

Brain Builders

Week #5

Brain Appetizer

Twist & Swing

- Gaze out on the horizon
- Have arms & shoulders loose and relaxed (floppy)
- Rhythmically twist upper torso and head from side to side; allowing arms to swing out
- Let the eyes “swing” freely to the sides following the movement of the torso without focusing on anything so the room seems to spin
- Do for 1 min
- Modification: start out doing seated if too unstable or if you get dizzy



Main Course: Brain Circuit Training™

Venus Fly Traps

- Sit slightly slouched in your chair legs straight and arms out at your sides; palms up. (You can also do these lying on your back on the floor)
- Bring your arms across your chest crossing the right wrist over the left (palms facing you). At the same time, cross your right ankle over your left.
- After crossing your arms and legs, immediately roll up into a ball. Tucking your chin to your chest as you roll up. (if you are sitting in a desk, simply roll up until your knees hit the bottom of the desk top)
- Unroll and uncross
- Repeat crossing the left over the right.
- Do 3 sets of 10 on each side



Tick-Toc Clock

- Stand with good posture
- Bring arms up to the sides at shoulder height
- Reach as far as you can to the left while bring the right leg up off the ground
- Hold 5 seconds
- Switch sides
- Repeat, switching sides 10-30 times each side



Bean Bag or Paper Toss (one leg balance, one hand catch)

- Stand tall with good posture
- Balance on your **right leg**
- Toss a bean bag or a wadded up piece of paper up into the air with the **left hand** and catch it with the **left hand**
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
- Repeat while balancing on your **left leg**
- Toss the bean bag or a wadded up piece of paper up into the air with the **right hand** and catch it with the **right hand**
- Modification: If the child has a hard time with this activity, have them stand on both feet but continue the toss and catch with only one hand
- Suggestion: Have older children pair up. Have one child perform the activity while the other child monitors head & eye movement



Sensational Activities

Week #5

Sensational Colored Sand

Classification:

Indoors or Outdoors

What you need:

Sand (1 cup clean dried sand per color)

Food coloring (1 tsp per color)

Paper towels

Tray or plates

Funnels

Scoops

Spoons

Cardboard toilet paper and paper towel rolls

Bottles

Small containers to use as moulds for building sandcastles

What to do:

Place sand into a bowl and add food coloring.

Using the flat part of a large spoon, make large strokes over the sand to blend the color evening. Stir and repeat large stroke actions.

Add a little more food coloring if needed to achieve desired color.

Place the wet sand out onto a paper towel and plate or newspaper.

Using a large spoon spread the wet sand out evenly to dry out.

Place the wet sand out into a sunny place (not windy) to air dry. If the sand is still wet, gently move the sand around to expose the wetter parts of the sand to dry out.

Give the container/bowl a wipe and a rinse, and proceed with your next color!

When the sand is dry, gently rub the sand between your fingers to break up any sand that may be stuck together.

Colored sand will last for several years if stored correctly in an air-tight container or zip-lock bags.

Some fun ideas:

