



RETURNING TO LEARN AFTER SUMMER VACATION

When a child suffers a concussion during summer vacation or a break from school, parents often wonder if their child will be ready to return when school starts again. Every child's injury and recovery is unique and requires careful observation from parents and healthcare providers. You can promote recovery and prevent ongoing symptoms by following a "return to learn during a break" plan like the one below. Your child's doctor will adjust this plan to meet your child's needs, and your child will move through the plan at their own pace.

STEP 1: Immediately after a concussion, your child should take a break from thinking activities for a few days.

At first this may mean avoiding texting and computers, not playing video games and possibly even avoiding television, if it makes symptoms worse. It may also mean staying away from "busy" activities such as swimming, large get-togethers with friends or family, or even summer camp. Your child may participate in activities with low thinking demands, such as drawing, cooking, and card or board games.

STEP 2: When you start to see your child's symptoms improve during rest, allow them to slowly start light thinking activities. These include things like texting, easy reading, and puzzles such as word search or crossword puzzles. If your child's symptoms return, stop these activities.

At first, your child may only tolerate 5 to 15 minutes of thinking activity at a time. Stop the activity if symptoms increase a lot. Allow your child's brain to rest, then return to activities when symptoms improve.

Your child may continue to increase time with thinking activities as long as symptoms do not get worse, or symptoms improve within 30 minutes of taking a break.

STEP 3: Slowly advance to higher levels of thinking activity.

When your child is feeling better, they should try to do some type of higher-level thinking activity. Even though school is not in session, it's a good idea to work on activities that would mimic schoolwork at home, increasing the amount of time as tolerated. This type of thinking activity could include summer reading (especially reading activity books where you can answer questions about what you read) or SAT prep questions.

Your child should continue to participate in these activities in short bursts of time (up to 30 minutes) as tolerated and then work up to longer periods of time.

Your child should participate in daily thinking activities until they return to school. Do not try to cram summer reading into the final weeks before school. This plan will help make a smooth transition back to school after concussion.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Minds Matter Concussion Program at 215-590-6919.