



EXERCISES BOOKLET
For adults and teens



FORBRAIN EXERCISES

SPECIALLY DEVELOPED TO PRACTICE:

- **Singing**
- **Rhythm**
- **Fluency**
- **Pronunciation**
- **Diction**



The Forbrain Song (to the tune of "Every Breath You Take" by The Police)

Every breath you take
Every sound you make
Every word you fake
Every sound you make
I'll be helping you.

Every single day
Every word you say
Every game you play
Every word you say
I'll be helping you.

Oh when you hear
Through your bone or ear
I will make it right, whether day or night.

Every breath you take
Every sound you make
Every bone you shake
Every sound you make
I'll be helping you.

I will help to change verbal memory trace
I am the king of the bone conduction space.
I hear your voice and it's that I can replace.
When you speak well there's a smile on your face
Keep using me, please, please...

Every breath you take
Every sound you make
Every word you fake
Every sound you make
I'll be helping you.

Every single day
Every word you say
Every game you play
Every word you say
I'll be helping you.

I'll be helping you...



The Forbrain poem

A mind training device called Forbrain
Makes speaking much less of a strain
It improves attention
And verbal retention
Better reading is also a gain

When words are an alphabet soup
And letters real hard to group
Use Forbrain
To correct and retrain
The audiological loop



Forbrain as Shakespeare might write it.

We've taken some Shakespeare and adapted it. Find the rhythm, stopping for a breath at the end of each line. You can compare the Forbrain version with the original speech, which is provided below. Some of the lines are the same or similar. Can you find them?

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to improve speech, not to make one.
Process problems are conducted by air;
The good is oft interred with our bones;

So let it be with you. Other people
Hath told you that air is the way we hear
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
Now I can show you, that your bones work faster

Allow not words of men to confuse you
Filter out all distractions from your mind
Focus your attention on every word
And surely your speech shall be improved.

Listening to our words means everything.
The brain doth control if your speech is right
And makes corrections. You speak your word
And you must pause till it comes back to you.

Shakespeare's Julius Caesar

From: Julius Caesar. Spoken by Marc Anthony

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,



And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:

But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.



FORBRAIN EXERCISES SPECIFICALLY DEVELOPED FOR TEENS



Exercise 1: Taking a stand against peer pressure

By Dr. Lara Honos-Webb

One of the great gifts of ADHD – imagination, can make teens more “suggestible” and more at risk for giving in to peer pressure. On the flip side, the “defiance” of ADHD can be channeled to stand up to peer pressure. You can notice your personal pitfalls and internal strengths to prepare in advance for peer pressure.

The following activity is excerpted from the book *The ADHD Workbook for Teens* (2010) by Dr. Lara Honos-Webb. The impact of this activity will be amplified by using your Forbrain device. The Forbrain device will increase your persistence and also make the activities inherently more interesting because of the novelty of the head phones. Additionally, the headphones can increase your felt sense of authority as he or she may associate the sound effect with a speaker on a stage and internalize the sense of confidence.

Read the story below out loud. Have fun trying to make the story more dramatic. See if you can change your voice to be serious when talking about the dangers and bold when Jane speaks out to her friends. Remember to be mindful of your posture including imagining your head is suspended by a puppet wire, and sitting up strait with feel flat on the floor.

Jane’s friends were going to spend Saturday night at a beach. The route to the beach was fairly treacherous and she was worried that if the people she drove with were drinking it could be dangerous getting home. She also knew that in the past some teens from her school had built a campfire on the beach and when they were cited by a police officer for breaking the law against fires, many of the kids were also arrested for underage drinking. When she voiced her concerns to her friends they persuaded her that things would be different this time, they had learned their lesson from the last event where lots of people got busted. She had almost decided to go to the beach when her defiant side kicked in. She said to herself, “This is silly, it’s just one event out of many and there are so many risks I won’t even have fun.” She boldly told her friends, it wasn’t worth the risks to her and told them she would go to the movies with some friends that night.



