

Puzzle Pieces

Solving the puzzle...Empowering the child



Meryl Lipton, MD, PhD
Executive Director

Summer Planning for You and Your Child

What are the best ways to plan the summer for a child with a brain based learning or behavior problem? Working with families over the years, I have two key thoughts on this topic. First, start early – NOW is a good time – and secondly, use the following list which the staff at RNBC has compiled.

To begin with, spend the next few weeks creating a list of goals with your child. Start the list and come back to it every day for a short time, as it is not recommended that it occur all in one sitting. Make this a family activity, especially considering your child's input. What are his or her goals? Allow your child to come up with as many goals as he or she desires. Make sure you also seek input about appropriate goals from your child's teacher and other professionals your child may work with (psychologist, O.T., tutor, etc.)

Explain to your child, that after the list is compiled, together you will prioritize which goals you will actively try to achieve.

When finalizing your goals, be sure to ask some important, focused questions that include:

- How can you and your child build areas of competence?
- How can you strengthen areas of weakness?
- How much structure is best for your child?
- How can you create structure in your child's summer schedule without being too regimented?
- Remember, Disney World or other similar stimulating experiences are great for some youngsters, but

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ADHD Medications and Summertime: Do They Go Together?

Marc Sandrolini, MD

It is a good time to evaluate the benefit of medication use while "on break" from school. Parents naturally wonder if they should continue their child's ADHD medication when their child is not in school. After all, the medication was probably started as a result of difficulties in school. But is there any reason to use these medications in the summer, when a child does not have to sit in a classroom to complete lots of homework done?

As is often the case in child psychiatry, the answer to this question is straightforward: it depends. There are some important factors to consider when making this decision and I will describe them in a bit. First, however, it might be helpful to know some history of this issue.

Up until perhaps 15 years ago, the general consensus among clinicians was that ADHD caused problems primarily in a child's school behavior and academic performance. At that time, there was a also concern that the stimulant class of medications (Ritalin, Adderall, Concerta, Dexedrine, etc.) could cause growth delays when used chronically. These two factors led to physicians routinely discontinuing a child's ADHD medication during school breaks and weekends.

However, in the last decade or so, newer research has

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Summer Planning

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overwhelming for others. How much “stimulation” is appropriate for your child?

As with any change, you should anticipate some regression in your child's behavior. They may feel a sense of loss from the established routine and structure of the school year. As you talk with your child's teacher, schedule a time for next spring to discuss planning your child's return to school in the fall. Our experience is that many families think it's O.K. to wait until school resumes next year before doing this planning. Just as it is wise to start thinking about next summer now, it is important to focus on next year's planning well in advance of the end of this school year. Make sure you discuss transitions with your child's teacher during this meeting. How can you insure the best transitions for your child from school to summer activities, and then back to school again? You may also consider a school visit for your child toward the end of the summer to reacquaint them with the school environment.

- **Create a plan for the completion of academic work that can – or must -- be done over the summer. A good idea is to preview subjects for next year where there are books that are available on CD, video, P.C. searches online, or pod-casting.**
- **Plan special trips to places that will be studied in school or go to museums or exhibits that will support your child's next year's lessons.**
- **Remember that learning is not just going to see things. Keeping a journal, designing a photo album, or creating a video or audio production can be a terrific way to capture events for future enjoyment while learning in the process.**
- **A variation on this idea is to go to special camps or join socialization groups. You must, however, evaluate how a specific camp, group, or activity really fits your child's particular situation or needs.**

Remember... children with brain based learning and behavior issues need structure, but they also need free time and opportunities to have fun. Finally, they are kids, and an important part of growing up is not to be overly scheduled, but to include time for enjoyment and relaxation.

Have a great summer and contact RNBC if we can assist in any way.

ADHD Medications

Continued from front page 1

altered some of our ideas about ADHD treatment. First of all, there is now little proof that stimulant medications cause delays in a child's growth. There have been observations of slower growth, though this may simply reflect the decreased appetites some children have while taking these medications. Regardless, the current research shows that children who use stimulant medication over long periods of time show no ill effects from it.

