

# Why Are Our Children So Restless?

By Barbara Ashcroft

Today's children grow up in a fast-paced society. They are bombarded with thousands of visual images flashing simultaneously in front of their eyes. From cartoons to action films and video and computer games they receive ongoing rapid visual and audio stimuli. With the remote control they quickly learn to channel surf, watch two shows at once, and tune out. Extremely loud music from headsets and speakers pierces their eardrums. Advertisers entice them with bigger and better gadgets and toys. They are surrounded with overwhelming choices and distractions at a young age. Family life has become hectic and over-scheduled. We may not be able to completely alter their environment, but we can become aware of its effect on our children and set up some strategies to offset all this over-stimulation.

## The Effect on our Children

- Many children have a hard time settling down, focusing and listening when they have been over-stimulated by so much sensory input.
- Their ability to focus and concentrate on a quiet demanding task has decreased.
- Children have become used to being entertained externally by this type of stimuli and have lost touch with using their own imaginations. They are always expecting action-packed entertainment and thrills. Heard the word "bored" lately?
- Listening skills have almost become a lost art.
- Getting to sleep has become more difficult.
- Our children are beginning to expect everything in life to be "instant"; consequently, they have little patience.
- Hearing impairments are becoming more prevalent.

## What Can We Do?

- Make sure your children have some daily quiet calm-down time. (reading a favourite book, listening to an audio book, working quietly on a hands-on hobby, watching an inspirational movie, having individual special talk times with Mom or Dad, even short meditation to reflective music.)
- Encourage imaginative play, creative hobbies and reading.
- Let them know that **you** also have to take quiet breaks.
- Share with them how **you** focus on long boring tasks and follow through.
- Monitor the amount of time they are involved in over-stimulating activities.
- Develop listening skills through the use of listening games. (75% of their classroom day requires listening)
- Play some soft, quiet, reflective background music.
- Create predictable consistent structures and routines that keep your child emotionally safe and secure.
- Limit their choices and see that those choices are age-appropriate.

- Make sure that your child is getting enough sleep to be able to listen and focus at school the next day.
- Try to keep your own voice calm and soft even while you discipline.
- Turn down the speaker volume. Protect their ear drums.
- Schedule family down time and guard it with your life.
- Slow down, pause and breathe!!!

By Barbara Ashcroft B.A. M.ED.

**Journey to Joy for Parents**

[www.barbashcroft.com](http://www.barbashcroft.com)