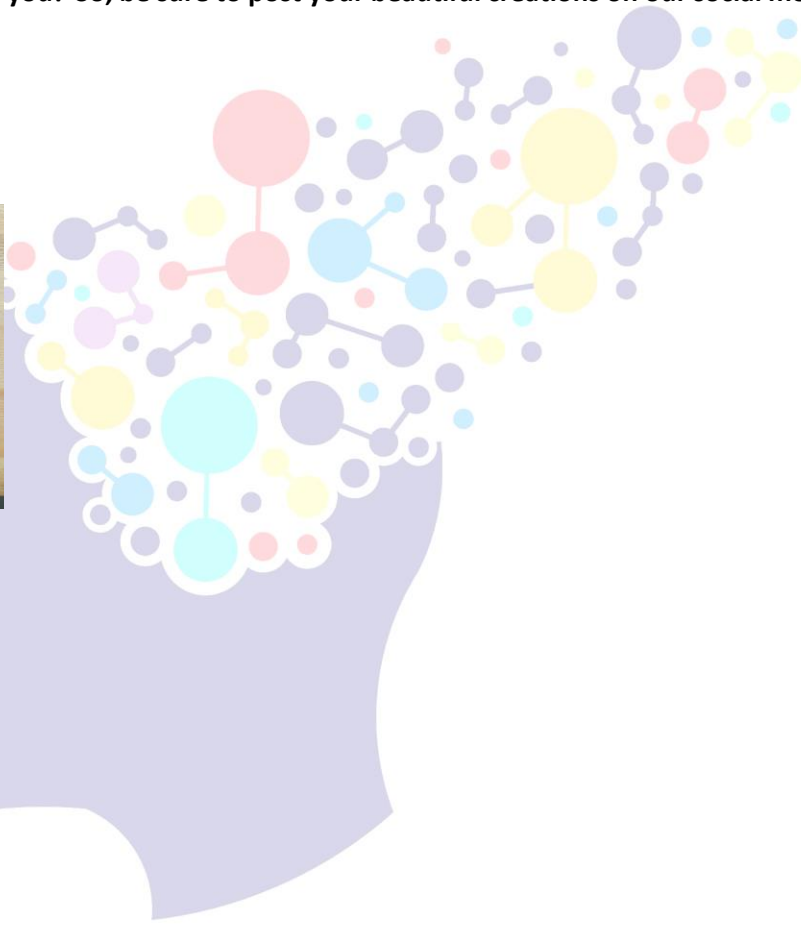
- Fill bottles up with different colored patterns of sand using funnels and/or the cardboard paper rolls
- Make a "Psychedelic Sandcastle City"
- Draw pictures, the alphabet, bugs and animals
- Make a picture story
- Seek and find hidden treasures

Learning Opportunities:

- Development of fine motor skills
- Eye & hand coordination – watching and doing and coordinating these actions.
- Promote creativity and imagination through role and developing stories.
- Sensory- Development of the sense of touch. Feeling and manipulating objects and moulding the sand.
- Language development – playing with sand is a social activity requiring speaking and listening, also developing vocabulary. Practicing and experimenting with language.
- Overcoming challenges – problem solving

We would LOVE to hear from you! So, be sure to post your beautiful creations on our social media sites to share with the world!

Stuck in the Mud



Classification:

Indoors or Outdoors

What you need:

Farm animal figures
Cornstarch
Unsweetened cocoa
Water

What to do:

The reason that it is such an awesome sensory item, is that if mixed in the right proportions, it's solid when you scoop it up and squeeze it, but turns to liquid and "melts away" when you open your hands!

- Mix 1 cup of cornstarch with 1/2 cup water.
- Add in a few tablespoons of unsweetened cocoa to make it look like mud and also smell delicious.
- Start mixing everything together (it will be very stiff). Begin adding water a little at a time until you reach the consistency that mentioned above. You'll notice that the mixture hardens as you stir and then looks like liquid again a few seconds later.
- If it becomes too runny, simply add a little more cornstarch
- Pour the "mud" into a tray or bowl and add your farm animals.

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Plunger-Scooter Board Races



Classification:

Outdoors

What you need:

Scooter boards and/or carpet dollies

Plungers

What to do:

Have kiddos kneel on the boards and use the plungers to push themselves forwards or backwards.

