



IAMNURSE.ORG
HEALTH COACHING SERIES

— EMPOWER. EDUCATE. ADVOCATE.

The Athletic Brain

A Parent's Guide to ADHD Advocacy & Non-Medication Strategies

◎ **Target Audience:** Parents of high-energy, athletic boys (approx. age 7) gifted in STEM, navigating focus challenges.

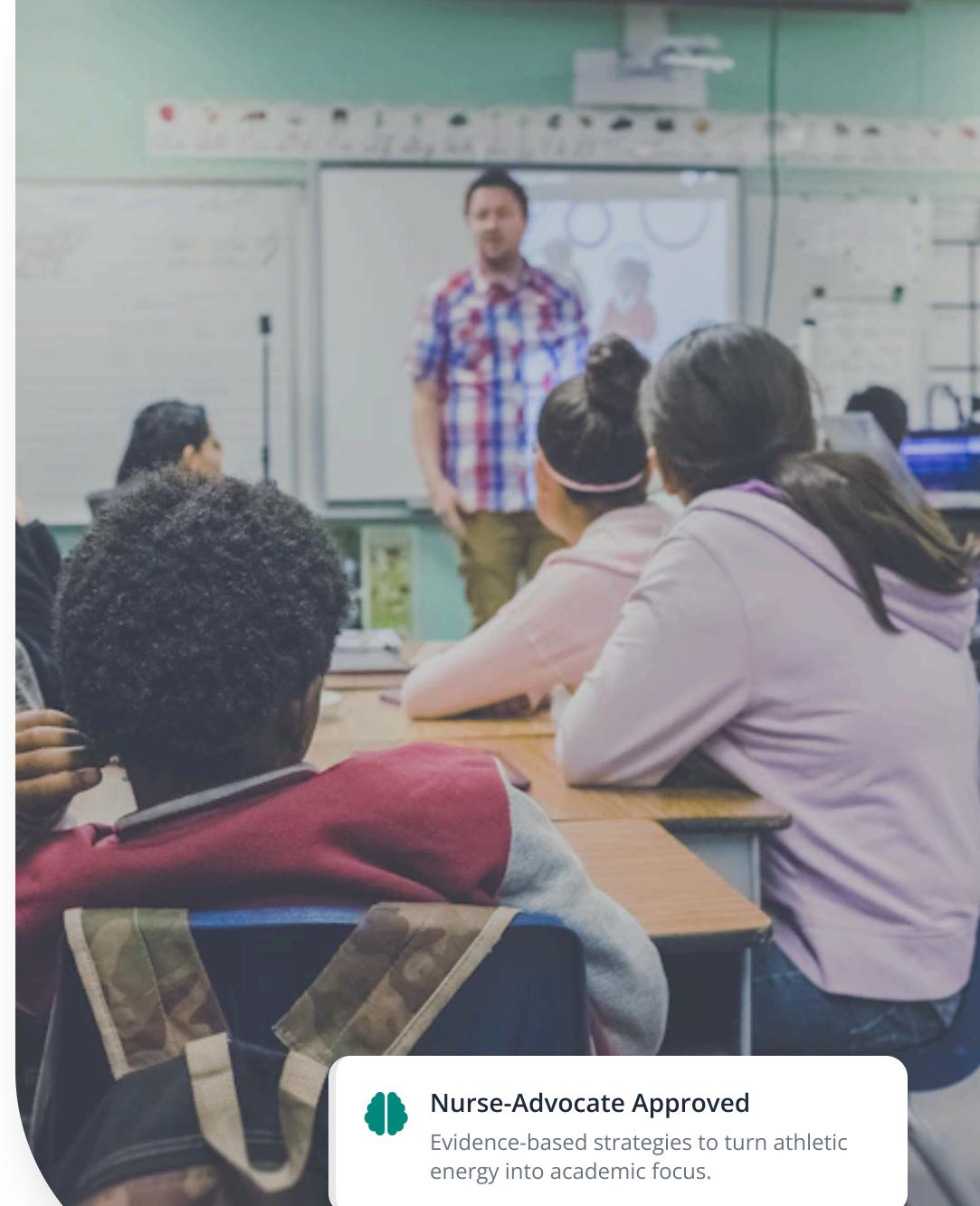
INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE:

Factsheet

Advocacy Scripts

STEM Strategies

Progress Tracker



Nurse-Advocate Approved

Evidence-based strategies to turn athletic energy into academic focus.

Who This Is For & Goals



Target Profile

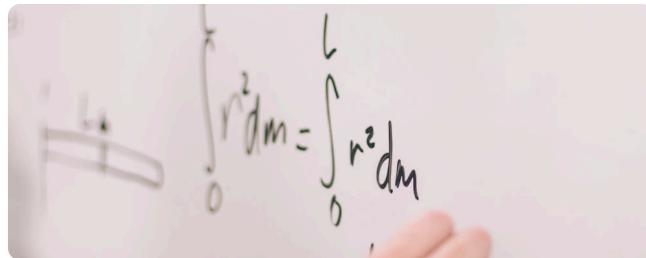


THE CHILD

- 为人 7-year-old, high-output athlete
- 天赋 Gifted in STEM / Math
- 挑战 Reading focus challenges

THE TEAM

- 家庭 Families navigating ADHD
- 教育者 Teachers & 504/IEP Teams



Strategic Goals



90-Day Behavioral Intervention Trial

Establish a clear timeline with data collection before medical decisions.



