# Study: Training improves attention in kids

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University of Oregon-Eugene scientists say just a five-day educational intervention can improve attention and boost intelligence in young children.

Michael Posner and colleagues explained the brain's executive attention network -- the area involved with higher level planning and organizational cognition -- helps a person voluntarily ignore irrelevant information and pay attention to meaningful stimuli.

The researchers examined how attention training and certain genes influence development of executive attention in 4- and 6-year-old children.

During the training, the children completed a series of increasingly difficult attention tasks. The researchers measured attention, brain activity, and intelligence before and after the intervention. They also determined what form of a particular gene (DAT 1), which had been previously linked to executive attention, the children carried.

Compared with control groups, children receiving attention training more closely resembled adult performance on all measures.

The gene studies indicated children with the long form of DAT 1 were better able to control their attention and, thus, might benefit less from such an intervention.

The results suggests attention training might benefit children with

attentional deficits.

The study is detailed in the early on-line edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

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