Another change in our view of ADHD is that it causes problems not only in school, but also in other spheres of life. For instance, a child who is very inattentive and restless can have a hard time with team sports. A highly impulsive and hyperactive child can make family life difficult on a vacation. A teenager with ADHD is more likely to have a car accident. Most children with ADHD struggle when they have a lot of unstructured time on their hands.

The summertime is a wonderful time for children because it allows them to lose themselves in hobbies and sports. But children with ADHD have poor attention and impulsive behavior, which makes it difficult to get absorbed in new activities. A child with ADHD often complains of being bored despite having lots of interesting activities available to him. There are few activities that can really hold this child's attention, so he naturally turns to mesmerizing activities, like video games or television or teasing his little sister.

Over the years, I have come to advocate using ADHD medications every day of the year unless there is a well thought-out reason not to. These medications are usually very safe to use over long periods of time and can help your child both in and out of school.

You can make the best decision about using medications during the summer by doing two things. First, observe your child during the summer or on weekends when she is both on and off medications. While making your observations, see if your child can:

- get interested in new or complex activities
- tolerate frustration
- master new skills
- play and socialize for extended times
- get along with family members

After you have done this, discuss your observations with your clinicians and decide in which settings the medications are helpful.

There are certainly times it is appropriate to stop medications for the summer. However, ADHD for many children can cause problems every day of the year. Your child may get more out of his/her summer and weekends if he/she stays on his/her medications year-round.

PARENTS CORNER

Our son, Nathan Puchek, 14, of Highland, Ind., has been under Dr.

Meryl Lipton's care for going on eight years. He's been diagnosed with ADD

and high-functioning autism. Generally, Nathan, a freshman at Highland High School, keeps to himself and social settings have proved to be challenging. But when he was given the opportunity in September to be the field announcer and scoreboard operator for one of his brother, Nicholas's, Highland Little League Fall Baseball League games, he surprised us by agreeing to work the game from the pressbox. He did a good job and paid attention to balls, strikes and runs -- a first -- and did a good job of announcing the players as they came to bat. He did the job one other time during the month-long season and has already asked about calling more games next year.. His parents, Joe and Candy Puchek, are very proud of him.



An Opportunity to Understand

Leslie Baer, Ph.D

Joe is an 8 year-old boy who was referred to me by his 2nd grade teacher because of concerns about his classroom functioning. His teacher reported that Joe often does not seem to be paying attention, is behind his peers academically and has difficulty keeping himself organized. In addition, she reported that Joe frequently goes to the school nurse complaining of stomachaches and sometimes seems sad.

As a child psychologist, Joe's situation is typical of the kinds of concerns I hear about on a regular basis. Parents often wonder what the best course of action is to help a child like Joe. The first stop for many parents is the pediatrician's office in the hopes that medication will do the trick. Other parents assume that their child will "grow out" of his difficulties and fail to act at all. Still other parents go to the other extreme and secure multiple services at once, sometimes without a clear sense of what is going wrong. When a parent contacts RNBC with this type of scenario, what is most often recommended is a comprehensive psychological assessment. How will such an evaluation help a child like Joe? This article will help answer this common question by highlighting some of the major goals of psychological/neuropsychological testing.

1. Diagnostic Clarity

Does Joe have ADHD? A learning disability? Executive functioning problems? Anxiety? Depression? A combination of things? These are all potentially valid hypotheses. Children are complicated and a host of factors may account for a similar behavioral presentation. For instance, children who look like they are not paying attention often have undiagnosed learning disabilities. The reverse is also true in that children who have attention deficit disorders may appear to have learning difficulties because they cannot consistently produce academically. Similarly, children who are anxious or depressed may have difficulty concentrating or be unavailable for new learning. One major goal of a comprehensive evaluation is to

determine which problem areas are primary and which are secondary, and to ascertain whether the data are suggestive of a specific diagnosis. Often, there is a combination of factors which need to be understood.

2. Learning style

In addition to diagnostic clarification, another major purpose of a comprehensive evaluation is to understand how a child like Joe learns the best. One size does not fit all. Testing provides a profile of a child's unique strengths and weaknesses across multiple areas of functioning and sheds light on how a child processes information. Such information is invaluable for teachers and other professionals who are working with children on a daily basis and may be unclear about how to most effectively intervene.

