



BRAIN GAINS: 7 FOODS TO BOOST KIDS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Fact is, all the books, tablets, and notepads kids use for studying are useless if their brains are not in top functioning form. There are certain nutrients that are crucial for their brain development, and better brain development means better brain function, memory, and concentration—all of which contribute to better academic performance.

To keep your kids' performance at optimum levels, we've rounded up seven of the best [brain foods](#) to help boost their mental power, and also talked to [Brainly's](#) parenting expert, Patrick Quinn, for pro parenting tips on how to incorporate them into your kids' daily diet.

1. Nuts & Seeds

Nuts and [Viva Natural Chia seeds](#) are packed with nutrients that are essential for brain health including essential fatty acids, protein, zinc, and B-vitamins. They're also natural mood boosters that are portable and versatile, making them an excellent choice for study snacks.

Parent tip: Kids aren't always going to love these. But mixing them in a trail mix with a few chocolate pieces or yogurt chips is a great way to get them munching on the healthy nuts and seeds. Just be careful not to send this in as a school snack in districts where nut allergies can affect other kids.

2. Greek Yogurt

Full-fat Greek yogurt packs a lot more protein than other yogurts (and much less sugar), and can help keep brain cells in good form for sending and receiving information. It's also full of protein and B-vitamins—essential for the growth of brain tissue, neurotransmitters, and enzymes. Greek yogurt is also a great source of Calcium and Vitamin D. *Parent tip:* Mix in a teaspoon of honey and some cinnamon to turn this healthy option into a delicious one as well. The problem for me at that point is avoiding eating it myself before the kids get it.

3. Berries

Berries are rich in a variety of compounds that may help promote academic performance and protect brain health. Berries (including blueberries, strawberries, and blackberries) are especially high in flavonoid compounds called anthocyanins, believed to improve mental performance by increasing blood flow to the brain. They also protect against inflammation and improve certain signaling pathways that promote nerve cell production and cellular processes involved in learning and memory. *Parent tip:* Berries make an easy study snack, but they can cause sticky fingers that can lead to messy keyboards and homework papers. Try putting several different types of berries on kid-friendly skewers for a fun, healthy, and mess-free desk snack.

4. Fish

Fish is an excellent source of Vitamin D and the Omega-3 fatty acids DHA and EPA— both essential for brain growth and function.

Consuming more Omega-3s means kids will have sharper minds and better mental skills. *Parent tip:* Fish can be a tricky one with kids. If you get them accustomed to eating it when they're young, they'll be more likely to be open to new fish dishes when they're pre-teen and teenagers. You can make fish tasty for kids by serving it simply grilled, like fish sticks, or including it in tacos or in tuna sandwiches. Another option is using canned salmon to make delicious salmon salad sandwiches that can be mixed with reduced-fat mayo or non-fat Greek yogurt, raisins, chopped celery, and carrots.

5. Eggs

The versatile egg is a great source of protein, and egg yolks are packed with choline, which helps memory development. Eggs can be served in a variety of ways and can be enjoyed at breakfast, as a mid-afternoon snack, or even at dinner. *Parent tip:* Eggs are great for making grab-and-go breakfasts kids can eat on the road. Scramble eggs into a whole grain tortilla to make a grab-and-go breakfast burrito, or make your own version of an Egg McMuffin at home by putting a fried egg on top of a toasted English muffin and topping it with a slice of low-fat cheese. *Bonus tip:* Eggs aren't only a great healthy option that will keep them full thanks to the protein, but it's also a really great gateway to cooking for the budding chef. Teach them how to make scrambled eggs, a fried egg, or a veggie omelet, and you're fostering a whole new side of creativity. Plus... you might get the occasional breakfast out of that deal!"

6. Oatmeal

Oats are extremely nutritious and they can provide the energy and fuel for the brain that kids need first thing in the morning. Oatmeal is also a fiber-rich food that keeps heart and brain arteries clear. In one [study](#), kids who ate sweetened oatmeal did better on memory-related school tasks than those who ate sugary cereal. *Parent tip:* Delicious AND helps with memory at school? Oatmeal should really be considered a bit of a superfood for our kids. It's another food option that can be endlessly tweaked to suit the tastes of your individual kiddos. You can dress oatmeal up with applesauce, dried fruit, almonds, and banana to make it tastier and more appealing to kids. Due to its natural compounds, adding cinnamon also gives oatmeal an extra ingredient that will help to protect brain cells.

7. Apples and Plums

Kids usually have a craving for sweets. Apples and plums are lunchbox-friendly items that contain quercetin, an antioxidant that helps fight the decline in mental skills. Keep them organic to get the best benefits. *Parent tip:* These are some of the few snacks that are on the 'help yourself' list in my house. It's great because kids can grab one when they get home from school while doing homework, or anytime they want a quick bite. For a heartier snack, you can also cut apples into chunky slices and spread them with almond or peanut butter, or you can freeze pitted plums and add them to a favorite nutrient-rich fruit smoothie.