Below are some phrases you can speak into your headset every day. These will emphasize your strengths that will help you stand up to peer pressure.

- I'm an original thinker, I don't have to follow the crowd.
- I can be defiant if others are making poor decisions.
- I don't go along with the crowd.
- I'm not afraid to speak my mind.
- I think quickly enough to come up with quick retorts
- I have good ideas for safer alternative activities.

Imagine you have stood up to peer pressure, and practice saying these phrases into your headset

- "I like how I did that"
- "I'm really gaining momentum"
- "That wasn't easy, but it took a lot of strength for me to do it"
- "If I keep at it, the sky is the limit."

You will benefit by practicing these affirmations every day. Many teens with ADHD seek stimulation. Like them, you may crave excitement and constantly be looking for more action and more intense experiences. This may make experimenting with drugs and alcohol a very real temptation. You can safely honor your need for thrills by finding healthy and natural methods for gaining positive emotional "highs." You can explore activities like hiking, biking dancing, rock climbing and other novel and physically challenging activities.



Exercise 2: Increase self-control for ADHD

By Dr. Lara Honos-Webb

Feeling like you can control your behavior, your thoughts, and your attitudes is a central component of self-esteem. In addition to behavioral management strategies, your child needs to believe that he is capable of controlling his actions. The following pretend game will help your child reclaim his belief in his own power.

EXERCISE: THE COACH AND THE CHEERLEADER

Set up this exercise by telling your child that, like any super sports star, he needs to have a coach and a cheerleader to do his best. Tell him that you want to play a pretend game with him where he learns to be his own coach and cheerleader.

The following activity is excerpted from the book *The Gift of ADHD* (2010) by Dr. Lara Honos-Webb. The impact of this activity will be amplified by using your Forbrain device. The Forbrain device will increase your child's persistence and also make the activities inherently more interesting because of the novelty of the head phones. Additionally, the headphones can increase your child's felt sense of authority as he or she may associate the sound effect with a speaker on a stage and internalize the sense of confidence.

Below are some sentences your child can practice every day with his head set on. Invite your child to use different voices for a cheerleader and a coach. A cheerleader's voice may be more high pitched and sing-songy, whereas a coach might be more gruff, speaking in short grunts. Have your child repeat these sentences every morning with your help. Remember to be mindful of his posture including imagining his head is suspended by a puppet wire, and sitting up strait with feet flat on the floor.

Coach

- Show respect and appreciation for your teacher's hard work
- You win if you keep trying!
- Take a deep breath and calm down!
- The harder you try, the smarter you get!
- You can build your brain by working harder!
- Look at your teacher and Listen!
- Pretend like you're a rag doll. Feel your body as warm and heavy. This will help you sit still.



Some examples of Cheerleader sentences are these:

- You have the power! Try harder!
- You can do it!
- Keep going! Keep trying!
- You can control your behavior!
- You are in charge!
- You win if you control your actions!

You can create sentences specific to particular problems. For example, if the teacher repeatedly complains that your son cannot sit still, you can create cheerleader cards that say, "I can sit still."

Below is a list that describes the types of statements coaches and cheerleaders say.

- A coach tells players how handle certain problems during a game.
- A coach makes the player practice, practice, practice.
- A coach tells the player what to expect.
- A coach gives the player strategies to prepare for game day.
- A coach will give pep talks to players.
- A coach will challenge the player if they have wrong ideas.
- A cheerleader gives a lot of support to the players.
- A cheerleader says nice things to the players.
- A cheerleader keeps hope up when the team is not winning the game.
- A cheerleader never gives up on the team.

Pick a recent concrete problem and show your child how to be a cheerleader or coach. For example, if in school the week before your son got in trouble for hitting his pencil against his desk and disrupting class, that would be a good place to start. Following is an example of how to do this.

Step 1: Information Gathering

Mom: What did you say to yourself when the teacher asked you to stop hitting the desk with your pencil?

Marty: I told the teacher I was trying, but I said to myself that I couldn't stop. I didn't know what else to do with myself. (Don't use headset for this information gathering part, you don't want to amplify, the negative self-talk).



