

## Sample Return-to-School Support Strategies and/or Approaches

COGNITIVE DIFFICULTIES		
Post-concussion Symptoms	Impact on the Student's Learning	Potential Strategies and/or Approaches
Headache and fatigue	Difficulty concentrating, paying attention, or multitasking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure instructions are clear (e.g., simplify directions, have the student repeat directions back to the teacher)</li> <li>allow the student to have frequent breaks or return to school gradually (e.g., 1-2 hours, half-days, late starts)</li> <li>keep distractions to a minimum (e.g., move the student away from bright lights or noisy areas)</li> <li>limit materials on the student's desk or in their work area to avoid distractions</li> <li>provide alternative assessment opportunities (e.g., give tests orally, allow the student to dictate responses to tests or assignments, provide access to technology)</li> </ul>
Difficulty remembering or slowed processing speed	Difficulty retaining new information, remembering instructions, and accessing learned information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a daily organizer and prioritize tasks</li> <li>provide visual aids/cues and/or advance organizers (e.g., visual cueing, non-verbal signs)</li> <li>divide larger assignments/assessments into smaller tasks</li> <li>provide the student with a copy of class notes</li> <li>provide access to technology</li> <li>repeat instructions</li> <li>provide alternative methods for the student to demonstrate mastery</li> </ul>

<p>Difficulty paying attention/ concentrating</p>	<p>Limited/short-term focus on schoolwork</p> <p>Difficulty maintaining a regular academic workload or keeping pace with work demands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordinate assignments and projects among all teachers</li> <li>• use a planner/organizer to manage and record daily/weekly homework and assignments</li> <li>• reduce and/or prioritize homework, assignments, and projects</li> <li>• extend deadlines or break down tasks</li> <li>• facilitate the use of a peer note taker</li> <li>• provide alternate assignments and/or tests</li> <li>• check frequently for comprehension</li> <li>• consider limiting tests to one per day and student may need extra time or a quiet environment</li> </ul>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES</b></p>		
<p><b>Post-concussion Symptoms</b></p>	<p><b>Impact on the Student's Learning</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Strategies and/or Approaches</b></p>
<p>Anxiety</p>	<p>Decreased attention/concentration</p> <p>Overexertion to avoid falling behind</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inform the student of any changes in the daily timetable/schedule</li> <li>• adjust the student's timetable/schedule as needed to avoid fatigue (e.g., 1-2 hours/periods, half-days, full-days)</li> <li>• build in more frequent breaks during the school day</li> <li>• provide the student with preparation time to respond to questions</li> </ul>
<p>Irritability or frustration</p>	<p>Inappropriate or impulsive behaviour during class</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage teachers to use consistent strategies and approaches</li> <li>• acknowledge and empathize with the student's frustration, anger, or emotional outburst, if and as they occur</li> <li>• reinforce positive behaviour</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide structure and consistency on a daily basis</li> <li>• prepare the student for change and transitions</li> <li>• set reasonable expectations</li> <li>• anticipate and remove the student from a problem situation (without characterizing it as punishment)</li> </ul>
Light/noise sensitivity	Difficulties working in classroom environment (e.g., due to lights, noise)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrange strategic seating (e.g., move the student away from window or talkative peers, proximity to the teacher or peer support, quiet setting)</li> <li>• where possible provide access to special lighting (e.g., task lighting, darker room)</li> <li>• minimize background noise</li> <li>• provide alternative settings (e.g., alternative work space, study carrel)</li> <li>• avoid noisy crowded environments such as assemblies and hallways during high traffic times</li> <li>• allow the student to eat lunch in a quiet area with a few friends</li> <li>• where possible provide ear plugs/headphones, sunglasses</li> </ul>
Depression/withdrawal	Withdrawal from participation in school activities or interaction with friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build time into class/school day for socialization with peers</li> <li>• partner student with a “buddy” for assignments or activities</li> </ul>

**Note:** “Compared to older students, elementary school children are more likely to complain of physical problems or misbehave in response to cognitive overload, fatigue, and other concussion symptoms.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Concussion in the Classroom. (n.d.). Upstate University Hospital Concussion Management Program. Retrieved from <http://www.upstate.edu/pmr/healthcare/programs/concussion/pdf/classroom.pdf>.