3. Road Map

A comprehensive evaluation should provide a road map for parents, teachers and other pertinent professionals about how to address their child's needs. Such interventions may include tutorial support, medication, psychotherapy, speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, social skills groups or school-based learning resource support. Sometimes, a change in school placement is recommended. Regardless of the type of intervention, once a full evaluation has been completed, the best combination of supports and specific goals for each is more readily understood.

4. Monitoring Tool

Comprehensive evaluations provide concrete data about a child's level of intellectual, academic, social/emotional and attentional functioning at a snapshot in time. Nonetheless, children are moving targets. As such, children like Joe need to be monitored over time to determine whether in fact they are progressing, hitting a plateau or falling behind. Periodic evaluations are a very helpful tool in this monitoring process. Interventions often need to be updated or changed to accommodate children's continual development. As such, 2-3 year re-evaluation intervals are typically recommended for school-aged children, while annual re-evaluations are ideal for children under age 5.

If you have questions about psychological/neuropsychological evaluations at RNBC, please contact our office at (847) 933-9339.

MASTER PIECE

“ADHD: I have had ADHD all my life. I am not ashamed at all. It is something I have learned to live with. The way people talk about it is usually negative but to me it is a positive. It is a challenge to me, and I like challenges. All my friends know I have it and it doesn’t bother them



at all, except sometimes my energy is too much for teachers. I have had many experiences where my ADHD is a positive. Like when most kids are too tired to do something, I am ready and psyched to start. Once I was in school and it was the last period class and everyone was tired and ready to go and I was the one in the back standing up and shouting my answers out. ADHD has its negatives, like my concentration. I am one of the

worst test takers because I can not take my time to read and follow the directions. I have always been good in math but my grade has not been great because showing my work is a challenge to me. Another negative is that I feel that I have to rush and be first. I have worked on that. Lately my friends have been reminding me to take my pill. I know I should because it is a better for me and my friends. A lot of my friends like having me as a friend because of my energy and hyperness. Some of my friends really like to know about ADHD and what it means. I feel that my life would not be as fun and action-filled without ADHD.”

Life Lesson : Things that are intended to be a negative can always become a positive.

Abe Dube, Solomon Schecter Middle School - 7th grade

Rush NeuroBehavioral Center invites you to join us on **Friday, October 13, 2006** to learn more about children with Asperger’s Syndrome, High Functioning Autism, Nonverbal Learning Disability (NLD) and other social emotional learning disorders

Keynote speaker, **Dr. Cathy Lord**, will present information on how to understand and help these children.

Conference details to follow in the next issue of Puzzle Pieces.

Rush NeuroBehavioral Center

Founded in 1997, the Rush Neurobehavioral Center brings together professionals from multiple disciplines to address the diagnosis and treatment of children with neurobehavioral issues. RNBC’s unique contribution is the understanding of each child’s strengths and weaknesses within the context of the family and school. From this knowledge, individualized interventions are developed, implemented, and monitored.

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Center Spotlight

Arthur Balourdos is one of the newest members of the RNBC Advisory Board and Outreach Committee. He is a University of Michigan graduate where he earned four varsity letters in football. He is currently a commercial real estate developer in downtown Chicago where his family business owns and operates approximately 300,000 square feet of real estate. As President of J.B. Realty, Inc., he oversees acquisitions, financing and management of the various developments.



Arthur is currently assisting in a capital campaign project in order to benefit The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Health Clinic in rural Kerala, India. This clinic will assist the area poor with medical testing and treatment for HIV, cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Arthur has continued fundraising efforts for the Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum (ACC) Network. The primary goal of the ACC Network is to promote networking among individuals with ACC and other colossal anomalies, their families and professionals. In addition, Arthur has also raised funds for The Orthodox Missions Mexico for the operation of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

Arthur and his wife Nancy have two daughters, Georgi, 7 and Samantha, 4 and reside in Lincolnwood.