Step 2: Practice Cheerleader and Coach for Specific Problem – Headset ON

Have your child practice these coach and cheerleader voices before doing the conversation below.

Cheerleader: Go Marty, You can do it. Yes you can! You can stop if you want. You have the power, Marty. If you try hard, you can do anything you want!

Coach: "Hey Marty, in order to win this game you can take a deep breath, you can calm down. Try taking a couple of deep breaths and relax. That will help you win the game. Act like you're a rag doll, and go limp. Let your body relax, feel heavy and warm. Remember to breathe!"

Step 3: Challenge Negative Thoughts Through Role Play – Headset ON

Once you have found out what your child says to themselves, you can challenge their negative thoughts. Have your child play the role of Marty below with his headset on.

The next step is for you to challenge Marty with thoughts he needs to challenge. The following is an example of how to do this. You read the Mom's lines and have him repeat back Marty's lines with his headset on.

Mom: Okay, I'm Marty, and I'm in class. (Mom has fun pretending to be Marty, sits down with a pencil, and begins hitting it against a table.) Why's everyone looking at me and why's that teacher telling me to quiet down and stop hitting my pencil on the desk? I like the noise, it helps me calm down. It's so boring in here! I can't stop anyway—I have ADHD.

Marty: Hey Marty, you can do it. You can stop if you want. Why don't you calm down by taking a deep breath. You can imagine filling up your belly with air like a balloon. That would be another way to calm down. Go Marty! You can do it!

Mom: But that teacher is so mean to me. If I stop, she wins. She embarrassed me in front of the whole class.

Marty: Hey Marty, you win if you stop hitting the pencil, because then you show that you can control yourself. Don't let the teacher bring you down. Focus on you. You can do it. You can control yourself.

Mom: Great job being coach and cheerleader, Marty!



Tell your son that he can be the cheerleader and the coach for himself, any day and time he needs a coach or cheerleader. Tell him that everybody needs both a coach and a cheerleader with them at all times, but that he has to be that for himself.



Exercise 3: Taking over the steering wheel

Many children with the diagnosis of ADHD describe their symptoms as being like having an internal motor that makes them go all the time. This exercise has two elements. In the first part, your child will practice becoming aware of and monitoring her internal “motor” activity. By becoming aware of it, she will be less likely to be driven by it. She will gain skills in noticing and tolerating the driven feeling. In the second part, your child will make fun cards with positive reminders that she can control herself and take charge of the energy.

To begin, talk to your child about how her excess energy can be thought of as a powerful motor that drives her. Ask her to draw a picture of the motor. Encourage her to talk about what the motor feels like and how fast it makes her go. Ask her before she goes to school to pay attention to the motor and just notice when it speeds up or slows down during the day.

After school, check in with your child and ask her what she noticed about the motor. Listen carefully as she tells you about her experience. Validate the power of the motor.

An exercise you can do even while driving home from school is to ask her to tell you about the motor inside. Some questions to ask are these:

Where in your body do you feel the motor?

How big is the motor?

How fast is it?

What color is it?

When does the motor speed up?

What happens before it speeds up?

What happens after it speeds up?

What happens when it speeds up?

When does it slow down?

What happens right before it slows down?

What happens right after it slows down?

What happens when it slows down?

Use some of your child’s responses to suggest strategies for giving her control over the motor. For example, if your child says she notices the motor speed up when she sits next to her friend Tommy during reading group, you can suggest that she not sit next to Tommy during reading group, but that she can play with Tommy at recess. If she says she noticed her motor slow down when she was trying to fix one of the toys at school, suggest to her that when she finds her motor revving up out of control, she can find something to fix or tinker with.



You can also suggest to her teacher that she be given certain responsibilities for projects such as tinkering with or setting up audiovisual equipment as a strategy for calming her down. You can also suggest to the teacher that he value and praise these activities and abilities displayed by your child. Similarly, at home you may want to offer a great deal of validation and approval for her exploring with and tinkering with mechanical objects. In this way, she can receive approval and a sense of self-worth for activities that are intrinsically rewarding to her. Often, gaining abstract knowledge from books will be a continual struggle for your child even when she becomes capable of high levels of achievement by using the strategies in this book. So it's important for your child to learn that practical projects that she finds easy and calming will also help her develop important skills.

