help from his dad and teacher, Hunter learns the steps to completing tasks.--Publisher.

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My name is

HUNTER LANE

and I'm in third grade.

Last summer, my dad took me to Kennedy Space Center. Ever since, all I can think about is space! When I grow up, I want to be an astronaut. My teacher says my "space travels" are keeping me from finishing my work. I guess you can say I'm a bit of a

"space cadet"!



When I got back to class,
Mrs. Julian told all of us to put our
stuff away and get ready for the test. **Test?**
Oh no! I forgot to study last night!

Maci passed out the tests. At first
I was off to a good start.
Then I heard my
space book calling
my name!

HUUNNTEERRR! HUUNNTEERRR!



When my shuttle landed, I couldn't wait
to write my name in the moon dust.
It was awesome!

Before long, I heard NASA call to me on my radio.

"Earth to Hunter!" the voice said.

"Hunter Lane, do you hear me?"
the voice repeated.

This time I recognized **THE VOICE**.
It wasn't NASA at all... it was Mrs. Julian.

Yikes!



“You’re such a space case,” said Carley.
“Come back to planet Earth,” chuckled Jenny. “Yeah, Hunter Bunter the Alien Hunter!” Trey snickered.

“Boys and girls, are those kind words? Stay focused on your work,” Mrs. Julian said. Then she knelt next to me, “Hunter Lane, you have five more minutes to complete the test. You’d best get going.” Complete the test?!... I just started! I guess it’s safe to say I didn’t do well on THIS mission.



Notes to Parents and Educators

As the story of Hunter Lane so vividly demonstrates, children can quickly (and repeatedly) get distracted, lose focus, and fail to follow through. Whether in school or at home, there are several strategies you can use to help children stay on task and be successful!



Encourage careful listening. Children must be able to hear and understand any instructions before they begin a project. You can encourage better listening by making sure their eyes are on you, and your eyes are on them. Eye contact is a nonverbal cue that helps focus attention on what's being said. With all the digital distractions kids have at their fingertips, plus everyday interruptions (a barking dog at home or an unexpected visitor to the classroom), you can't assume children are listening simply because you're speaking.



Have children restate or summarize what was said. This is a great way to ensure your instructions were heard and understood correctly. It's also a good idea to give children time to ask questions so any confusion or misunderstandings can be clarified and corrected before they begin their work.



Divide large tasks into small tasks. Children who struggle to maintain focus can easily feel overwhelmed by big or complicated assignments. By breaking large tasks into more manageable chunks, you make it easier for kids to maintain their concentration and be successful. The more success they experience, the more motivated they will be to complete the next task. As their success continues to build, you can gradually increase the size and complexity of the assignments.



Provide positive attention. Listening and following instructions are behaviors that need to be reinforced. Anytime a child, especially one who has had difficulty paying attention or following instructions, listens and does what he or she is told, offer praise. A smile, thumbs-up, or "Awesome job!" are simple ways you can acknowledge the child's effort and deliver positive attention. Using praise to reinforce positive behaviors also fosters healthier relationships with children and provides the motivation they need to change their behaviors.

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