

Puzzle Pieces

Solving the puzzle...Empowering the child



Meryl Lipton, MD, PhD
Executive Director

Sculpting A Child's Environment: Forging A Future

To participate and have an important role in a child's development is an awesome responsibility. That responsibility increases

when the child has been diagnosed with a brain-based learning, behavior or social issue. Parents, teachers and other professionals that share an interest in optimal outcomes for this child are often looking for help and guidance in optimizing learning, behavior, social and developmental outcomes.

Over the past 30 years there has been a theme to the responses received when I ask parents and professionals to answer the question, "What are you looking for from me?" They are very aware that these youngsters have some tough issues to deal with, but they also see the many wonderful abilities and attributes that the individual child possesses. Parents and professionals consistently want to know how they can create an environment at home and in school that will augment a child's strengths while minimizing their weaknesses.

Every parent and professional only wants to sculpt an ideal environment to ensure the greatest level of success for the child.

The first step in this process is to gain an understanding of the available information and to learn from the existing facts. Prior to creating an optimum environment, the child, family and school must understand each other and have a willingness to work together to resolve differences, and create this ideal environment. Once this information is communicated and understood, it can be operationalized to impact changes in the family and school that positively contribute to an environment individually sculpted for the child.

For example, if Johnny has a hard time learning to read words, and you know he is a visual learner, you can work to ensure that at school and at home everyone uses pictures in addition to the words to help him learn new words. Johnny's teacher can use his interest in cars, sports or animals to augment his learning style and enhance the development of his reading skills. Each week he can pick a specific car that he is excited to learn about

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New Research on Bullying: How to Help Your Child



Georgia Bozeday, Ed.D.

Any parent who has lived through a child's experience of being teased or bullied at school can testify to a comingling of feelings: helplessness, anger, and protectiveness. Many of us can recall similar events in our own childhoods and devastating feelings of rejection. Now, as we mentor through parenting and teaching roles, our perspectives have changed. There are no easy recommendations. Yet, the latest research

about the social dynamics involved in teasing and bullying provide support and a framework for working with a child to develop problem-solving techniques.

This article will explore two topics. First, we will examine the validity of some traditional notions about teasing and bullying. Second, we will discuss the practical steps that parents and teachers can take when they question, "What should I do when children are involved in a bullying situation?"

Consulting the Research: From Categories to Continuum

Bullying is defined as a social interaction (physical, verbal or emotional), repeated over time, involving an imbalance of power and resulting in one (or more) person exerting unsolicited control over another person who feels hurt as a result.

Traditionally, society has considered bullying situations to have two distinct groups: bullies and victims. Apart from these

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New Research on Bullying

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extremes, no other categories were considered relevant. However, in the last decade, research has identified additional important roles. The difference between being a victim and being a target has been more clearly defined. While the term “target” refers to anyone who is bullied, someone who adopts a victim role has accepted a downgraded view of themselves. A victim is often stuck in a vicious cycle of low self-esteem, damaged self-confidence and an unhealthy and unfounded suspicion of others. Additionally, a victim may engage in provocative and/or annoying responsive behavior, which draws more focus as the target of a bully.

Another newly identified role, the bystander, has the potential to impact the outcome of a situation. A bystander who does nothing or walks away lends support to a bully. Conversely, a bystander who stands up to a bully provides active support for a target. If the risks involved in stepping forward are too great, the bystander can support the target by befriending the target after the contentious situation has passed. A sympathetic bystander can also seek help for the target (usually adults in the vicinity) at the time of an incident.

Dorothy Espelage, a University of Illinois social researcher, reported in 2003 that most students participate in all of these roles over time. Playing bully, bystander or target is not a fixed role.

Responding to a Targeted Child's Needs: Reducing the Incidence of Bullying and Teasing

Surviving bullying as a rite of passage is no longer acceptable. The growing incidence of school violence demonstrates that those who have been targeted over the years may retaliate. Historically, these “bully-victims” often received little, if any, support from peers or adults.

Our responses to helping those frequently targeted for bullying will be different depending on the circumstances and the personalities involved. Generally speaking, the oft-given advice to “fight back” is not helpful. (A recent study conducted in Australia found that victims who reacted aggressively to bullying experienced an increase in bullying. Consequently, simply passively and silently “taking it” is not beneficial to the target’s sense of self.

Some steps that can be taken to help the targeted child:

- Seek help from adults and peers.
- Re-think role as victim.
- Enhance self-esteem; recognize strengths.
- Create a school environment that helps a child develop friendships and seek peer support.

Reducing the incidence of bullying and teasing requires changing the ecology of the school culture. Past practice that emphasized zero tolerance toward bullying often backfired. (Bullies often increased their resolve to “get back” at their targets), instead, working with individual students to develop a greater sense of empathy has been productive.