Make a fun game out of creating cards that remind your child that she can control the motor. Tell her that she can notice when the motor revs up and take charge by imagining that she has her hands on the steering wheel and her feet on the brakes. For this exercise, you will need three-by-five or four-by-six index cards. You will use these to create vivid reminders for your child to help her control her energy. You can cut out and paste pictures of cars or boats on one side or have your child draw a car, boat, motor, or steering wheel on the front. On the other side, you can write out reminders for your child. Some examples of reminders follow:

- I can slow down the motor.***
- I can steer the car.***
- If I take a few deep breaths, I can put on the brakes.***
- If I take time to feel the motor, I can take charge.***
- I'm in charge.***
- I can use this motor to help me pay attention.***
- I can use this motor to help the teacher.***
- I can use this motor to help other students.***
- I can use this motor to do my homework.***
- I can use this motor to clean my room.***
- I know how to slow down the motor.***
- I can put my hands on the steering wheel.***
- I can sit still even if the motor is going fast.***
- I can stay quiet by just noticing the motor.***

Have your child take these cards to school. You can also keep them (or a second set) around the house as reminders of how to channel energy in positive ways. The more your child is involved in having fun in creating the cards, the more she'll be interested in looking at them and using them in school and other settings.

Ask your daughter to tell you stories about how and when she used the cards in school. Listen carefully and offer generous praise for using the cards and taking control of her behavior. You can



help her problem solve if trouble arises. If she experiences other kids making fun of her cards, you can make suggestions about how she can handle the situation by standing up for herself or by using the cards in a way that won't draw the attention of other students.

This exercise combines some of the most fundamental cognitive behavioral strategies for transforming behavior. The first step is guiding your child in monitoring her behavior. Awareness generally precedes any change. By simply noticing the revved-up, driven feeling, your child will be taking a significant step toward gaining control. The more the driven feeling is in her awareness, the less she will impulsively act out. Additionally, by identifying antecedents and consequences of behavior, you can dramatically shape behavior.



Exercise 4: Helping your child ask for help

In this exercise, the goal is simply to increase your child's awareness of the difficulty of managing his emotions. By increasing his awareness of his struggle, he can be guided to ask for help. By asking for help, your child will increase his chances of channeling his intense emotions in socially appropriate ways. Because every social situation is singular, there are no simple formulas to offer your child to help develop social skills. Also, by offering your child simplified, pat strategies, you tend to invalidate his sense of the intensity of his own reactions.

The most important aspect of the following exercise is that it reminds your child to put one step between emotional expression and emotional outburst. By directing your child to ask for help, you're offering him a strategy for breaking the automaticity in a way that seems reasonable to your child. By guiding him to ask for help, you are acknowledging that the intensity of his emotions may prevent him from rationally deciding how to effectively channel his sensitivity. And while you're validating him, you are also giving him one manageable step to insert between a strong emotion and a socially inappropriate behavior. One step between the emotion and action may be all that it takes to break the pattern of disruptive behavior.

Start by talking your child about his emotional intensity and reframing it for him as a gift. Give many examples of how emotional sensitivity is a much-needed trait in the world. Some examples might be these:

Emotional sensitivity helps us to connect with others by showing them we know what they are feeling.

Emotional sensitivity helps us see parts of the world that need to be fixed.

It helps us see people that need our attention.

It helps us know our own selves.

It can lead to creativity.

It helps you to care for other people.

Talk to your child about how there is a difference between our strong feelings and our behavior. Let him know that you can feel something strongly and not act it out in ways that disrupt others. Tell him that because he is so gifted with emotional sensitivity, he may need to ask for help from other adults to find ways of expressing his emotions in positive ways. Tell your child that whenever he feels a strong emotion that begins to feel uncontrollable, he should ask an adult (his teacher at school, you, or his other parent) to help him with it.