Suzanne Bessette-Smith has been a member of RNBC's Advisory Board for 5 years. She is a partner with the law firm of Barack Ferrazzano Kirschbaum Perlman & Nagelberg, LLP, in Chicago, where her practice is focused on commercial real estate and related corporate, financing and tax matters. Suzanne and her husband, David, are the parents of two children through adoption, a son and a daughter, born 11 weeks apart. Suzanne and her family found their way to RNBC when their children were 6 and in kindergarten. At that time, one of Suzanne's children was diagnosed with Nonverbal Learning Disabilities (NLD) and ADHD. Suzanne's children are now in 7th grade, but RNBC and its staff continue to play an important role in the lives of Suzanne and her family members. Suzanne's particular interest on the Advisory Board is outreach and she is the chairperson of the Board's Outreach Committee. There is no doubt in Suzanne's mind that the education, support and guidance continually provided to Suzanne and her family by RNBC have been crucial in their ability to understand, live with and learn from the challenges presented by NLD and ADHD. Suzanne believes that every family struggling with the living and learning challenges presented by neurobehavioral issues is entitled to that same education, support and guidance, and she hopes that the work and efforts of the Advisory Board and its Outreach Committee will touch and assist an ever-growing number of families.



INCHES

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Set weekly goals together
and identify steps to achieve them.

Keeping Hope Alive!

The RNBC Ninth Annual Awards Dinner

October 25, 2005

The RNBC Ninth Annual Awards Dinner at the Four Seasons Hotel Chicago proved to be a spectacular event! This was in no small part due to this year's outstanding honorees, Nancy C. Crown and the Honorable Anne M. Burke. It was an absolute privilege to celebrate the lives, community service and vision of two exceptional Chicago area women.



Rearl H. Rieger of RNBC with Nancy C. Crown of Winnetka

This year, RNBC honored **Nancy C. Crown** of Winnetka, Illinois with the **Pearl H. Rieger Award** for her commitment to making a significant difference in the lives of children with neurobehavioral issues.

Nancy's vision, support and continued confidence in the Center and Pearl Rieger's psychoeducational diagnostic techniques resulted in the creation of the Pearl H. Rieger Fellowship. The program is designed to provide training for professionals working with children with a myriad of neurobehavioral disorders, but specializing in learning disabilities and social-emotional disorders. Pearl Rieger shared with the dinner guests, Nancy has given a tremendous amount of time and energy to multiple organizations that truly benefit children with various challenges, especially those with neurobehavioral issues.



Roger Plummer, Immediate Past and Founding Chairman, Meryl Lipton, MD, PhD, Executive Director, and Ted Schmidt, Chairman

The **Living Proof Award** was bestowed upon the inspirational **Justice Anne M. Burke** of the Illinois Appellate Court's First District. Despite Justice Burke's challenge with dyslexia, she has proven to be a successful and formidable member of the Illinois community. Issues and causes impacting the civic, cultural and educational life of Chicago have been a priority for Justice Burke. In addition to a successful judicial career and commitment to prominent community boards and foundations, Justice Burke is responsible for founding the Chicago Special Olympics in 1968, which grew into the present day 88,000 participant International Special Olympics. "Our award winner is a leading advocate for Chicago's most vulnerable of young people," said Roger Plummer.

We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to the outstanding generosity of RNBC's honorees, friends, supporters, staff, Advisory Board and Dinner Committee members Chrissy Collins, Molly South and Laurie Yorke. The event raised over \$860,000 for the purpose of serving children with brain-based neurobehavioral issues through outreach, education, training and research.



Roger Plummer with the Honorable Anne M. Burke of Chicago

For information regarding the October 18, 2006 RNBC Tenth Annual Awards Dinner, please contact Stacy Shafer Peterson at (847) 933-9339 ext. 230.

If you are interested in making a donation to RNBC, please contact Stacy Shafer Peterson at (847) 933-9339 ext. 230.

EDUCATION CORNER

Rush Neurobehavioral Center has been serving the children of Chicago through its brain-based learning and behavioral outreach and education programs. RNBC provides various types of training workshops to teachers, parents, and professionals on how to recognize and provide appropriate educational experiences for children.