Focusing on the bystander role offers a new and hopeful approach, especially in the context of emphasizing empathy and compassion throughout the culture of the school.

The following ideas are helpful ways to structure conversations on this topic:

- Implement programs focused on character education and/or social-emotional learning.
- Create appropriate grade-level, school or district activities that promote tolerance and social mores.

Efforts are most effective when parents and educators join forces to incorporate the same language and problem-solving approaches in both the school and home settings. These highly collaborative models provide the most impact and long-lasting changes. A supportive, caring and system-wide environment fosters excellence in teaching and encourages learning along with the development of strong social relationships.

Books About Bullying:

- Bosch, Carl W. *Bully on the Bus*. Parenting- Press.
- Carlson, Nancy. *Loudmouth George and the Sixth-Grade Bully*. Puffin Books.
- Cohen-Posey, Kate. *How to Handle Bullies, Teasers, and Other Meanies: A Book that Takes the Nuisance Out of Name Calling and Other Nonsense*. Rainbow Books.
- Cole, J. *Bully Trouble*. Random House.
- Henkes, K. *Chrysanthemum*. Greenwillow Books.
- Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *Reluctantly Alice*. Dell.
- Rosenberg, Liz. *Monster Mama*. Philomel Books.
- Shreve, Susan. *Joshua T. Bates Takes Charge*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Walker, Alice. *Finding the Green Stone*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Romain, Trevor. *Bullies are a Pain in the Brain*. Free Spirit Publishing
- Shapiro, Robert PhD. *Bullies, Tyrants, and Impossible People: How to Beat Them Without Joining Them*. Crown Business
- Coloroso, Barbara. *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: From Preschool to High School--How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence*. Collins
- Allan, L. PhD. *The Bully Free Classroom: Over 100 Tips and Strategies for Teachers K-8*. Free Spirit Publishing
- Langan, Paul. *The Bully (Bluford Series, Number 5)*. Townsend Press

Websites About Bullying:

- www.teacheq.com/articles.htm
- www.nldline.com (Bullyproofing our Schools)

Sculpting

Continued from page 1

and gather all of the information he can from a variety of sources. Because his focus is so specific, he will have a vested interest in reading about the specific car of the week. In the process, he and his classmates recognize that he is the class “car-expert” and he feels good about himself as well as his accomplishments.

Martha is an energetic, forgetful, but creative and well meaning girl whose behavior declines in unstructured settings. It is the end of third grade, when everyone begins to think about the choice for their fourth grade teacher. Of the two fourth grade teachers available, one has a relatively unstructured, “hands-on” activity-based classroom that is “child directed”. The other teacher utilizes a more structured and supportive approach. Taking into consideration Martha’s learning style along with her behavior, the choice for her fourth grade teacher seems clear!

Meanwhile at home, Martha’s parents improve her environment by creating an after school and weekend schedule that mirrors the one she will have in the fourth grade. This helps significantly with Martha’s upcoming transition to fourth grade, because it supports her skills in planning and time management and creates a structure that limits her “free time.” Using consistent strategies at home and at school contributes to a positive learning environment.

Through the process of gathering in-depth information, Johnny and Martha were able to benefit from the effective sculpting of their environments by building on their strengths and effectively optimizing their abilities.

General Principles

Each child is a unique individual with a variety of strengths and relative weaknesses. Potential problems occur when those weaknesses are emphasized at home or at school. When children fail to fulfill the behavior, social or academic expectations that are set for them, difficulties with their self esteem can compound the

situation. A clear understanding of the facts helps parents and professionals create opportunities to minimize the barriers and enhance the child’s development.

The process of sculpting the environment usually involves many of the following steps:

- Finding the facts and trying to understand them
- Building on strengths
- Developing areas of interest
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Developing creative problem-solving strategies
- Careful, rigorous, year-round follow-through at home and at school
- Being consistent, persistent and determined
- Developing the strengths in the individual child
- Maintaining a positive outlook and a sense of humor
- Being realistic in expectations
- Accepting the child as a unique individual

Each year, the professionals at RNBC continue to see hundreds of children with brain-based learning, behavior and social-emotional issues. These children develop into thoughtful, interesting, effective, productive, caring adolescents and young adults. The most critical role we play is to assist in the creation of environments that enhance their abilities, interests and self-esteem. We are honored and lucky to be part of that process. The heart of it, however, is what you, the parents and professionals who are with them every day, do in this process to help sculpt the child’s environment in a positive way as part of this ongoing collaboration.

