

# Visit With the Utays

June 2008

*School Psychology and Education Specialists*

---

## Give Your Child's Brain a Workout this Summer

*"Though David would prefer to take the summer off, our son needs to improve his ability to plan, organize and actually accomplish increasingly complex school tasks, or put plainly, to use his head better! You have written about brain plasticity - that there are now programs that take advantage of new research showing you can change the brain's ability to think more efficiently and therefore ease stress and increase academic success. I THINK this is what David needs. How can I find out for sure and if he needs such a program this summer, and how do I get him to go?"*

David is lucky to have you in his corner! What you are describing is the very important "take charge" brain process called executive functioning. You are right to ask how to strengthen executive functioning. And, even though **anytime** of the year is good, the summer does offer advantages of focus without homework. Well, that is from our adult perspectives. As you wrote, **David would prefer to take the summer off (imagine that).**

Motivation to actually work on this (either at home or learning center that offers such a program) is important. Parents often worry that their child, who has typically worked so hard during the school year, will burn out without a summer hiatus from learning. What we have found at Total Learning Centers is that intensive, targeted, individualized, one-to-one training programs guided by student-friendly experts, have such a different feel and bring so much success, that students are energized and motivated to come. One to two hours a day (depending on the program), with the rest of the day to participate in traditional summer fun activities, is a rewarding combination. **We have noticed there is often an "aha" moment when students discover that learning CAN be worthwhile. What an awesome realization that you CAN do it!**

For children more sensitive to stress, increasing the ability of the brain to efficiently achieve goals is the name of the game. By taking advantage of local resources who offer research-proven programs designed to strengthen executive functioning, these summer months can make an incredible difference in David's next school year as well as his entire school career. Realizing that school will be easier, learning faster, homework time shorter, and grades higher: THAT'S DAVID'S MOTIVATION. **So, you get him there and let his clear progress become his ongoing motivation to come back.**

Next month we will focus on answering your question about signs that executive functioning needs strengthened. The following month we will cover approaches to accomplishing that worthwhile goal. If you cannot wait, just call the Total Learning Center for answers to specific questions about your particular child's needs as well as expert programs available this summer and throughout the year (724-940-1090). **Because it affects SO many important aspects of academic, social, athletic, and even spiritual life, developing the brain's executive functioning processes is certainly one more powerful way to help a child prepare today for success tomorrow.**

---

*Reprinted from Northern Connections June 2008.*