For one week, practice this with him at home. Whenever you notice him getting highly emotional, remind him to ask for help. If you catch him after his behavior has gotten out of control, rather than getting mad at him, remind him that next time, he can ask for help before he loses control. Reassure him that he does not have to figure out how to control himself. All that he has to do is ask for assistance.

After practicing for a week, ask your son to practice this at school. You will want to let his teachers know what you're working on. You may want to share with the teachers some specific strategies you discovered in your weeklong trial period for helping your child manage his intense emotions.

When your child is in a positive and calm frame of mind, ask him the following questions and write his responses in a journal.

- What can you do to help yourself when your emotions start to feel too big for you?***
- What can we (your parents) do to help you when your emotions start to feel too big?***
- What can your teachers do to help you when your emotions start to feel too big?***
- What can your brother and sister do to help you when your emotions start to feel too big?***
- What can your friends and classmates do to help you when your emotions start to feel too big?***

Begin to try some of the suggestions your child comes up with. Guide your child to ask for the aid that he identified as being what he would most like. For one week, let your child practice asking for help, specifically the kind of help he wants. For example, your child might tell you that when he asks you for help when he gets mad at his little brother, he wants you to not only separate him and his brother physically, but he wants you to show that you understand why he is mad. Because of the diagnosis of ADHD, sometimes parents just assume that bad behavior is not rooted in a realistic complaint. The next time your child gets mad and asks for help, you might separate him and his brother and reassure him that you can see why he gets frustrated at his brother when he seems to get all the attention.

In trying this exercise, you can expect to transform your child's behavior just by guiding him to insert one behavior—asking for help—between his intense emotion and his impulsive action. In this way, you are not repressing your child's sensitivity, but helping him to gain social skills in one social situation after another. As he learns to get help, he will gradually gain the skills and strategies he needs to stay connected to his own gifted emotional life without disrupting the environment.



Often you will find that the more you validate the intense emotion your child feels, the more he'll be able to gain control. Any time you can immediately validate the feeling while channeling its expression, you can defuse a potential outburst. It is paradoxical that the more you negate, criticize, or deny your child's feeling, the more it will grow out of control. The more you validate it, the smaller it will get. You'll be amazed at the power of this one technique. For example, if your child is jealous, you will help him to gain control by deeply affirming his feelings: "Of course you want more of the attention that your little brother gets now. It's okay if sometimes you feel mad at him when Mommy's nursing him. But remember to ask me for help when you're mad rather than jumping up on Mommy when she nurses your little brother." In this way, you do not make him feel like he is a bad person for having his feelings. The worse he feels about himself, the more his behavior is likely to be disruptive. The more he sees his feelings as acceptable, the more he will be motivated to work with you to help manage them

In addition, this simple technique of labeling your child's emotions has been found to have long-lasting positive impacts. One recent study found that mothers who talk to their children about emotional states have significantly better social skills than children with mothers who don't talk about emotional states (Yuill, and Ruffman 2009).

By frequently labeling your child's emotions and talking about other people's emotions you are preparing your child for both emotional intelligence and high level social skills. As you can imagine, these abilities will have long-lasting positive impacts on your child's entire life with positive "side effects" that persist. Below is another activity for building your child's ability to master his emotions.



Forbrain Activity: Improve auditory processing

By Douglas Haddad, Ph.D.

The auditory system is implicated into much of our daily lives, not only for hearing, but also for processing sensory information. The brain's ability to process auditory information is critical for many functions, including communication, learning, and attention. Most auditory information that we process comes from our own voice.

Auditory processing is a key component to being a successful reader. Children with ADHD often have difficulty staying focused and paying attention for a prolonged time frame. To help a child improve his/her focus and attend to relevant foreground sounds, such as written information in a book or directions spoken by another person, the following exercises have been designed. They are intended to help children overcome distraction challenges and remain attended to pertinent information, while ignoring extraneous, ambient stimuli.

