

Brain Builders

Week #1

Brain Appetizer

The Serpentine

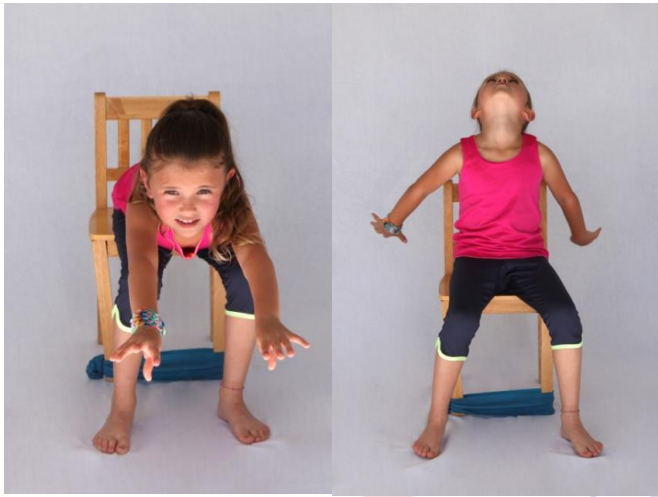
- Cross right leg over left with arms extended straight out in front; thumbs pointing down
- Cross left arm over right and clasp hands together
- “Fold” arms inward and up
- Count to 20
- Repeat crossing opposite sides
- Options:
 - 1) Do with eyes closed to enhance proprioception
 - 2) Hum for one minute on each side (increases vagal tone)



Main Course: Brain Circuit Training™

Reach for the Stars

- Sit up tall at the edge of a chair; make sure to keep your bottom always touching the chair
- Reach your arms as far forward as possible while still keeping your bottom touching & hold 20 seconds
- Reach your arms as far back as you can while you look up at the ceiling & hold 20 seconds (should one get dizzy DO NOT look up)
- Reach your left arm as far as you can to the side while keeping your bottom touching & hold 20 seconds
- Reach your right arm as far as you can to the side while keeping your bottom touching & hold 20 seconds
- Options: Do standing instead of seated



***Standing option**

Cross Body Stars

- Stand tall with arms reaching above the head
- Match the right hand with the left knee
- Then match the left hand with the right knee
- Repeat 20-30 times on each side
- Keep good posture and do not go too fast that you lose good form
- Option: Perform to a beat by adding music or a metronome



Bean Bag or Paper Toss

- Stand tall with good posture
- Toss a bean bag or a wadded up piece of paper up into the air (just to the height slightly above eye level) and catch it with **both** hands.
Keep your eyes on the bean bag or paper the entire time **without moving your head**; eyes only
- Do for one minute (older children); 10-30 times for younger children
- Suggestion: Have older children pair up. Have one child perform the activity while the other child monitors head & eye movement
- Challenge: Put a bean bag or small stuffed animal (that has a flat surface) on top of the head and try not let it fall. Start with a wide stance and then work towards bringing the feet closer together and eventually touching.
*Note: They may have to start with moving their head to watch the bean bag/paper.
As they progress, have them do it without moving their head.



Sensational Activities

Week #1

I Spy Street Smarts

Classification:

Indoors or Outdoors (preferably)

What you need:

Neighbors or nothing

What to do:

Place different items, signs/letters/numbers, “fake” animals, toys, etc along a walking path in your neighborhood. Create a “treasure map” with the items listed that children should be looking for (perhaps have hints of where they should be looking). Every time your child finds one of the items put a stamp or a sticker on the treasure map by that item. Have the last item be somewhere in your home that leads to a “secret surprise treasure” where they will find a small toy surprise! For extra fun, ask neighbors to join in!

We recommend you do this activity outdoors if weather and environment permits. However, you can certainly do the activity indoors as well and/or in your backyard. For younger children, you may need to put a picture of the things they are suppose to find.

Bouncing Bubbles & Balls

Classification:

Indoors or Outdoors

What you need:

Sheet or blanket

Bubbles or Beach Ball

What to do:

Have all participants hold one end of a sheet or blanket (hold tight) and bounce bubbles or a beach ball. If bouncing bubbles, see how many times you can bounce before the bubbles are gone or how many bounces you can do with one big bubble before it breaks or how many bounces you can do with the beach ball.

Shaving Cream & Bubble Wrap

Classification:

Indoors or Outdoors

What you need:

Shaving cream

Water colors/non-toxic paint or food coloring

Butcher paper, plastic tablecloth or bubble wrap (optional)

Masking tape (preferred)

Smock, apron or naked child!

What to do:

Tape the butcher paper, plastic tablecloth or bubble wrap to a table or floor to stop it moving around. The bubble wrap adds an extra sensory dimension to this activity, but it is what happens at the end that makes the bubble wrap really cool!

Squirt some shaving cream onto the covered surface and add a few squirts of color or dollops of paint if you like. Adding color will up the mess factor slightly and be aware that some food coloring can stain. Liquid water colors add a bright vivid color and clean up really easily.

Pop on a smock, apron or go shirt-less and explain to your child that they need to be careful not to get the shaving cream in their eyes... and then let them go to town! Have them mix colors with the shaving cream and 'build' mountains, serve up handfuls of 'ice cream' or make animals!

For extra fun, do with feet instead of hands!

*Brain Building extras: Put piles of shaving cream and different paint colors to the right and left of the child. Have them use their right hand/foot to reach across their body to the piles on the left and vice versa.

Sensational Snacks

Week #1

Gluten Free Cranberry Almond Butter Oatmeal Breakfast Bars (Vegan, GF, Dairy-Free)



Dry Ingredients

- ¾ cup gluten free rolled oats
- ¼ cup gluten free oat flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Wet Ingredients

- 2 flax eggs (whisk together 2 tablespoons ground flax + 6 tablespoons water, let set for 15 mins)
- 2 tablespoons melted coconut oil
- ¼ cup + 2 tablespoons natural, unsalted almond butter
- ¼ cup coconut sugar
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Add-in Ingredients

- ½ cup dried cranberries, roughly chopped
- ½ cup almonds, chopped

Optional Topping

- 1 tablespoon dried cranberries, chopped
- 1 tablespoon almonds, chopped

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper or greased foil. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together all of the dry ingredients: oats, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together all of the wet ingredients: flax eggs, coconut oil, almond butter, coconut sugar and vanilla. Whisk until smooth.
4. Pour the wet mixture over the dry mixture. Using a rubber spatula, fold until well combined. Fold in cranberries and almonds.
5. Pour into the prepared baking pan. Using the rubber spatula, spread into an even layer. Optionally, sprinkle with cranberries and almonds.
6. Bake for 22-28 minutes. Mine took 25 minutes. You'll know it's done when the edges turn a dark, golden brown.
7. Place on a cooling rack for 1 hour, or until completely cool. Slice into 16 bars. Enjoy!

NOTES:

Store in an airtight container for 1-2 weeks.