Movement-Based Accommodations

Secure culturally responsive, movement-friendly classroom supports.



Leverage Athletic Routines

Use sports as "Natural Ritalin" for dopamine regulation.



STEM-to-Reading Bridge

Use existing Math/Science strengths to accelerate literacy.



IMMEDIATE ACTION STEP

Identify one teacher champion.

Schedule a standing 15-min weekly check-in to review the data.

Biological Rationale: Proprioception & Regulation



ACTIONABLE Heavy Work Menu (Micro-Breaks: 2–5 mins)

Wall Push-Ups
Or isometric chair holds

Carry Jobs
Books, water jug, bins

Resistance Bands
Therabands at desk legs

Animal Walks
Bear crawl or crab walk

Evidence Snapshot:

Research indicates that aerobic exercise and proprioceptive input can improve **short-term executive function** and self-regulation in children with ADHD, serving as a "primer" for learning.

NURSE PRO-TIP

Pair heavy work **immediately before reading blocks** and after chaotic transitions (e.g., recess/lunch).

SAFETY CHECK

Always supervise movement. Choose options aligned with PT/OT guidance to ensure proper form.

The Natural Focus Support Effect: Sports as Regulators



THE CHEMISTRY

Dopamine Boost

Vigorous activity naturally spikes **dopamine** & **norepinephrine**, the same neurotransmitters targeted by medication.



THE WINDOW

1-3 Hours

Post-exercise, the brain enters a state of **heightened arousal regulation** ideal for reading and seated focus.



PRACTICAL DOSING

Every 20 Min

"Micro-bursts" of heavy work (2-3 mins) act as boosters to sustain the regulation window throughout the school day.

The Athlete's Brain Daily Routine



7:00 AM

Morning Primer

Track laps or vigorous play (15m)



10:00 AM

Literacy Block

Pre-task heavy work (3m)



DAILY MAINTENANCE

Micro-Dosing

Heavy work every 20-30 min



3:30 PM

Stabilizer

Organized sports (Football/Track)



OBSERVATION PRO-TIP

Log the "After-Burn": Track focus for 60-90 min after activity to find your child's specific optimal window.



CLINICAL CAUTION

Support, Not Replacement: Exercise is a powerful tool but may not replace medication for all. Coordinate changes with your clinician.

504/IEP Meeting Factsheet

“

THE OPENER

"As his primary health advocate, we are entering a **90-day Behavioral Intervention Trial**. We need consistent accommodations with data collection before we consider pharmacological options."



THE CLOSER

"Let's set a **30/60/90-day review** with written data. I'd like to see how the 'heavy work' breaks impact his reading focus specifically."



EQUITY & CULTURE NOTE

Ensure discipline data is checked for bias. Avoid punitive loss of recess—movement is his medicine, not a privilege to be revoked.



NURSE PRO-TIP

Be firm but polite. You are the expert on your child.

Requested Accommodations

[Printable](#)

Movement Plan

- Heavy Work:** 2-3 min micro-break every 20-30 min.
- Pre-Reading:** 15 min vigorous activity prior to block.
- Reset:** Allow "wall push-ups" or standing breaks.

Environment

- Flexible Seating:** Wobble cushion or standing desk.
- Priority Seat:** Near teacher, away from high traffic.
- Sensory:** Noise-reducing headphones available.

Instruction

- Chunking:** Break multi-step tasks into single parts.
- STEM Integration:** Use science texts for reading practice.
- Visuals:** Written schedule and visual timers visible.

Data & Accountability

- Daily Tracker:** Log on-task minutes & breaks used.
- Communication:** One weekly summary email (Fri).
- Testing:** Small group setting for assessments.



Declining Medication: 5 Firm, Polite Scripts



THE CLINICAL TRIAL APPROACH

"We are currently in a Behavioral Intervention Trial phase. We want to collect 90 days of data on how these classroom accommodations affect his performance before we consider pharmacological options."



THE BIOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

"Because he is a high-output athlete, his metabolic and dopamine needs are unique. We want to leverage physical activity as a primary regulator first."



THE HOLISTIC FOCUS

"We are prioritizing his executive function skills—teaching him 'how' to learn through his Math strengths—rather than just suppressing symptoms. We want his social development to remain natural."



THE INFORMED PAUSE

"We'll revisit medication discussions only after we have objective classroom data showing that the agreed-upon supports have been implemented with fidelity."



THE DATA ALIGNMENT

"Please document any concerns on the daily tracker so we can match the intervention to the data rather than change his biology prematurely."



PRO-TIP: THE "PIVOT"

Always pair a "No" with a specific "Ask":

"Instead of meds right now, can we try a 2-minute heavy-work micro-break after recess?"