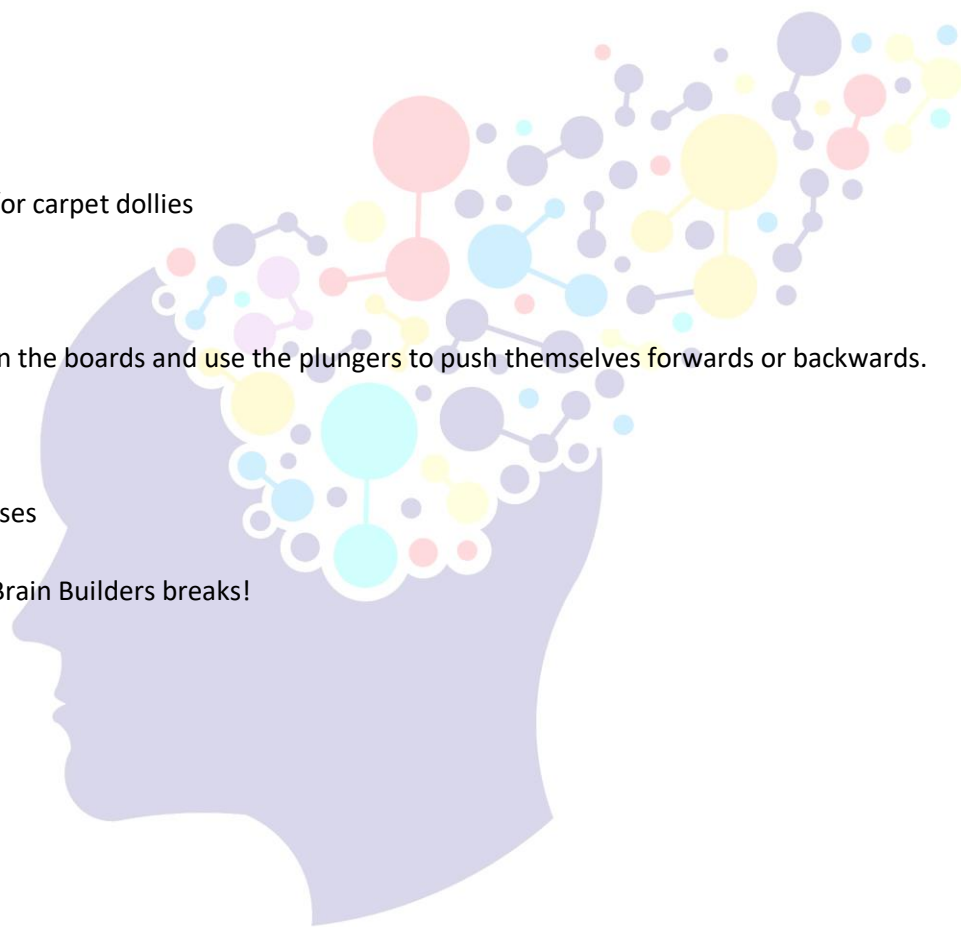
Fun Ideas:

Have scooter races

Set up obstacle courses

Have relay teams

Use as part of your Brain Builders breaks!



Sensational Snacks

Week #5

Blueberry-Almond Energy Snacks



Ingredients

- 2/3 cup finely chopped raw almonds
- 1/3 cup dried blueberries
- 1 ¼ cup old-fashioned gluten free oats
- ½ cup almond butter
- ¼ cup organic honey
- Optional but recommended: ¼ teaspoon salt

Instructions

1. In a large bowl, stir together all of the ingredients until completely combined.
2. Use a small ice cream scoop or spoon to scoop out the mixture into individual portions. Use your hands to roll it into balls and place on a rimmed baking sheet or small baking pan.
3. Tip: Keep your hands damp with water so that the mixture doesn't stick to your fingers and it's easy to roll into balls.
4. Place balls in the refrigerator to set for about 1 hour. Store in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to 1 week (but they probably won't last that long)!

Recipe Notes

A few notes: If you don't have dried blueberries, try using raisins and adding some cinnamon to the mix. A Cinnamon Raisin Oatmeal Energy Snack sounds delicious!

To make a batch of Chocolate Peanut Butter Energy Snacks, just substitute dark chocolate chips for the blueberries, peanuts for the almonds, and peanut butter for the almond butter. The ratios can all stay the same. So easy, and so versatile!

Other Suggestions

Try adding different nuts such as hazelnuts

Other dried fruit would also work well such as cranberries

Don't have almond butter? Try peanut butter or cashew butter