For an example of the success of this process see Masterpieces on page 5

Teen Social Program 2007

June 12-15th , & June 19-22nd

2-5pm each day

(The program session runs for both weeks for a total of 8 days, 3 hours/day)

This group experience is designed for high-school aged boys and girls (entering freshman through seniors), with a history of social-emotional learning issues. Together, we work to create an environment to support self awareness, increase social skill, coping strategies, and personal change in a peer supported environment. We aim to have fun while exploring and engaging in a variety of group experiences that promote a sense of inclusiveness and increased social competence.

This is the fourth year we are offering this successful concentrated summer program. Joshua Mark, LCSW and Jonathan Levin, LCSW will lead the program assisted by graduate students from the Family Institute at Northwestern University .

If this group sounds right for someone you know, contact Nadine Wengroff, RN at RNBC, 847-763-7944

Center Spotlight

Dr. Stasi, Ph.D., joined RNBC as a post-doctoral fellow in September 2006. Over the past four years, Dr. Stasi has trained and worked in a variety of clinical settings in the Midwest. Dr. Stasi was a psychometrist



Greg Stasi, Ph.D.

in the Pediatric Neuropsychology Department at the University of Chicago Hospitals while completing his degree at the Illinois Institute of Technology. He completed his internship at the University of Minnesota Medical Center where he honed his skills in the assessment and treatment of children with various neurological and medical conditions. Dr. Stasi's research interests have included the neuropsychological profiling of children with HIV, the cognitive profiling

of children with hydrocephalus, and designing and implementing metacognitive strategies to help children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. At RNBC, Dr. Stasi will conduct psycho-educational and neuropsychological evaluations, provide cognitive behavioral therapy, consult with schools, and take part in the Social-Emotional Learning Research Initiative.

Julie Gidaspow joined the RNBC team as an Educational Specialist in mid September of 2006. The last four years Julie has taught in Chicago public and charter schools, grades one and four. Her focus was working with at-risk students in elementary schools. While teaching, Mrs. Gidaspow worked on developing Science and Social Studies curricula for the first grade. During her undergraduate years at Southern Illinois University, Mrs. Gidaspow worked as a teacher assistant for a college level art class and as a preschool teacher. After graduation Julie was a Kid Care teacher, summer school teacher, and tutored students who spoke English as a second language. Additionally, Mrs. Gidaspow worked with students on the autism spectrum when she was a special education teacher assistant adapting lesson plans for students in grades one through four.



Julie Gidaspow

Since joining the RNBC staff, Julie has been working with different schools and after-school programs, implementing Executive Functions into their weekly lessons and adapting the lessons to fit their educational needs. Julie has been working with teachers demonstrating how to apply EF into their school curriculum throughout the year. She has also been working on the development of an EF curriculum for utilization in these educational settings. This curriculum has also been adapted for our after-school and mentoring program. On the weekends, you can find Julie walking her yellow Labrador Retriever, Sophie, or doing some type of art project.

Adelaide Walker, Ed.M. recently joined the RNBC team after completing her graduate program in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard's Graduate School of Education. The focus of her studies was cognitive and emotional development, neuroscience, and how individual learning differences can be applied to educational theory.

While in Boston, Ms. Walker gained experience in early childhood development through an internship position at the Wellesley College's Child Study Center where she assisted in a research classroom designed to study the behavior and cognitive development of 4-year old children. Adelaide also worked as a Child Care Specialist at the May Behavioral Health Clinic in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. The children served in this program were 9 to 11-years old and exhibited severe emotional and behavioral problems. In this position, she worked with and counseled children on behavior control, frustration tolerance, and helped them to develop more general life-coping strategies.



Adelaide Walker, Ed.M.

Before and during her graduate study, Ms. Walker worked as a Research Associate at Lexia Learning Systems investigating the efficacy of reading and cognitive software, specifically in lower performing populations. As part of this position, Adelaide worked with the Director of Research and Project Management to coordinate specific reading and cognitive software products. She also co-authored manuscripts that are currently in submission and was the primary data analyzer for the research department. She was the lead designer on a computerized reading assessment, which launched during her final months in Boston.

At RNBC, Ms. Walker works within the Research and Educational Services departments. Specifically, she is part of the Rondout research team examining social-emotional cognition and functioning. Within the Educational Services Department, she is working with the team to develop the Executive Functioning curriculum. Adelaide is excited about tutoring in the Executive Functioning Program. In the coming months, she will work with the Research, Educational, and Clinical departments to design a social-emotional curriculum that will be used in both clinical and educational settings.

In her free time, Adelaide stays active by playing soccer and doing yoga. She enjoys her morning coffee, listening to NPR, traveling, reading memoirs, talking about her nephews, and the entire holiday season from Thanksgiving through the New Year.

