



Brain Coach Tips for Summer Camp & Ideas to Enhance Learning Throughout the School Year

By Ruth Young ND, BS

The best summer camp I attended as a youth was a backpacking trip to the San Juan Wilderness of Colorado; a gift from my parents for graduation from high school. Later, my husband and I led rustic junior high conference camps at the H.E.B. Foundation in Leaky, Texas for years. Our five children attended church camps during the summer and three of them became counselors for YMCA camps. Our family has always enjoyed attending summer camps; but recently, I had the privilege of helping Jan Bedell, the Brain Coach, create a summer camp model for families and groups of children that is full of brain boosting fun and can produce a lifetime of learning success.

Whether your goal is to climb a mountain this summer, put in a garden next spring or to help your child graduate from high school, it is important to plan, organize and remember the details. If your goal is to apply for a job or help your child to succeed academically, then you will want to plan for full potential. It will be important to get organized; then it will be crucial to remember the details of your project.

Proverbs 29:18 “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

My dream at age nineteen was to climb to the top of the world and see as far as I could see so I could enjoy seeing God’s great mountains and vast beautiful creation. Therefore, I set my heart on the heights! What are your plans? What do you plan for your child? Are you getting organized to implement your plans for the summer or for the next school year?

For my hike along the continental divide in Colorado I carefully organized my backpack with dehydrated food, layers of clothing, a tent, tent stakes, a sleeping bag, and a thin foam mattress for a total of thirty-seven pounds that I would carry for fourteen days. Getting all family members’ brains organized will help adults organize cabinets, balance the checkbook, clean the garage and can help students write better papers, organize their time and clean their room. So let’s take a closer look at specific physical activities designed to build and strengthen nerve pathways for intelligence:

- By stimulating the tactile system with deep pressure for 1.25 minutes on each limb twice a day and lightly tickling with bath gloves on each limb 45 seconds twice a day you will be building brain/body connections; you will be stimulating the nerves that run up the **spine** to the brain and back down to the extremities enabling a child to experience the benefits of better connections like holding his pencil correctly and resolving bedwetting issues.
- Picture a golf tee in your mind. Now, imagine the tee as a spinal cord and the top of a tee as the **medulla** which is responsible for autonomic functions like heart beat, blood pressure, breathing and arousal. Enhanced function of the medulla can be achieved by specific organizing activities called, “See Saw” and “See Saw Reversed” done by lying down on the floor or bed on the back and raising and lowering the arms and legs in rhythm thirty times once each day.
- A cross pattern crawl (army crawl on the tummy) two minutes two times a day can organize the **pons** level of the brain to build strong, well-bonded relationships; empathy for others, the ability to

discern danger, pain, hot/cold and hunger and to interpret social cues.

- The **midbrain** influences impulse control, memory for learning, emotional responses, the autonomic nervous system, the endocrine system, the immune system and eye/hand coordination. To accomplish improvement at the midbrain level, a well synchronized cross creep on the hands and knees for two minutes two times a day is recommended.
- A cross march (hands touching opposite knee while marching) and a cross skip done twice a day for two minutes each, plus a twenty minute fast walk with a good arm swing will organize the **cortex** level of the brain. The cortex is responsible for formal reasoning, inner speech (thinking before acting), test taking and the ability to respond quickly and intelligently to new situations.

In addition to brain-organizing activities, you may wish to improve short term and long term memory to help you and/or your student remember the details, increase maturity levels, improve behavior, follow directions, be successful with phonics, comprehend reading and recall quickly what is learned.

Make your plans for a summer camp that can organize your brain for a lifetime of success in learning at school and on the job. A free auditory processing test kit with tips on improving short term memory is available at www.littlegiantsteps.com. A DVD on “The Neurodevelopmental Approach” from our online store will explain how to increase long term memory. Developmental Foundations is a program which includes the foundational aspect of brain development for all the areas previously described. It includes free auditory and visual processing test kits for all ages (including tiny tot test kits for under age three), “The Neurodevelopmental Approach” DVD, The Rapid Recall System (a popular math facts memorization program), online instructions for every activity that you can view for thirty days, a tool kit of supplies and much more. Developmental Foundations is a great idea for summer camp or can be implemented during a school year for the whole family as a physical education and brain building program. A successful summer camp, success in school, success in a career or success in managing a home can happen if you make your plans for developing full potential through organizing your brain so you can remember the details.

During that first summer after graduating from high school; it was an exhilarating experience for me to reach my goal of climbing a mountain by hiking to the top (elevation: 14,000 feet) of the Rio Grande Pyramid at the head waters of the Rio Grande River for a breath-taking view of the spectacular Colorado Rocky Mountain peaks touching the sky as far as the eye could see. You can reach your goal for full potential with a plan to organize your brain by implementing a program of specific physical and mental activities this summer and throughout the year for a lifetime of academic benefit and learning pleasure.



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