# Student At-Home Quick Guide

# How to help strengthen your child’s cognitive skills

# **What is ACTIVATE?**

ACTIVATE is a cognitive cross training program designed by Yale Medical School Researchers that stimulates areas of the brain to strengthen eight core cognitive capacities that make up Executive Functions. These eight “CCC’s” are important building blocks for the early development of both social and cognitive capacities that enable children to be more effective learners and to help them manage the routine tasks of everyday life.

8 Core Cognitive Capacities

* Sustained Attention
* Speed of Processing
* Cognitive Flexibility
* Working Memory
* Response Inhibition
* Pattern Recognition
* Multiple Simultaneous Attention
* Category Formation

ACTIVATE provides exercises in the form of games that consist of multiple levels. The games will become increasingly more challenging as your child progresses through the levels. It is important that your child stay engaged with the exercises and try to complete each level as fast and accurately as they can. Remember these are exercises and your child may need motivation and coaching to get them through the session.

We recommend a minimum frequency of three 20-minute computer sessions per week, with the expectation that results will emerge for most children after about 1,000 minutes of accumulated computer training. By the time the child has completed 1,000 minutes (or fifty 20-minute sessions), they should have worked through enough cognitive tasks for ACTIVATE to identify their unique cognitive strengths and weaknesses in detail.

**Be sure your computer system is compatible with ACTIVATE:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hardware** | Pentium Processor 1.6 Ghz or higher (or equivalent)1GB RAM, minimum. **OS requirements:**Mac – Mountain Lion or newerPC’s – Windows 7 or newer |
| **Internet Connection** | High speed |
| **Browser Requirements for HTML5** | Firefox 24 + (PC only)-**Recommended**Safari 6.0 + (Mac only)-**Recommended**Chrome 30.0 + (Mac or PC) **Recommended**\***Internet Explorer is not supported**Mobile Safari + iPad 2.0Silk Browser + Amazon Kindle Fire HDX or later |

# **Account Information:**



**Cognitive Exercises: https://\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.c8sciences.com**

**Account name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Username: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Password: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

# **Getting Started**

**Preparing for the ACTIVATE computer training session:**

**Inform yourself:** To best help your child with their questions we advise the teacher/coach/parent to play the games. To play the games on our Demo Site, type this URL into the address box

<http://teacherdemo.c8sciences.com/?debug=true>

Use **demo** as the username and as the password. This site can also be used to help your child with harder levels.

**Note:** The Demonstration Site does not collect data, so your child should not exercise here.

**Manage the environment:** To ensure a smooth exercise session you should:

* Make sure the computer is turned on and working properly. We recommend that you use a desktop, laptop or tablet. If a laptop is used we recommend a mouse and not the finger pad for quicker response time. When using an iPad, log in with the Safari browser and swipe away all background running apps.
* Bookmark the ACTIVATE URL for easy access. See Account Information above.
* We recommend that your child use headphones in case there are distractions in the area.
* Arrange your child’s so they will have the best opportunity to focus on the games.

**Inform your child:** Let your child know that *Captain Bluefeather’s Island* is designed to strengthen their brain’s abilities to work more efficiently. Stress that these games might be challenging and in order to be successful and how important it is to focus on what the games ask them to do, but that they can ask for help at any time.

**Building intrinsic motivation with looping feedback:** We find the computer training to be more effective when we can help our children find the self-motivation needed for completing their weekly exercise sessions. Children are more likely to become invested when they see that they have the ability to change their struggles in learning in the classroom environment. Have a conversation with your child on what a weakness in any of the eight CCC’s would look( see <http://www.c8sciences.com/about/8ccc/>) like and how these weaknesses might manifest themselves at home and in the classroom and the consequences they might bring, can be compelling. Showing the results of the ACTIVATE Preliminary Report (from your child’s teacher) can provide measured evidence of their struggle. ACTIVATE can provide an action to change the behavior, and with fidelity it can be measured over time. Making observations of positive change and accomplishments not only on the exercises but also in the classroom or at home and reinforcing with positive praise will help your child understand they have the ability to strengthen the capacity to succeed.

## **How to coach your child:**

ACTIVATE is a training program and therefore your child will need assistance as the levels become more challenging. Repetition is what makes the new pathways in the brain become stronger and children will find the computer games less engaging over the course of their training. It is important to help motivate your child to complete their session with focus. Here are some recommended techniques to assist with coaching and motivating.

* Each game has a progress meter that indicates how well your child is performing on the level. Theo the mouse on the right of the screen should climb to the top of the mast and raise a flag. When this occurs mastery of the level has been achieved and child will be rewarded with Progress Points. The objective of every level of every game is to achieve mastery and collect Progress Points. Monitor the location of Theo to see if your child is in need of coaching.
* Research the science of Neuroplasticity and how the brain has the ability to change can help provide motivation to exercise.
* Break the training session up by injecting a physical activity ie...jumping jacks, yoga poses- after 2 computer games and then return to the computer games for completion.
* Position yourself where you can see the computer screen to see how well your child is progressing.
* Sit with your child to help with difficult levels, ask your child to repeat the clue for the level.
* Providing expectations for every session. Be clear on what is expected for the training session. Example: The games will be challenging and your goal today is to complete each game as fast and accurately as possible, stay focused.
* Quietly ask them what they are looking for as they are playing. Encourage then to keep saying it out loud quietly. This is a strategy for recognizing patterns which is very helpful in all our games.
* Set achievable immediate goals together – “how many in a row can you get correct?” offer encouragement and count out loud and on your fingers each one they get correct.
* For some children who have great difficulty engaging, you can move the mouse and ask your child to tell you when and what to click on. Then take turns with the child, and gradually have the child do more and more.

For technical support please contact Support@C8Sciences.com