



# Family Engagement Newsletter

## The Importance of Exercise for Children with ADHD within the Confines of the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Wendy Overturf

While most of us focus on exercise as a way to trim our waistlines or improve cardiovascular functioning, the better news is that routine physical activity firms up the brain. “Exercise turns on the attention system, the so-called executive functions — sequencing, working memory, prioritizing, inhibiting, and sustaining attention,” says John Ratey M.D., author of *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*. “On a practical level, it causes kids to be less impulsive.”

So how exactly does exercise deliver these benefits to the ADHD brain? When you walk, run, or do a set of jumping jacks or pushups, your brain releases several important chemicals. Endorphins, for one, are hormone-like compounds that regulate mood, pleasure, and pain. That same burst of activity also elevates the brain’s dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels. These brain chemicals affect focus and attention, which are in short supply in those with ADHD. “When you increase dopamine levels, you increase the attention system’s ability to be regular and consistent, which has many good effects, such as reducing the craving for new stimuli and increasing alertness,” explains Ratey.

Even with stay-at-home restrictions now being relaxed during the pandemic, many things like soccer clubs, baseball games, and group sports may be limited this summer. These and so many other venues for children and teenagers are now off limits to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. Fortunately, even without organized activities, parents can do plenty to get their housebound children moving — and have fun doing it.

### Preschool and early elementary ages [\(Adapted from UCI Health\)](#)

- Young children are naturally active. Let them use a very soft ball — a plush ball might be a good choice indoors — to play a simplified soccer game without breaking household items.
- If young children don’t have a sibling near their age to play with, make up some simple games to play with them, such as Simon Says. Make sure to incorporate some active moves such as stretches and calisthenics they can imitate.
- Not enough space in the house to clear for running around? Yoga builds real strength in young muscles and is great for developing gross motor skills. [Youtube’s Cosmic Kids Yoga videos](#) are a great resource and are geared to young children and feature visual effects and storytelling.
- If you have a good-sized backyard, consider sprinting competitions or playing with a kickball or soccer ball to help children build strength and stamina.

### Older children and teens

- Older children generally crave more space to play. Remember, it is still considered healthy to go outdoors for a walk or bike ride. In fact, everyone in the family regardless of age would probably enjoy such outings. But in each place, it’s still necessary to keep a safe distance — six feet — between your family and others. Play as a family, not as a community at this point. You could kick or throw a ball or run or use a basketball court as long as no one else is on it and parks are open.
- Try to keep everyone from touching playground equipment (which has been touched by many hands.) Avoid holding railings or touching other surfaces as well. Bring hand sanitizer in case you do need to touch something or one of the kids does not pay perfect attention to the rules.
- Teens might show more interest in playing video games over the internet with friends than in exercise. It is a stressful time, and this keeps them connected with friends. Let them have a couple of hours of device time before recommending a family get-up-and-move outing.

Be vigilant, keep safe, and adapt activities in response to new information that becomes available about COVID-19.



## Statewide Event



### Virtual Conference

#### [Endless Possibilities Conference 2020 - A Closer Look at Invisible Disabilities](#)

**Keynote: Navigating Unfamiliar Spaces with an Invisible Disability.**

Presenter Christina Irene, author of "Talking Splat: Communicating About Our Hidden Disabilities."

#### Sessions Include:

- **Communicating About Hidden Disabilities: Tips and Tools**
- **NAMI Mental Health & Verbal De-escalation Training**
- **Compassion Resilience**
- **Breaking the Phonics Code for Struggling Readers**
- **Basics of Autism within Special Education**
- **Making Sure Your 504 Plan is Not Invisible**
- **Supporting Neurodiversity**
- **Success Stories Panel**
- **A Comprehensive Approach to Bullying Prevention: Creating Supportive and Responsive Environments to Address Bullying**

Virtual Conference Date: August 7, 2020

Registration will open in early June.

#### [Information & Registration](#)

Registration Fee: \$20. Parent scholarships are available. Contact via email [Lori Karcher](#), at WI FACETS or call (414) 374-4645.

**Learning Opportunities**



## At Home Learning Strategies

### [June 2020 Early Literacy Activity Calendar](#)

Help your child get ready to read. Each day includes a fun activity that will help your child build pre-reading skills.



[Scholastic Summer Read-a-Palooza](#) unites kids, parents, educators, public librarians, community partners, and booksellers in a nationwide campaign that celebrates reading for fun while improving access to books during the summer. For 2020, Scholastic is sharing a brand new kids experience in Scholastic Home Base. Scholastic Home Base is a free digital destination which offers full books, live events, and games in a safe community for readers.



