

How to Build Better Focus

This summer

The weather is warming up, days are getting longer, and the buzz of lawnmowers fills the evening air, but most importantly, school is almost out for the summer. While our kids anticipate the much-needed break from long days at school, homework, and the rigors of learning, summer can be a great time to work on knowledge and skills for the fall and beyond. Skills like attention.

Here you will learn about sustained and reward-driven attention, why it's important to balance them throughout the summer, and tips and tricks to find a balance between tech and brain-healthy activities. And don't worry; the kids won't even know it.

Practice sustained attention this summer to set your child up for success in the classroom next year.



What's The Difference?

Sustained attention is the ability to maintain targeted concentration and relevant information over prolonged periods. We use sustained attention for studying, memorizing academic information, paying attention in a sports game, classroom setting, note-taking, driving, and even chores.

Reward-driven attention is when we involuntarily shift our attention to something we find more valuable. Reward-driven attention activities can teach the brain that it needs a stimulus or an instant gratification reward to keep attention on a task. Think technology--scrolling on social media or playing video games.

Is It You Against Them?

What you want - help with the yard work, daily chores, hours spent outside, and a summer reading list. What they want - lazy days in front of the TV, sleeping in, and playing video games.

It doesn't have to be you vs. them all summer long. With a bit of planning and structure, you can create a healthy balance and, at the same time, help your child naturally build sustained attention skills to impact the upcoming school year positively.

Here Are Some *great* Ideas

Make A Plan

Create a weekly calendar for yourself and the kids. Set some reasonable expectations for you and them. Your plan should include a healthy balance between sustained attention activities and reward-driven activities.



For example, if you allow 1 hour of video games, schedule a 15-30 min break outside playing.

Make It Fun



We risk a fight whenever we pull our kids away from their personal to-do lists or ask them to do something they would rather not do. Making activities like reading, art projects, or writing stories fun and engaging for the whole family creates positive memories that draw their attention and desire from the simple reward-driven fun they seek.

Make It Stick

So create daily opportunities for your child that require sustained attention - without a reward. It doesn't have to be every day or all day. Think incremental steps. So a little each day to start and then aim for a little more.



Help Build *sustained* Attention with These Easy Starter Ideas



Daily Goals

Aim for 15 minutes of sustained attention activities for every 1 hour of tech per day.



Pick a theme

For the week or month – think about what your child enjoys. Perhaps sports, the ocean, animals, food, or space. The possibilities are endless.



Library

With your theme in mind, pick up some books to help you learn. Find books with more than just information, but also activities.



Then Throughout The Week...

- Read with them
- Do crafts
- Cook together. *See our brain-boosting cool treats on the next page.
- Create imaginative games
- Plan some fun field trips
- Do a puzzle
- Play outside
- Helping around the house
- Create a scavenger hunt
- Talk to a friend or family member
- Household projects
- Move your body: walk, run, exercise, sports

remember!

Sustained attention activities:

1. Have no immediate gratification
2. Can be lots of fun
3. Are age-appropriate



How Brain Balance Can Help

Despite the urge to let your child rest for the summer and recharge for the fall, use this time to help them be more prepared. Brain Balance's holistic, integrated program has been proven effective by research to help positively impact focus, attention, and behavior. With a little work, intentionality, and some help from Brain Balance, you can help achieve more sustained attention and some great family memories in the process.

School year success starts in the summer. Visit **BrainBalance.com** to contact our team and get started with a personalized plan for your child.





brain-healthy popsicle guide

Orange Creamsicle Yogurt Pops



- 2 cups plain yogurt or non-dairy yogurt
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

TIP: Add orange zest for extra orange flavor!
In a medium bowl, whisk together all the ingredients. Pour into ice pop molds, insert a popsicle stick into the center of each and freeze for 6 hours or overnight.

MAKES 5 POPSICLES WITH 12 GRAMS OF ADDED SUGAR PER POP

Coconut Water Pops



- Fresh or frozen diced fruit
- Unsweetened coconut water

Fill popsicle molds with chopped fruit, then pour in coconut water. Freeze until solid, about 6 hours.

0 GRAMS OF ADDED SUGAR PER POP

Fudge Pops



- 1 cup canned full-fat coconut milk
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 6 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

Whisk together all of the ingredients until smooth and well-combined. Pour into popsicle molds. Freeze until solid, about 6 hours.

MAKES 5 POPSICLES WITH 15 GRAMS OF ADDED SUGAR PER POP

Juice Pops



- Pour 100% juice or a homemade smoothie into silicone molds to make popsicles in your favorite flavor.

Note: We recommend limiting juice to 4 to 8 ounces per day. Enjoying juice popsicles counts towards your daily juice tally.

0 GRAMS OF ADDED SUGAR PER POP

We recommend limiting added sugar to 20 grams/day

Brain-Healthy Store-Bought Popsicles



Paleo Passion Pops
Strawberry Passion Pop



Welch's 100% Juice Ice Bars



Mott's Fruitsations Juice Ice Bars



Frozer Frozen Fruit Snacks



GoodPop Red, White & Blue



DeeBee's Organics Super Fruit Freeze