Currently, through school-wide programs, RNBC is involved in mentoring teachers, and providing workshops to parents by demonstrating how to coach and teach children to improve their executive function skills. Concurrently, we are conducting a research project to evaluate the impact of the executive function

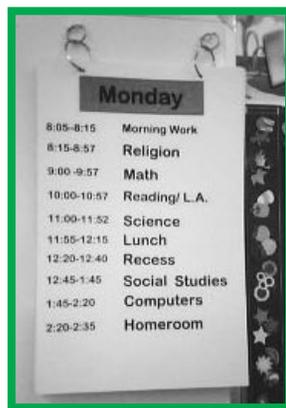
system on students overall school performance. Life-proficiency skills taught through the Executive Function program include:

- organization
- time-management
- planning
- goal setting
- effective study habits



Through these proficiencies children will gain knowledge of:

- improved organizational proficiency
- efficient time-management
- sustained motivation
- effective planning and scheduling practices
- development of proactive behaviors
- goal setting and clarification activities
- academic and social balance
- increased self knowledge of learning styles
- development of self-discipline
- reduction of fear of failure
- personal and academic growth



8th graders at Gale Community Academy

Rush Neurobehavioral Center is currently implementing the Executive Function System in five Chicago area schools.

William B. Ogden School

24 West Walton Street, Chicago
www.ogden.org
 Principal: Ken Staral
 grades K-8
 3rd year of implementation

Gale Community Academy

1931 W. Jonquil Terrace, Chicago
 Principal: Rudy Lubov
 grade 6-8
 1st year of implementation

Young Women's Leadership Charter School

41 South Calumet Avenue, Chicago, IL
www.ywllcs.org
 Principal: Margaret Small
 grades 7 & 9
 1st year of implementation

Children of Peace School

1900 W. Taylor, Chicago, IL
<http://www.copeace.pvt.k12.il.us/>
 Principal: Arlene Redmond
 grades 3-8
 2nd year of implementation

Sunset Ridge School

525 Sunset Ridge Rd, Northfield, IL
www.sunsetridge29.net
 Superintendent of Schools, Principal:
 Dr. Howard J. Bultinck
 Asst. Superintendent, Director of Student
 Services: Dr. Georgia Bozeday
 grades 4-7
 2nd year of implementation

Clark McKown, PhD

We all know how important friendships are. In their presence, life's rough patches are easier to take. Common sense and research tell us that this is true. One good friendship is protective against the negative effects of many stressors. More social support is predictive of greater mental and physical health.

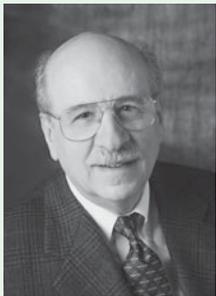
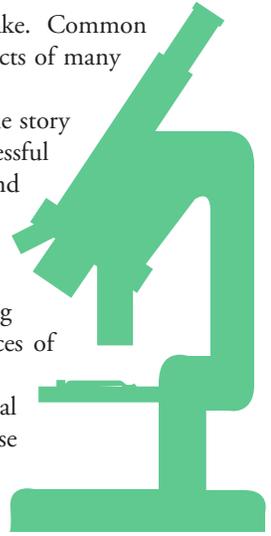
At first blush, it seems clear what it takes to make and keep a friend. Upon closer examination, though, the story becomes more complex. Next time you are at a social event, observe others' behavior. Notice what socially successful people do, how quickly and effortlessly they do it, and what an enormous impact their behavior has on those around them. If you really look, you will see that developing and maintaining connections with others is an enormously complex task that requires a large set of skills operating in concert.

We often notice how complicated friendship is when things are not going well. Many of the children who come to RNBC, and many more who do not, have a difficult time making and maintaining friendships and gaining acceptance from their peers. When parents and clinicians are faced with the challenge of identifying the sources of children's social struggles, the absence of social skills makes obvious the importance of those skills for social success.

But what are the most important social skills and how do they relate to children's peer relationships? Several research teams have developed theories about critical skills children must have to be socially successful. Some of those theories focus on children's ability to read nonverbal cues—such as others' facial expressions and tone of voice. Some of those theories focus on children's ability to take another person's perspective and infer what they are thinking. Some of those theories focus on children's ability to engage effectively in social problem-solving.

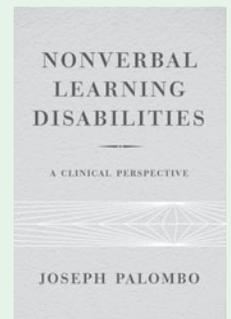
All of these models are useful for thinking about sociability. However, no one model seems to capture the full complexity of the skills required to make and maintain friendships. In addition, with few exceptions, these models have given us few clinically useful tools for assessing children's social strengths and weaknesses.