### [45+ Virtual Summer Camps to Keep Kids Busy While Safely Social Distancing](#)

The coronavirus pandemic has thrown a serious wrench into most summer camp plans for kids. Thankfully, there are still options for kids and parents to keep busy and active while maintaining safe social distancing through virtual summer camps. These [programs](#) will keep your children happy while we all work through the COVID-19 crisis. For summer classes for kids or even fun summer school for kid ideas, here's the best virtual summer camp ideas for kids K-12.

#### Get Outside... Virtually!

Experience the beauty and awe of nature with these resources for virtually exploring different parks and regions across the globe.



#### **National Parks via Google:**

Explore 360° views of 31 different parks via [Google Earth](#)  
Join a National Park Service ranger for a [guided tour of select parks](#)

**ProArtinc's Virtual Hikes** via the [4K Virtual Outdoor Hikes Playlist](#) on YouTube.

Immerse yourself in a trail for several hours, listening to the sounds of nature as the camera moves along a hiking trail at walking speed. For added inspiration, pair with a personal workout such as jogging in place/around the room.

**Brooklyn Botanical Garden:** [Stroll through the Japanese Garden in Bloom](#)



### [10 Inspired Gardening Projects for Kids](#)

#### **Muffin Tin Coin Counting Activity**

All you need to set this up is a muffin pan and paper cupcake liners. To set up it up, write amounts of money on paper cupcake liners with a marker. Then set out some coins. The child uses the coins and places correct change in each muffin cup.



#### **Dot Sticker Addition: A Fun Math Activity**

Is your child learning addition skills? Check this kindergarten math activity that is quick and easy. 2 + 4...what does that mean? It is an abstract concept at this age. If we allow kids to merely memorize that 2 plus 4 is 6, then they never truly grasp the concept of addition. Instead use some different colored stickers. For example, write the problem 2 + 4. The child would use 2 stickers of one color and 4 of another. Then the child would count the total number of stickers.

#### **Teach Your Child a Phone Number**

Reinforcing new skills through movement and working with manipulatives during hands on activities creates that awesome mind-body connection that solidifies learning and memory. Plus, it's just more fun than a pencil and paper! Write each digit of your phone number on a piece of paper. Also write each digit of the phone number on a paper cup. At first, have your child match the number on the cup to the number on the paper. After your child has practiced this for a while, begin to see if your child can sequence the phone number with the cups without the use of the paper. Practice this skill often until your child has committed the phone number to memory.

# Online Resources



## [Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#)

The link connects to a webpage that provides brief, but detailed fact sheets on ADHD. The fact sheets give information about ADHD, describe its characteristics, offer tips for parents and teachers, and provide links to related information and organizations with special expertise as it relates to ADHD.

## [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction \(DPI\)](#)

This website has information on how a child with ADHD may qualify for special education services under “Other Health Impaired” (OHI). It also includes links to several online resources related to identifying and programming for students with ADHD.

## [Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder \(CHADD\)](#)

CHADD is a national non-profit organization providing education, advocacy and support for individuals with ADHD. In addition, the informative website also publishes a variety of printed materials to keep members and professionals current on research advances, medications, and treatments affecting individuals with ADHD.

## [Understood](#)

The goal of this website is to empower parents to understand their children’s learning and attention issues and relate to their experiences. With this knowledge, parents can make more effective choices for their children. One can also subscribe to a weekly newsletter pertaining to learning and attention topics by going to [link on the mission page](#).

## [ADDitude Magazine](#)

The website provides practical information about raising children with ADHD, including behavior and discipline strategies, help making and keeping friends and organizing for success. There are a multitude of education and learning resources to help students (and the teachers who work with them) succeed at school. While the website also includes the option of a paid subscription to the magazine, most of the articles are free and accessible.

## [WebMD](#)

This website has many resources pertaining to the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD. The website also includes an overview of some of the more common medications that are used in the treatment of ADHD.

## [Office of Civil Rights \(OCR\) Resource Guide on Students with ADHD and Section 504](#)

The U.S. Department of Education’s [Office for Civil Rights \(OCR\)](#) issued guidance clarifying the obligation of schools to provide students with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) with equal educational opportunities under [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#).

## [ADHD and School](#)

This is a toolkit developed by CHADD for parents which has strategies to help with school success.

## [Free Webinar Replay: How ADHD Affects Executive Function in Adults and Kids](#)

In this hour-long webinar-on-demand by Russell Barkley, Ph.D., participants will learn how to identify executive function deficit disorder, the seven major types of executive function, treatment strategies for managing executive function deficits, and more.