In these exercises, the Forbrain device will help enhance the way the child utilizes expressive language, while facing acute and/or chronic distractions occurring in the surrounding environment. While performing these exercises, the child will gain a heightened awareness for enunciating and pronouncing words, all while focusing on comprehending the content of the reading. Additionally, the child will hear his/her own voice through this audio-vocal loop and will be able to better regulate volume, pitch, tone, and clarity of one's voice.

Daily practice is recommended for full benefits of this product.

Exercise 1: "DEFEATING THE DISTRACTION"

The purpose of this activity is to sharpen a child's attention on relevant information while presented with background noise. The child will read a simple story aloud with background noise created (refer below for examples to use for this exercise). The child can perform this activity with music being played softly in the background and slightly increasing the volume after each successive round performing this exercise.

The child can increase the difficulty by doing this activity in an environment that presents intermittent, unpredictable noises (e.g. common area of the house with family members passing through from time-to-time).

Below are some reading passages the child can practice every day with his/her head set on. Encourage the child to vary the tempo of his/her reading and use inflection in the voice when coming across bolded, italicized words (or phrases) found in the passage.

Upon completion of reading the passage, have the child turn it over face down. With the headset on, the child can answer aloud the following questions associated with each of the passages below. A child should read one passage a day and answer aloud the questions. To increase reading and speaking endurance, the child can repeat the passage(s) from the day(s) prior and add on a new passage.



SAMPLE READING PASSAGE 1:

Zack sat near the window in his classroom. Through the window, Zack could see another class playing kickball on the field. He thought about last week, when he had caught the game-winning catch deep in leftfield when his best friend Timothy had kicked the ball right to him. In the background, Zack could hear his teacher talking. Then, his teacher came over to his desk and said, "Zack, I asked you a question a minute ago. I asked you if you would like to come up to the board and do today's daily edit."

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR PASSAGE 1:

1. What was Zack's problem?
 - a. Zack and Timothy got into a fight about what happened in the kickball game.
 - b. Zack wasn't listening to the teacher.
 - c. Zack didn't do the daily edit correctly.
2. What was Zack daydreaming about when he was looking out the window?
 - a. Zack wasn't daydreaming.
 - b. When he had scored the game-winning run for his team.
 - c. When he made a catch that resulted in his team winning the game.

SAMPLE READING PASSAGE 2:

Katie is sitting next to her sister, Jessica, at the dinner table. Katie is telling a story to her sister and parents. The story is about something that happened at school. She is waving her hands wildly while telling her story. Suddenly, her hand hits her sister's glass and water spills all over the table. Their dog starts barking. Katie jumps up and immediately goes into the kitchen to grab a roll of paper towels and cleans up the spill. After dinner, Jessica says, "Don't worry about it. It was just an accident." Katie replies, "I'm sorry."

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR PASSAGE 2:

1. What best describes how Katie handled the situation?
 - a. Katie told a really good story about her day at school.
 - b. Katie cleaned up the spill and felt bad about her accident.
 - c. Katie sat next to her sister at the dinner table.
2. What caused Katie to knock over her sister's glass of water?
 - a. She was telling a story and accidentally knocked over the glass of water with her hands.
 - b. She reached over to get a scoop of mashed potatoes during the dinner and knocked over the glass of water.



- c. The dog barked and startled Katie in which she accidentally knocked over the glass of water.

Exercise 2: "DIALOGUE DISTRACTIONS"

Engaging in dialogue is a challenge for many individuals with receptive and/or expressive language difficulties. The purpose of this exercise is to help children engage in meaningful conversation with another person or in a group setting and express their thoughts fluently in complete sentences amid distractions.

The following exercise requires the child to stay present in the moment and practice active listening – focusing completely on what the person is saying – and practicing giving oral feedback to what they heard that person say or ask.

Activity:

Below are different role play activities that require the child (wearing the headset) to engage in a back-and-forth conversation with another person by listening to the other person's dialogue. Have the person not wearing the headset initiate dialogue with the child (wearing the headset). When the person is finished speaking, the child (wearing the headset) will be asked to reply.

