

Boost Attention Span

by Making Learning Fun Again

Attention span has long been a topic regarding the relationship between children and learning. As the years have passed, technology has been at the forefront of our everyday lives. This has caused the concern for **inattentiveness** to become even more of an issue. Children are constantly presented with new and exciting things that catch their attention, so it's up to adults to find ways to teach new information in an entertaining way. This approach will maintain the interest level of the child so that learning can be cultivated.

Attention span refers to the time a person can focus on an activity. As most people know, this varies depending on the age. The general rule is 2-5 minutes per year of age is how long a child should be able to pay attention. However, to take it a step further, Neal Rojas, a developmental behavior pediatrician, states, "Attention span is elastic." He refers to everything from the time of day that attention to a specific task is required to actual **cognitive** abilities and how a child interprets sensory input. Knowing that attention span will vary throughout the day can help adults tune in and make the necessary adjustments or plans to help them be as **successful** as possible.

When children are younger, adults make everything fun and exciting to learn. However, as children get older, much of the fun is taken away, and learning becomes a mundane task. Expectations go up; enjoyment goes down. Adults must remember that children learn best through play...not just younger ones, but all ages. The **SKILLZ** Child **Development** Centers use the following tips to keep children engaged in the learning process, increasing attention span and bringing a newfound excitement to learning again.

- 1) Gamify: Playing is one of the easiest ways to help children maintain attention and learn. And when children **play** with other children, it is even more effective. When this technique is implemented, adults find that children learn quicker, are happier, and learning new information comes easier. The **SKILLZ** curriculum utilizes a game-based

learning format to associate learning with a strong positive emotion, which helps them retain information better.

- 2) Divide It Up: We should have **expectations** of how long a child should be engaged in an activity and the time frames within each period. By cutting the time into smaller chunks, children will be more likely to stay interested and retain the information better. The SKILLZ program does this by splitting children into developmental age **groups** in which the class structure is then separated into different activities.

- 3) Break It Down: When children are expected to complete challenging tasks, adults should take the time to break down the task so that the directions and expectations are clear. The SKILLZ **instructors** utilize the "7 Steps for Teaching a Drill" to make sure all students are confident of instructions to be the most successful during each activity leading to more satisfaction and understanding.

- 4) Boost Brain Power: Children's attention spans can be exercised to become stronger. By engaging them in activities that require concentration, this muscle can be used. In SKILLZ classes, mat chats are utilized to quickly activate children's learning efforts, and neurobics is used to engage their concentration and thinking skills. Also, **positive chemicals** in the **brain** are triggered, creating the ultimate brain power for learning.

- 5) Praise and Reward: As we know, children are motivated by praise and rewards. They want nothing more than to be recognized for their efforts and success. This is a critical step in maintaining their interest and motivation to learn new things. The SKILLZ **instructors** connect with each student, prompt, good behavior, and **reward skills** developed through hard work in each class.

When it comes to attention span, adults must be knowledgeable of what normal expectations are for children. Making simple adjustments to any learning environment can significantly boost a child's attention span and make learning fun again.