One of our goals is to better understand and address roadblocks to children's social success. Towards that end, we are working to develop a model of children's social reasoning that integrates the best of several schools of thought. We are also working to translate this model into clinically useful techniques for efficiently assessing children's social strengths and weaknesses. We hope that this work illuminates the complexity of children's social relationships, and provides clinicians with useful assessment strategies that directly inform treatment planning for children who have trouble making and maintaining friendships. In each of the coming issues of Puzzle Pieces, we will highlight a specific project that is currently under way.



Book Review

“Comprehensive, insightful, and practical, Joe Palombo's new book, *Nonverbal Learning Disabilities*, will enable mental health professionals and educators to better understand the inner life of children with learning challenges. Remarkable in its clinical scope and depth, it provides thoughtful descriptions of the different ways in which these learning challenges affect children and their families—ranging from daily learning and social interactions to the deepest feelings and sense of self.”



Stanley I. Greenspan, M.D., Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, George Washington University Medical School

“This is a book for anyone who is interested in learning about the true nature of nonverbal learning disability. Joseph Palombo is one of the early pioneers in the study and treatment of children with this disorder. He knows and understands them as only an involved clinician can, and this expertise shows in his clear descriptions of what NLD is and how it interferes with children's attempts to make satisfactory lives for themselves. I believe that this book will become the standard in the field for those seeking to understand this debilitating disorder.”

— Steven Nowicki, Ph.D., Charles Howard Candler Professor of Psychology, Emory University, and coauthor of *Helping the Child Who Doesn't Fit In* and *Teaching Your Child the Language of Social Success*

The book's dedication:

To the children and their families, the staff (past and present), and Meryl Lipton, the founder and Director of the Rush Neurobehavioral Center

This book is due out sometime in February 2006

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

Parent Connections

2006 Schedule:

February 15, March 15 and April 19

Wednesdays from 1:00- 2:30 p.m.

Parents of children with neurobehavioral disorders often face many challenges unique to having children with these special needs. While a supportive friend or sympathetic family member is always appreciated, it can be helpful to talk with others in similar circumstances. That's why **Parent Connections** was formed.

Parent Connections is an opportunity to:

- Participate in an informal, parent-led group comprised of other parents
- Share ideas on what has worked for you and your child
- Benefit from the experiences and suggestions of others
- Discuss issues or concerns you may have about your child
- Receive support and network with other parents

Parent Connections is held at RNBC, 9711 Skokie Blvd., Suite D, Skokie. There is no fee to participate in this program.



Solving the puzzle... empowering the child

RNBC Social Development Groups

New Social Development Groups are forming.

RNBC groups are run by psychologists, social workers and educational consultants. For more information, please contact Nadine Wengroff at 847-933-9339 ext. 235.

Chicago Public Library

All programs will be held on the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 P.M.

RNBC is committed to increasing knowledge and awareness about neurobehavioral disorders through community outreach. A partnership with the Chicago Public Library (CPL) has been a successful way to disseminate accurate information and resources to people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn about neurobehavioral issues and how they impact children/students. The Chicago Public Library (CPL) system is effective in reaching more people and offering educational programs to educators, families and professionals in all communities, especially those that are underserved and under-resourced. Our current library series will be held at the Sulzer Regional Library, 4455 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago. These events are free and open to the public. For information call Adult Services at 312-747-4252 or Cate at 847-933-9339 ext. 222. CPDU credits are available.

IEP Programs in Chicago

Kathy Kinsey

February 16, 2006

Central Auditory Processing Deficits

Jeanane M. Ferre, PhD, Audiologist, CCC-A

March 16, 2006

Encourage Your Child to Read During Summer Vacation

Gail Connely, MS, CCC

April 20, 2006

NLDA's 10th Annual Symposium

Friday, March 10, 2006

San Francisco, CA

Meryl Lipton MD, PhD, will present RNBC's Social Emotional Learning Framework (SELF)

Go to nlda.org for more information.

Top 10 Ways *Motivate* Students

By John Bishop

When students take educational ownership, they take personal responsibility to do something meaningful and positive to change their lives. With ownership comes dignity and self-respect. With educational ownership students realize there may be challenges in their path but they will not allow them to become insurmountable roadblocks to their future.

