



Keep Studying Despite Holiday Distractions

As we get closer to the end of the semester, it can be harder and harder for kids to concentrate. After all, the holiday season is in full swing and between holiday classroom parties and the actual holiday itself, it's no wonder kids have a tough time staying focused. "There is so much disruption during this time of year, it is essential to stick to your usual study routine as much as possible," explains Benjamin Kohls, MS, LPC, NCC at Avera McKennan Behavioral Health Outpatient Services. "Studying is a top priority for kids and should be part of their daily routine."

Kohls suggests the following when trying to juggle studying with all the festivities:

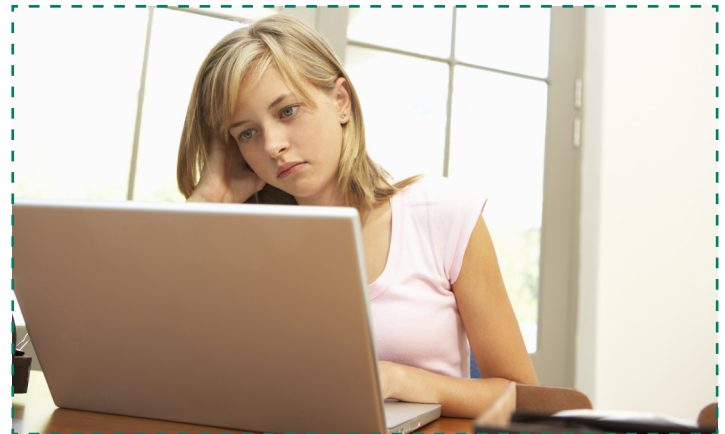
- Make a calendar/schedule with events so there are no surprises
- Know what work is due and when it's due
- If you're traveling, call the teacher ahead of time and ask for upcoming assignments

One of the hardest things about being a successful student can be developing that daily routine of study time. Kohls recommends:

- **Breaking up study time into blocks**
- **Find a quiet place to study.** A place that is quiet yet has parents easily accessible to answer questions is best
- **Give kids a choice for background noise.** Radio, stereo, etc. No TV!
- **Turn off wireless** so kids can't get distracted by surfing Facebook, etc.
- **Turn cell phone off**

Some parents may wonder when is a good time for their kids to study. Kohls says it really depends on the age:

- **Elementary:** Before dinner is ideal; younger children tend to get tired after dinner and their bedtime is earlier



- **Junior/High School:** Later in the evening, after dinner. Kids this age stay up later and they need a good meal to focus

One more piece of advice Kohls gives parents: never use study time as a consequence. "This time should be a positive and meaningful experience," he says. "Never use it as a punishment because then kids will associate study time as a bad thing."

Healthy Super Foods to Boost Brainpower

We all know that our bodies need fuel to function. Getting the right food in students' bodies is especially important during the day as well as in the evening, when they are busy studying and doing homework. Kristin Sousek, a Hy-Vee registered dietitian, says when the body is empty, it can't think and the attention span is then lost.

Here are the top five healthy brain foods guaranteed to supercharge your studious someone:

1. Avocado
2. Blueberries
3. Wild Salmon
4. Nuts/Seeds
5. Coffee/Espresso beans

cont.



Healthy Super Foods (Continued)

Sousek says students also need to remember to drink plenty of water or milk. "Our bodies are just not made to function well if it's not hydrated," she says. Sousek says other good foods for the brain include strawberries and spinach. "They help prevent

and even reverse age-related brain deficits such as:

- Decreased short term memory
- Loss of balance and coordination
- Neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease

One thing Sousek recommends for boosting brainpower is to use more spices. "People don't realize they are packed full of anti-oxidants," she says. Here are five amazing spices anyone can incorporate into breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks:

1. Turmeric. Add a quarter teaspoon of turmeric powder to milk, stir and drink.
2. Saffron. Sprinkle a pinch in a glass of milk and let it dissolve overnight.
3. Garlic. Mix one or two cloves of garlic, add basil with tomato for a great marinara sauce.
4. Ginger. Add sliced ginger to vegetables, chicken and other meats.
5. Cinnamon. Sprinkle one teaspoon on oatmeal for a great breakfast.



Healthy Family Breakfast Ideas

Source: Sparkpeople.com

Whether you have toddlers, junior high school or high schoolers at home, eating a healthy breakfast is essential. But which type of breakfast makes the cut? Here are some ideas to get you started, and keep you going all day long:

- Natural peanut butter on whole grain toast, topped with banana slices.
- Vanilla soy milk, blended with frozen banana chunks and frozen strawberries.
- Oatmeal with chopped apples and raisins stirred in.
- Eggs, scrambled with minced green and red peppers.
- Lowfat vanilla yogurt mixed with sliced bananas and topped with granola.

Need a quick breakfast fix? Keep a stash of natural fruit & nut trail mix on hand for emergencies.



Snowshoeing, Cross-Country Skiing Add Adventure to Family Fun

Take a break from holiday planning and take your family outside!

Two great options are snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. All you need is a sense of adventure. Outdoor enthusiasts say when it comes to snowshoeing, all you need is a sense of adventure, and a pair of good boots. In fact, if you do not have your own snowshoes, you can borrow them from South Dakota State Parks. The parks have snowshoes that fit anyone from youth to adult, and they are free to check out for a day or an entire weekend. Find snowshoe trails at Big Sioux Recreation Area, Newton Hills, Oakwood Lakes State Park or the Outdoor Campus in Sioux Falls.

Another option is to discover the beauty and wonderment of our South Dakota winters by heading off the beaten path. There are many cross-country ski trails available in many state parks during the winter months. Close to Sioux Falls, you and your family can find trails at Newton Hills and Oakwood Lakes State Park. In fact, many of the trails begin and end near heated warming shelters. Officials at the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks department say each shelter has a wood-burning stove and accommodates up to 30 people at a time.

Note: Newsletter information should not replace direct medical advice from your doctor. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your family's health care provider.

Health Events & Programs

Super Sitter Babysitting Classes

December 28 or 29, 2011 • 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Education Center Classroom 2 • Cost: \$30

All classes held at the Avera Education Center located at 810 East 23rd Street, on the Avera Campus. To register, call 1-877-AT-AVERA (1-877-282-8372) or register online at www.AveraMcKennon.org.

Find out your risk for certain types of health issues. Confidential, online assessments available for lung cancer, colon cancer, diabetes, stress, and many more. Go to www.AveraMcKennon.org to learn more.