

## **HOCUS, POCUS, HYPERFOCUS!!!**

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This magical technique takes advantage of the natural ability of visual-spatial children to hyperfocus.

1. Use a quiet work space with a minimum of distractions: no TV, radio, or intrusions. Bring a kitchen timer to the table. Have at hand some specific assignment to complete.
2. The aim is to shut out everything from mind but the work at hand. Get into this mind set of total focus before starting. Taking a deep breath helps. Some children like to wave away “all that stuff around my mind.” (Or think it.)
3. Set the timer for a short period of time, say 8 or 10 minutes. As soon as the timer begins to tick, tell the child, “**Now! Hocus Pocus Hyperfocus!** Do your very best work as fast as possible.” Simply let child work. When the timer goes off, the child **must stop working**. He/she should get up and do something physical (jump on a trampoline, make a sandwich, play with the dog, etc.). No reading or TV watching allowed! After intense concentration, the mind tends to be scattered. A “mini-vacation” acknowledges this.
4. After a brief time (5-8 minutes—will vary with child), reset the timer for the same period of time and have the child again hyperfocus on doing “your very best work as fast as possible. Hocus, Pocus, Hyperfocus!!”
5. As before, when the timer goes off, **stop**. Probably the work will be completed by now, and the quality will be high. Intense focus makes for minimal errors. If not finished, focus again after another “mini-vacation.”
6. Even very long assignments can be completed, taking breaks periodically. With older children or adults, the timer might be set for slightly longer times, say, 12-15 minutes. Generally it is best to keep the periods of intensity short and get into the rhythm: Focused work. Relaxation. Renewed Focus. Occasionally, someone may get drawn into the process and be determined to continue working. If so, that’s fine, but don’t press to make it happen. The **HPH** method works well just as it is even for adults. It is actually a life skill that is great to learn early!
7. If full concentration is not maintained for the short time period set, try a shorter period, 5-7 minutes, for example. The aim is to induce hyperfocus and then use it to advantage.
8. The appropriateness of the task should also be considered. Mindless drill that teaches nothing does induce rebellion rather than hyperfocus. But that is another story!