



FOUR STEPS TO A FRESH START IN THE NEW YEAR

GIVE YOUR BRAIN A BOOST WITH THESE HEALTHY HABITS



At Brain Balance, we believe that your child has the potential to thrive. We can help equip them to better handle their own challenges, so they can enjoy and thrive in family gatherings, classrooms, social events, and more. Get a fresh start in the new year with our tips for developing brain-healthy habits that are in line with our leading drug-free program helping kids move beyond challenges to achieve greater success.

1 EAT CLEAN AND FUEL YOUR BODY WITH FRESH FOODS

Health is a lifestyle journey. Good eating is the foundation. When people start a new eating program they are not usually looking forward to it and often try to change too many things in their daily routine to be able to stick with any of them. Make a commitment this year to take small steps towards a cleaner diet and a healthier body and happier brain!

When goal setting, focus on the creation of SMART goal!



- **SPECIFIC:** Instead of "I want to eat cleaner," state, "I want to improve my health by eating more vegetables."
- **MEASURABLE:** For this goal, I might say "my child will eat one serving of vegetables, each day, at lunch. I will record their veggie intake on the family calendar."
- **ACTION ORIENTED:** What is going to be your key to success? Are you going to include your favorite veggies in your weekend shopping, chop them and package in individual baggies so that they're ready for lunch? Make a big pot of veggie soup and pack a thermos for lunch? Have a serving of leafy greens in your usual smoothie?
- **REALISTIC:** If the last time a green vegetable landed on your child's plate was last summer, a vegetable every day is probably too big of a change. Having a serving of veggies twice a week might be a good place to start.
- **TIME BASED:** Start with one small goal over a period of time and then reassess. "I will have one serving of vegetables, twice a week, for the next three weeks. Then I will reassess."





2 GET OUTSIDE AS A FAMILY FOR SOME FRESH AIR AND EXERCISE

Outdoor play is not only beneficial, but also crucial for the brain's healthy development. For children with special needs, outdoor play is especially critical in core muscle development, small motor skill refinement, and increasing coordination. Children need to navigate obstacles, maintain appropriate space around other children, and use their strength to throw, catch, manipulate objects or tackle a jungle gym. When you tell your child to "Go outside and play", you're not just getting him or her out of the house. You're also promoting healthy brain development, as well as a good workout for your child's body



Many children with special needs are also vitamin D deficient, and natural exposure to sunshine can help boost a child's immune system.

Here are some ideas as you head outdoors to play as a family:

- ✓ Go for a Nature Hike
- ✓ Play Frisbee
- ✓ Kick a Ball
- ✓ Swing at the Playground
- ✓ Jump on a Trampoline
- ✓ Play Tennis or Golf
- ✓ Enjoy Unstructured Play in the Woods or at the Beach



3 RESOLVE TO REDUCE FAMILY SCREEN TIME

At Brain Balance, we believe too much screen time affects the ability of the brain to form healthy connections, leading to behavioral problems and other developmental issues. Getting away from screens often improves focus, behavior and academic ability and gives your child more time to burn energy outside, get to know new friends, and enjoy more creative or academic activities.

Here are a few activity ideas to do in lieu of screen time:

- ✓ Write & Illustrate a Story
- ✓ Scrapbook a Recent Event
- ✓ Practice Photography
- ✓ Family Puzzle Night
- ✓ Play Hide & Seek
- ✓ Paint & Build Model Airplane
- ✓ Conduct a Blindfold Taste Test
- ✓ Garden
- ✓ Play Board Games
- ✓ Help a Neighbor

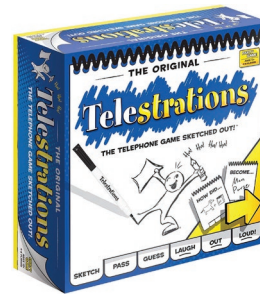


4 BUILD COGNITIVE SKILLS WITH BRAIN BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Introduce games that not only build cognitive skills but also foster motor skills, rule following and focus in a fun and entertaining way. The following brain building games are great screen-free activities for a family night, party or to take along on a family road trip for hours of entertainment!



Tangrams: A great way to teach kids about spatial relationships, tangram puzzles are travel friendly and offer hours of independent play.



Telestrations: The telephone game on a sketch pad, Telestrations builds listening skills and boosts creativity.

Chess / Checkers / Chinese Checkers: Strategy games are a great way to teach planning and critical thinking.



UNO: This colorful card game helps with attention, pattern recognition, and reinforces numbers/colors.



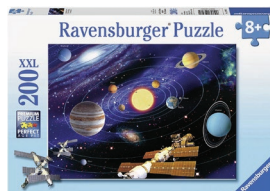
Bingo: Appropriate for all ages, Bingo is a great way to exercise listening and memory skills.



Monopoly: A classic board game that has withstood the test of time, Monopoly offers lessons in financial planning, saving, and adapting to sudden changes (like going to jail!).



MindTrap: This brain building game for older kids aged 10 and up, taps into both the left and right brain for a full brain workout!



Jigsaw Puzzles: A great way to encourage focused, quiet time, jigsaw puzzles help build cognition and improve fine motor skills.



Scrabble: This well known crossword game helps to build vocabulary and improve spelling

Brain Balance Achievement Centers is the leading drug-free program helping kids move beyond challenges to achieve greater success. This personalized program is designed to improve focus, behavior, social skills, anxiety, and academic performance. The program takes an integrative approach to strengthening the brain and its connections through sensory engagement, physical development, academics, and nutrition. Over the past decade, this comprehensive and effective program has helped thousands of individuals nationwide to improve the critical skills needed to create a brighter path for their future.