



## Brain Break Ideas to Improve Focus and Attention



### Are you or your kids experiencing *Zoom Fatigue*?

Brain breaks are mental breaks kids can take in between learning tasks. They are great in between on line classes, or before sitting down to a meal. They act as a reset when transitioning from one activity to another. Brain breaks can be active or relaxing depending on what's needed for each child.

#### Our top 10 brain breaks:

1. 30 second dance party
2. Stretch
3. Chair yoga
4. Squeeze and relax various muscles
5. Wall pushups/wall sits
6. Make silly faces
7. Close your eyes and focus on your breath
8. Jump
9. Cross body movements when the left arm and/or leg crosses over to the right side of the body and the right arm and /or leg crosses over the left side of body
10. Hot hands - rub hands together vigorously until warm, close eyes and place hands over eyes

Crayola's ColorCycle lets you recycle any brand markers. This is an opportunity to teach your child about the importance of recycling and sustainability. We are collecting used markers for recycling. There is a box in our office waiting room for drop off. Please drop off your donation by March 31.

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**TOY CORNER:**  
Fat Brain Suction Kupz

- Stack, roll, stick and sip!
- Each of these six colorful, squishy cups features a suctioning brim at the top, plus endless creative-play possibilities all around
- Encourages fine motor skills, open ended play, and exploration
- Great for motivating little ones to come up to stand at a vertical surface



# Scissor Skill Development

Scissor skill development happens in stages and involves more than just picking up a pair of scissors. Your child needs to be able to

- sit up properly and have good balance
- have stable shoulders with wrist and finger control
- bilateral coordination



**Stage 1:** Child can learn how to open and close scissors but is not ready to use with paper. It's a great time to practice with play dough or modeling clay.

**Stage 2:** Child can learn to hold the paper with their non-dominant hand. Remember to encourage a thumbs up position.

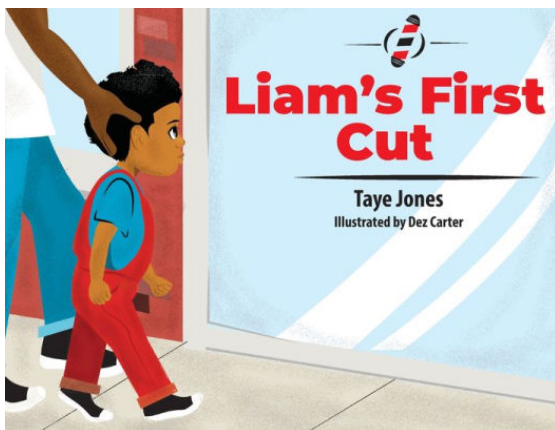


**Stage 3:** Child cuts on straight line and possibly curved line.

**Stage 4:** Child can cut out a square shape.

**Stage 5:** Child can begin to cut more complex shapes and figures with accuracy.

*If your child is having difficulty mastering scissor skills or the prerequisite skills, please contact an OT for a screening or evaluation.*



## **BOOK CORNER:** **Liam's First Cut by Taye Jones**

Taye Jones weaves together the beauty of fatherhood, community, and neurodiversity as Liam, an autistic Black boy, gets ready for a day he's been anticipating for quite some time. Liam takes readers on a journey as he approaches a major milestone and prepares for his first visit to the barbershop.

**Words Book Store in Maplewood** is hosting a virtual event with author Taye Jones Monday, February 22nd at 7:00pm

[Register here](#)

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## FOOD CORNER: YUMMY SWEET POTATO BROWNIES\*

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### Ingredients:

- 5-6 ounces unpeeled sweet potato cut into large chunks
- 3/4 cup raw or roasted creamy almond butter (or sub any nut butter)
- 1 flax egg or 1 large egg
- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/3 cup coconut oil or avocado oil, melted
- 1 1/2 T pure vanilla extract
- 3/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp sea salt

### Prepare:

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease an 8"x8" pan w/ coconut oil and line w/ parchment paper, leaving a tab on either side for easy removal
2. In the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade, process sweet potato and then add in all remaining ingredients and process until smooth
3. Optional: add 1/2 cup chocolate chips at this point
4. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 30 minutes or until set, but still soft in the center
5. Leftovers can be stored at room temp for 1-2 days and then in the fridge

*\*Courtesy of Pamela Salzman*

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[New Jersey Family Magazine](#)

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### **Updated COVID Policy**

The emergence of vaccines and their increasing availability brings hope that our lives will return to more normal behavior and our friends and family will be safe from infection. Until the CDC advises otherwise, our office will continue to maintain strict adherence to public health guidelines.

We encourage you to continue to adhere to mask wearing, social distancing and handwashing protocols. Visit the [Getting Started Page](#) on our website for details about

[keeping you safe](#) and maintaining a hygienic environment.

With gratitude to all the healthcare workers, our committed therapists at Pediatric Potentials, and to our supportive families who share their children with us, we are pleased to continue to service the needs of the community.

Give us a call to discuss your child's Occupational or Physical Therapy needs. Appointments are available in person as well as via telehealth.

Best,  
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Pediatric Potentials

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