



**PLA** PERFORMANCE  
LEARNING  
ACADEMY

## Cognitive Skills Training

### Benefits of Cognitive Skills Improvement

Cognitive skills training is a one-on-one instructional process that occurs 30 minutes per session, 3 times a week to develop the student's underlying skills to learn any information. Through a series of drills and exercises, the student is trained to develop and strengthen their ability to learn any academic content easier and faster. Unlike classroom instruction or academic tutoring that focuses on teaching content, the individual cognitive skills exercises that each student receives enhances the cognitive functions needed to help students with their learning of the academic material so they can ultimately perform to their full potential.

Almost all students have one or more weak underlying cognitive skills that can be improved. Frequently, a student's choice of friends, their lack of self-esteem, low to average academic performance, or behavioral struggles at home are a result of deficient cognitive abilities. Research has recently confirmed the importance of the development of these skills. Much like physical exercise strengthens the body, cognitive skills exercises can strengthen the performance of the brain. These basic mental skills are needed throughout life for every person to function effectively.

### Why Must Cognitive Skills be Trained?

Just as you cannot learn to play the piano with classroom lectures, cognitive skills grow stronger when you actually practice playing, not teaching or tutoring. Cognitive skills training must feature specific methods if it is to be consistently effective. Studies have shown that one-on-one training is by far the best vehicle to deliver these essential

training methods. The student gets undivided, individual attention.

### Is Average Good Enough?

It depends on your goals and desires for your child. The average student in the U.S. is significantly below grade level in writing, math and reading. Average students do not face a very bright future. Increasing demands in the Knowledge Economy and stiff competition from foreign students make average far too low a goal for most students.

- 69 out of 100 4th graders in the United States below grade level in Reading
- 71 out of 100 8th graders in the United States below grade level in Math
- 76 out of 100 12th graders in the United States below grade level in Writing



## Rewiring Brain to Solve Academic Problems

Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) allows us to actually watch the brain at work. By pinpointing the area of the brain utilized most heavily while reading, we learn why some students are forced to use slower analytic pathways on virtually every word while skilled, fluent readers use a more automatic, auditory processing route to see a word and automatically assign pronunciation and meaning. This understanding allows us to measure the effectiveness of various reading strategies. Evidence continues to prove that exposure to intense, effective training in reading can actually transfer brain activity to the more automatic processing centers naturally used by good readers.

Memorizing the ABC song has virtually nothing to do with learning to read. It's the letter sounds (phonemes) that are important, not the letter names. Learning to read demands that a child be able to recognize individual sounds of speech, sounds correctly, and then associate those sounds with the letter.

## List of Skills Developed or Improved with Cognitive Skills Training

**Visual Processing:** the ability to perceive, analyze and conceptualize information that is seen

**Auditory Processing:** the ability to perceive, analyze and conceptualize information that is heard

**Logic and Reasoning:** the ability to create and implement a strategy and course of action to solve a problem or take a specific action

**Processing Speed:** the speed at which one can understand input from a source and return a desired response

**Comprehension:** the ability to understand a series

of inputs and utilize them in both short and long term applications

**Short term memory:** the ability to store and retrieve information for long periods of time

**Auditory memory:** the ability to remember what is heard

**Visual memory:** the ability to remember what is seen

**Phonemic decoding:** the ability to dismantle simple to complex words structures to ensure fluency

**Selective Attention:** the ability to focus on one element while other distractions are present

**Simultaneous Processing:** Processing information from multiple sources or performing more than one task at the same time

**Sequential Processing:** the ability to process information in a particular order or sequence

