

A video game that helps your child?



Mrs. Bach-Bowen?" My heart sank. The voice belonged to my six-year-old son's teacher.

"I couldn't take my eyes off him"

What did Brody do this time? My stomach twisted. "I couldn't take my eyes off him"

The first sign there was something wrong came when Brody was just a baby. He barely slept five hours a day. And if he was awake, he was crying!

As awful as it sounds, when my maternity leave ended, I was almost relieved to go back to work.

Once Brody started walking, I literally couldn't take my eyes off him for one second. I even kept the bathroom door open so I could watch him!

When Brody was three, his preschool teacher asked me, "What do you feed him for breakfast - a bowl of sugar?"

"He really is a sweet little boy," I insisted. But it was hard to remember that when he was trying to stick toys in the light socket!

"He is a handful!" friends remarked. But what they meant was, "Why don't you discipline him?"

The truth was, I disciplined him constantly.

"I wanna be a good Mommy, but I can't," he told me.

"You are a good, sweet heart," I blinked back tears. "I know you don't mean to misbehave."

But from the first day of school, the calls began. They weren't terrible things - "Brody makes animal sounds during class" - but they happened constantly.

Gradually, Brody's behavior grew more troubling.

And now... "Brody threw rocks at another child," his teacher reported.

Desperate, my husband, Shannon, and I took him to a child psychologist.

"Brody has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder," he told us. I was actually re-

lieved. After all, you give kids with ADHD a pill and everything's okay, right?

But it wasn't that easy. The first medication Brody gave facial tics. The second didn't work at all. And the third one made him cry all the time.

"An antidepressant could reduce the side effects of his ADHD medication," his doctor suggested.

There has to be another solution, my heart told me.

And one day, as I found scoured the Internet for something really different...

"It's called Play Attention," I told Shannon. "It's a video game that helps kids with ADHD learn to stay focused through biofeedback."

Instead of a joystick, these games operated on brain power, the website explained.

When a child concentrates, his brain makes certain kinds of brain waves. The game helps kids learn how to have those "concentrating" brain waves more often.

It sounded too good to be true but we had to give it a try.

When the box arrived, it looked too simple to be our solution. Just a video game and a special helmet that read brain waves.

It didn't take long for Brody to catch on. When he concentrated, a bird soared across the screen. If he lost focus, it crashed.

"I'm bored!" Brody quickly

grew frustrated.

But each time he played, the bird flew a little longer until he could make the bird fly as long as he wanted. He soon mastered the other games too.

"You're doing great!" I praised him. But would it really help?

"Brody's doing great!"

At first, I thought it was my imagination. But soon, at homework time, Brody finished in 10 minutes what used to take him hours!

Then one afternoon, Brody's called. "Brody is doing great!" she raved.

I was thrilled.

And so was Brody. "I used to get in trouble all the time," he confided. "But I like school now!"

"I'm so proud of you!" I hugged him.

One year later, Brody's still doing great. And when he snuggles next to me, "Just because, Mommy," my heart fills with joy. Before Play Attention, he couldn't sit still for more than a few minutes. Now Brody's free to be the happy little boy he was meant to be.

*-Joyce Bach-Bowen,
Sugar Hill, GA,
as told by Deborah Bebb*

“I wanna be a good Mommy, but I can't,” Brody told me