## WI FACETS

Webinars  
Trainings  
Workshops

### Event title links to information & registration for WI FACETS FREE workshops & webinars:

By phone, Sandra: 877-374-0511

All webinars 12:00—1:00 PM (unless otherwise noted)

#### [IEP Checklist](#)

Date: June 2, 2020

Presenter: Matthew Zellmer, WI FACETS

#### [Special Education and COVID-19](#)

Date: June 23 2020

Presenter: Jeff Spitzer-Resnick, Systems Change Consulting

#### [Aprenda sobre las claves del éxito para la transición de un joven con discapacidad a su vida adulta](#)

Date: June 11, 2020

Presenter: Samson Srok, WI FACETS  
To register, contact Samson Srok (414) 374-4645, [ssrok@wifacets.org](mailto:ssrok@wifacets.org)

#### [It's My Life: Taking the Lead!](#)

##### [A Virtual Youth Conference](#)

A **FREE** summit about self-determination, employability skills, disability disclosure and postsecondary educational resources. Meet other teens and learn how to plan for your future.

For high school students with disabilities who are interested in becoming leaders and advocates for themselves and others with disabilities.

This event is a collaboration of: WI FACETS, TIG, CESA 1, Elm Brook Schools and WSPEI.

Dates: July 30-31, 2020, 10am-4pm (tentative)

Register by July 1, 2020

For more information, email [Matthew Zellmer](mailto:Matthew.Zellmer) or call: 414-374-4645.

WI FACETS  
ARCHIVED  
WEBINARS

available for download on our [website](#).



## Understanding Special Education Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has recorded a [presentation](#) to help develop a greater understanding, particularly for families, of guidance issued to date in response to challenges facing school communities as a result of the COVID 19 Pandemic. In particular, the presentation focuses on the guidance contained in the *Extended School Closure Due to COVID-19 Special Education Question and Answer Document*. Links to the presentation and guidance document can be found on the [Special Education Team's COVID-19 Updates and Resources webpage](#).



#### [Virtual IEP Tip Sheets](#)

Because of coronavirus, school closures, and social distancing, many IEP teams are now meeting virtually, either in conference calls or via the Internet using web-based meeting platforms such as Zoom, Skype, or GotoMeeting. These tip sheets may prove helpful to all who host or participate in virtual meetings, now and in the future. Several of them are also available in Spanish.

## Research to Read

### A Follow-up Study of a Successful Assistive Technology for Children with ADHD and Their Families

Tobias Sonne, Paul Marshall, Jörg Müller, Carsten Obel, and Kaj Grønbaek. 2016. A Follow-up Study of a Successful Assistive Technology for Children with ADHD and Their Families. In Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Interaction Design and Children (IDC '16). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 400–407.

#### [Article Link](#)

Little research on assistive technologies for families of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has investigated the long-term impact, after the assistive technology is returned to the researchers. In this paper, the authors report the outcomes of a follow-up study, conducted four-weeks after a field study of 13 children with ADHD and their families who used an assistive technology designed to help establish and change family practices. The article shows that some of the positive effects on parent frustration level and conflict level around morning and bedtime routines that were observed in the first phase of the study, continued even after the study period, when the technology was no longer available. Furthermore, the authors present insights into family practices in families of children with ADHD and how these could lead to unexpected challenges and implications related to the adoption, use, and outcome of the assistive technology.



*Is this newsletter a useful resource for you in your work and/or in your home?*

*Please complete this 3-Question [survey](#) and let us know  
Thank you!*

This monthly update is provided by the Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS) to share statewide information regarding parent leadership and family involvement. *If you would like to receive this monthly update or if you would like to have your name removed from the distribution list, contact: Wendy Overturf at [woverturf@wifacets.org](mailto:woverturf@wifacets.org).*



## **Contributions to the Newsletter**

**Upcoming newsletter topics: July: Speech & Language**

**August: Other Health Impairment**

**September: Assistive Technology**

*To submit contributions of articles, events, or resources, you may use the attached word document. Send submissions to [woverturf@wifacets.org](mailto:woverturf@wifacets.org). If unable to access form, you may send information in an email.*

*Material appropriate for the monthly newsletter include web links to sources of family involvement/parent leadership resources, advertisements for statewide trainings for parents, youth or parent/educator audiences, information about statewide parent agencies, recent research pertaining to family engagement, and family engagement success articles.*

***The WI FACETS Family Engagement E-Newsletter  
can be found online at:***

***<https://servingongroups.org/resources>***



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