1. Minimizing “Bummer Words” that can stop you before you start - no, can’t, won’t, never, maybe, and if.

2. Stress the “I’ll Make It Happen” words: “yes, I can, and I will.”

3. Do the Basketball Shuffle:

- a) Write “It’s in your court NOW” on a basketball.
- b) Put the ball in a neutral, yet easily seen, area (i.e. the kitchen) for the first two weeks of the new school year. This signifies to the parent and the student they need to work together to get the off to a good start.
- c) After the second week put the basketball in the student’s room indicating in a positive, yet physical way, that the student is in charge of his/her success in school. The student can “pass” the ball back to the parents when asking for help.
- d) If the student “passes” the ball to the parent, then the parent must display the ball in a prominent place until the student receives the help he/she needs. They may then “pass” the basketball back to the student.
- e) The basketball becomes a fun, visual, and practical way to show the student they have to take an active role in their education.

4. Thank You, Ben Franklin: With your child, develop thirteen character traits you want to work on together. This might include honesty, fairness, self-control, etc. Take one character trait each week and concentrate on improving in that area. Agree to help each other improve on the chosen trait. At the end of the week go on to the next character development trait on your list. Continue the process until you complete all thirteen weeks of character traits. Option: Start over again at the top of the list and go through the list again. (Note: This is what Ben Franklin did week after week for fifty-seven years.)

5. Stress the Importance of Goal Setting: By learning how to set and achieve goals and how to use these principles in the classroom, students will take more personal ownership for their education. When students learn these life skills they will embrace your efforts to help them succeed. Note: No Vision = No Direction

6. Accountability is a Two-Way Street: Often we hold the student accountable for doing well in school. As parents, we have to be accountable to them also. If we say we will help them with their homework, and/or raise money for the PTA, etc., we have to make those activities a priority. As responsible adults, we have to model the behavior we want our children to display. It is extremely important to get positively involved with your child’s teacher and school.

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Motivate

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7. The “BIG” Question: At least three times per week have your child write down this question – “Did I give my best effort to today’s activities?” If he answers “yes”, great. Reward him. If he answers “no”, then have him list two things he will do tomorrow to improve his effort. NOTE: It is extremely important that he writes the message down because it will imprint those words in his mind. He will learn that he is responsible for the quality of his effort. As a responsible adult, this is an exercise that you should also do to show your child that you want to continually grow and improve.

8. The Importance of Helping Others: Our children live in a rapid paced, MTV world where they are bombarded with media messages that define success as “bigger, better, faster,” and “you can have it now – and not have to work hard to get it.” Many of our children are growing up in the world of instant gratification, and shortly they will be entering the world of hard knocks. Help your child learn the importance of helping others.

9. Manage Your Time or Be Mismanaged By It: Let’s say your child starts each day with 24 gold coins – one for each hour of the day. If he knew that at the end of the day, he could keep the remaining gold, how would he “spend” his gold coins? The remaining pieces are his to spend any way he likes. He does not have to spend them for sleeping, eating, school, etc. The intent of this activity is to encourage your child to think outside of the box, to ponder what is really important in his day. Is he spending his time wisely?

10. FOCUS = VISION + GOALS + ATTITUDE + ACTION: These five words will help students grow up to be healthy, productive, caring adults with a good self - image and a positive outlook toward their future.

As responsible adults, our legacy to our children consists of three things—giving them clear, positive character traits, an ability to set and achieve goals, and an understanding how they can take personal ownership for their education. Together we need to help students learn that success takes time; success takes planning and a strong desire; success takes setting and achieving goals and success involves helping others. Students need to learn that it’s their achievement, not ours.

John Bishop is the Executive Director of Accent on Success®, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping students succeed in the classroom and in life. He is the author of Goal Setting for Students®. Please visit our website for more information.

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Teacher’s Manual: *Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities, Solving the Classroom Puzzle* developed by Mardi Bernard, RN, is available for purchase. We only have 30 copies remaining. To order, please mail a check for \$13.00 (includes S & H) to Cate Gonley at Rush Neurobehavioral Center, 9711 N. Skokie Blvd. Suite D, Skokie, IL. 60077. Please allow 2 weeks for delivery.



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