

Subject: Youth & Family Ministries – Children with Learning Challenges
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Here is a valuable tip from educational consultant Ann Aubuchon of Olympia, WA. She specializes in children with learning challenges, particularly ADD and ADHD. She was a guest presenter sharing some helpful techniques at a monthly teachers' meeting with the Junior Church

teachers at the Center for Spiritual Living in Seattle, WA last year. Many techniques she offered came from Brain Gym, a system of physical movements that produce measurable improvements in learning abilities such as memory, concentration, listening, writing, reading, physical coordination, more. Called educational kinesiology, it has helped many to overcome dyslexia, ADD, and learning problems. You can learn more on their website <http://www.braingym.org/> Recent research indicates these techniques are helpful for Alzheimer's patients as well.

One challenge many teachers have is with grade school aged children who are restless, squirmy, and easily distracted and, consequently, disturb the rest of the class and make doing a lesson very difficult. Ann suggested something that would help with those children and that teachers could easily implement .

Gather a collection of small, quiet manipulative type toys and keep them in a basket in the classroom. She says if you explain to the children what they are for and that they are for personal use only, the kids who need them, will use them. Some ideas for what to put into the basket are

small pieces of clay such as Sculpy or Fimo, squish balls, slide puzzles (education stores have very nice nature ones) and other small manipulative puzzles. Having something to do with their hands gives them focus and it does make a difference.