Below are sample dialogues that you can use for this exercise. Feel free to create real or imaginary stories that may be of more interest and relevance to the child.

Sample role play activities for adults to engage in with a child:

Dialogue (parent/sibling/friend/etc.): What would you say to yourself when the teacher asked you to stop hitting the desk with your pencil?

Dialogue (parent/sibling/friend/etc.): The waiting room is where patients can read magazines, play games, or sit quietly. Describe how you feel waiting for the dentist to call your name and come into the room.

Dialogue (parent/sibling/friend/etc.): Soda and candy have sugar in them. Sugar can cause cavities. What would you say to someone who loves candy but wants to have healthy teeth?

Exercise 3: "NAME THAT DISTRACTION"

One of the biggest culprits responsible for shaking a child's concentration away from a task is external distractions. Distractions come in many different forms: the beep of an incoming text



message, news feeds on social media, e-mails, the sound of neighborhood children playing, television or music playing in the background, video games, siblings, friends, or an unexpected sound in the house.

The following exercise is designed to help children regain concentration when a distraction presents itself.

Activity:

Have the child read aloud a paragraph from a book (with the headset on). While the child is reading, interrupt with a distraction and have the child immediately stop what he/she is reading and identify the specific distraction. Next, have the child promptly continue reading where he/she left off. At the conclusion of the passage, ask the child to repeat what he/she remembers from the reading.

You can vary this exercise by altering the number of distractions per round (from “none” to “many”). This is to make the exercise a bit more unpredictable for the child where he/she is forced to focus on the content being read aloud and immediately having to shift focus to identify external stimuli and then immediately having to shift focus back to the content being read aloud. Also, the student can practice using different intonations for expressing the words throughout the passage.

Below are examples of distractions you can use:

- phone ringtone,
- sound of a text message,
- whistling,
- dog barking,
- tapping of pencil/fingers on table,
- dropping a book on the floor,
- clap,
- verbal interruption.

SAMPLE READING PASSAGE 1:

There are many kinds of bears. Real bears growl. There is one bear that won't growl at you. It is a teddy bear. How did the teddy bear get its name?

Long ago we had a president named Theodore Roosevelt. He had a nickname. He was called “Teddy.”



One day, Teddy went hunting. He saw a bear cub. He could not shoot the little bear cub. Many people heard about his trip. They heard how he would not shoot the cub. Toy makers began to make bears. They called the bears "teddy bears."

Today you can buy many kinds of teddy bears. They are different colors. Some are dressed in coats and hats. Some wear glasses. Some are little. Some are big. But each one is still a teddy bear.

SAMPLE READING PASSAGE 2:

Some slaves only dreamed of going north. Some slaves made their dreams come true. One such person was Harriet Tubman. Harriet was a slave. Most of the time she worked in a house, but she liked to work outdoors. She felt like she was free when she was outside. When Harriet was 25 years old, she escaped. She went north.

Harriet wanted to help others be free. She made 19 trips back to the South. The trips were dangerous. She could be caught. She could be killed. Harriet did not care. She knew the taste of freedom. She wanted to help her people. In all, she helped over 300 slaves escape. She risked her life for freedom.

Then the Civil War started. The North was fighting the South. Harriet worked as a nurse for the North. She also worked as a spy. This was a woman who had been a slave. She didn't know how to read or write. But Harriet was a very special person. She gave of herself to help others. Harriet died in 1913. She was buried with military honors.

The above sample reading passages were selected for early-to-mid elementary reading level students to facilitate positive outcomes in refocusing when distractions are presented. More complex reading passages can be used with older subjects.

NOTE: These exercises are intended to provide helpful and informative material for adults to use with children/individuals with special needs. These exercises do not provide medical advice and are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease or illness. Please consult a medical or health professional before you engage in any new activity/exercise program. The author specifically disclaims all responsibility for any liability or losses, personal or otherwise, that is included as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the information that is provided in these exercises.