STEM Strength → Reading Gains

The Bridge Strategies



Math-to-Literacy

Write out the steps for solving word problems. Emphasize decoding math vocab (e.g., "sum," "fewer," "equal").



Science Texts

Use high-interest, hands-on science readers. Pre-teach domain words with diagrams and visuals.



Data Stories

Turn sports stats into short reading passages. Ask him to read the chart and summarize the "story" aloud.



Coding & Directions

Practice reading simple "if/then" code logic instructions to build sequencing skills without narrative pressure.



Graphing Narratives

Convert bar graphs into 3-sentence written summaries: Who, What, and "So What?"



Fluency & Rhythm

Use a metronome or track cadence beat for repeated reading of short passages to build flow.

Leverage Strengths

⌚ Daily Routine

10 MIN

The "STEM Read-In"

Read **one** science paragraph.

Read **one** data sentence.

Write **one** summary line.

Consistency > Duration

ACTION STEP

Find a "Science News for Kids" article today. Read just the captions together.

NURSE PRO-TIP

Celebrate his **reasoning and accuracy** first. Speed (fluency) will naturally follow confidence.



Action Steps: Classroom + Home



The Classroom

TEACHER / IEP TEAM

- Heavy-Work Toolkit:** Resistance bands or wall-push station available in room.
- Seating:** Flexible option (wobble stool/standing desk) provided.
- Structure:** Visual schedule posted; large tasks chunked with timers.
- Routine:** Movement break *immediately before* reading block.
- Materials:** STEM/Science texts integrated into reading practice.
- Data:** Daily tracker completed and sent home weekly.



The Home Base

PARENT / CAREGIVER

- The Primer:** 15–20 min vigorous play *before* starting homework.
- Sprints:** Homework done in 10–15 min bursts with movement in between.
- Reading Game:** "Sports Stats" reading session 3x/week.
- Fuel:** Protein + complex carb snack (e.g., apple & cheese) after school.
- Sleep:** Consistent wind-down routine (no screens 1h before bed).
- Connection:** One weekly "Track & Read" family outing.



NURSE PRO-TIP: THE "BRIDGE" LANGUAGE

Use the same cue words at school and home for self-regulation.

"RESET"

"PRESS"

"PULL"

"BREATHE"

90-Day Progress Tracker

🧪 Behavioral Intervention Trial Template (Teacher Copy)



WEEK OF: _____

DAY / DATE	TASK TYPE	MVMT BREAK?	FOCUS (0-3)	READING %	NOTES / TRIGGERS / SUPPORTS USED
MON __/__		<input type="checkbox"/>			
TUE __/__		<input type="checkbox"/>			
WED __/__		<input type="checkbox"/>			
THU __/__		<input type="checkbox"/>			
FRI __/__		<input type="checkbox"/>			

FOCUS SCALE KEY

- 0 Refusal / Shut Down
- 1 Distracted / Off-Task
- 2 Redirectable
- 3 Independent Focus

>tag Weekly Summary

⭐ WINS / BRIGHT SPOTS

⚠ BARRIERS / TRIGGERS

↗️ ADJUSTMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK

Review Date:

Video Storyboard: Health Coaching Script



U The Hook

0:00 – 0:20

■ VISUAL / B-ROLL

B-Roll: Close up of cleats being tied tight. Cut to child in a "calm corner" looking frustrated with a book.

Text Overlay: "The Athletic Brain Paradox"

■ NARRATION

"If your 7-year-old runs like a sprinter but stalls the moment he sees a book, this is for you. We're turning that athletic engine into a reading superpower."

■ The Advocate

2:00 – 3:00

■ VISUAL / B-ROLL

On Screen: The "5 Polite Scripts" scrolling.

Action: Nurse/Host holding the Progress Tracker document.

■ NARRATION

"When the school suggests meds, you use the 'Clinical Trial' script. 'We are in a 90-day behavioral data phase.' Be firm. Be polite. But get the data first."

■ The Teach

0:20 – 2:00

■ VISUAL / B-ROLL

Demo: Split screen. Left: Child doing wall push-ups. Right: Dopamine chart animating up.

Graphic: "Move → Learn → Log" 3-Step Loop.

■ NARRATION

"It's called Proprioception. His muscles need 'heavy work' to tell his brain it's safe to focus. Exercise isn't play—it's his natural focus support. Here's the 3-step protocol..."

■ The Close

3:00 – 3:30

■ VISUAL / B-ROLL

CTA: Large QR Code on screen + URL.

End Card: 

"Empower. Educate. Advocate."

■ NARRATION

"Download the Factsheet and the 90-Day Tracker below. You are his best expert. Go advocate."

VIEWERS NEXT STEP



Download the Kit

Includes Factsheet, Scripts, and 90-Day Tracker.

IAMNURSE.ORG/ADHD

■ PRODUCTION NOTE

Keep the tone **Empathetic but Authoritative**. The parent is stressed; the Nurse is the steady guide. Use bright, natural lighting for the "Teach" section.