Do's and Don'ts for Managing Attention Difficulties/Hyperactivity

Externalizing behaviors typically observed in the classroom include the following:

Attention Difficulties: *Staring off into space frequently, making simple/silly mistakes, talking to peers, playing with materials/in desk, missing directions (asking for repetition), missing assignments, not following through with homework struggling to follow classroom rules, disorganization.*

Hyperactivity: *Constantly fidgeting and moving, talking when not supposed to, messing with other people's stuff (desk, locker), excessive talking, shouting out, roaming around the room and frequent requests to leave to room or go to the restroom.*

Please consider following these do's and don'ts when managing a student who is exhibiting Attention Difficulties/Hyperactivity:

DO

- Move student to front of class. Consider student's proximity in room as well as to peers and surroundings.
- Provide brain breaks or opportunities to move around when fidgeting occurs.
- Role model methods or ways to address to handle different situations.
- Use frequent and immediate positive reinforcement and recognition.
- Redirect back to lesson if student loses focus, by simple, preset signals (tap on desk, verbal command, etc.).
- Simplify instructions, choices and scheduling.
- Set behavioral expectations. Describe how students are expected to behave during the lesson.
- Provide an advanced organizer to assist with academic work.
- Divide work into smaller units.
- Be predictable and organized.

DO NOT

- Debate/argue with the student as this just feeds student behavior.
- Assume why the behavior or actions are presenting themselves.
- Make threats/ultimatums that you cannot follow through with the student.
- Demean the student for their actions, especially in front of other peers.
- Ignore issues that are brought to your attention. Address them appropriately based on the specific situation.
- Discuss or address situation in front of other students or in public.
- Laugh at the student or situation as this just feeds student behavior.
- Take comments or actions personally.