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MASTER PIECE

Celebrating a Child's Courage, Perseverance and Achievement



Wendi Mahoney and Alex Mahoney, 2006
Creating the Future Award recipients

I begin by sharing a story about an 11-year-old boy whom I met on a plane recently. The flight began with the stewardess telling me that my seatmate would be a boy with Asperger's syndrome. She told me not to worry but that the conversation might be strange. Sure enough, without greeting, he began to talk at random intervals about various subjects. He also recounted some autobiographical facts, showing no apparent interest in my responses.

There are people in this world who look normal but who have very different ways of processing the world around them. The boy's behavior may appear rude or strange and he may not fully grasp his effect on others. A boy with Down's Syndrome would require no explanation and might elicit sympathy and tolerance. Sadly though, there would probably be little understanding for the boy with challenges like the boy with Asperger's. In fact, he is probably often singled out for punishment, which further isolates him. The boy on that plane made me revisit some of my hardships as a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

From the day I entered preschool, my parents knew it would be an uphill battle to help me realize my potential. I had no recognizable language. My behavior was horrendous. ... Changes in routine made me extremely irritable. I was so difficult in the car that my mom placed a sticker chart on the back of her seat, posted in front of me. I would receive stickers as she was driving and the chart would determine whether I would get a reward that day. Even in self-contained classrooms, I was singled out by my teachers because I was less compliant than others.

Perhaps the greatest test was my transition from Special Ed to a mainstream classroom in 4th grade. There, my deviation from expected norms became much more apparent. I felt extremely frustrated when I noticed that although there were several troublemakers in the class, my teacher always seemed to punish me with exceptional disdain. I blurted out answers and had a knack for extending my own recess time. My eccentric behavior made other students afraid to associate with me. My peers were confused. I think they asked themselves how this apparently intelligent kid never missed an opportunity to draw the ire of the teacher. They openly speculated that I had broken a record for the number of times that my name found its place on the blackboard. Other classmates took advantage of my erratic behavior, blaming or outright framing me for their wrongdoings. I can tell you that I often awoke fearing the

This year at the Tenth Anniversary Awards Dinner, RNBC bestowed the Creating The Future Award upon Alex Mahoney and his parents, Wendi and Bill Mahoney. The Creating the Future Award highlights the accomplishments of a young adult with neurobehavioral challenges who, along with his or her family, has struggled and achieved.

trouble I would find that day.

In high school things began to turn around. I joined the running team and found some great friends. For the first time in my life, I felt that I was not only striving to work on my weaknesses, but impacting a greater group in a positive way. This and my persistence in weathering years of negative situations and surviving, gave me greater self-confidence. I only made a few trips to the advisor chair's office in high school and the visits stopped by junior year. For the first time, I realized that I could handle a mainstream college education. Today I am a junior at Rhodes College.

What is next for this 20-year-old kid? I guess I begin with the fact that I have found it important to look at life's challenges with faith and persistence. In some ways, labels are distracting. I think most people with similar challenges can find ways to see their weaknesses in perspective. A determined attitude also goes a long way.

I have learned to see my strengths and weaknesses in perspective. I am often told that I am overly logical or pedantic in my thinking and reasoning and not emotional and human enough. However, my intense ability to focus, my memory and my logic allow me to surpass many of my peers in some academic areas.

I am still working on showing my emotions, but unlike many naturally gregarious people, I have an extraordinary appreciation of the value of family and genuine friendship. Friends did not come easily to me when I was growing up, as few were able to look past the confused and demoralized kid I was in elementary and middle school. Therefore, I truly treasure people who have made the time to understand who I am and who appreciate how far I have come. If it weren't for my parents and that handful of people who steadfastly supported me when I was most demoralized, I would not be receiving this award tonight. It is in that spirit that I also thank all of you for listening to my story and RNBC for bringing us all together to celebrate our courage and perseverance.

RNBC Mission Statement

Rush NeuroBehavioral Center serves the medical, psychological and educational needs of children with brain-based learning and behavior problems, specializing in social-emotional learning disorders.

Ten Years of Solving Puzzles!!!!

RNBC Tenth Anniversary Awards Dinner



2006 Founders Award recipients: Pearl H. Rieger, M.A., Karen Pierce, M.D., Meryl Lipton, M.D., Ph.D, Joseph Palombo, M.A.



Dr. Mel Levine, 2006 Pearl H. Rieger Award recipient

“When you can reach the community with that degree of commitment, you’re really doing something right. Actually - everything right. We’re lucky you’re part of Rush.”

- Larry Goodman, M.D., President and CEO, Rush University Medical Center

The RNBC Tenth Anniversary Awards Dinner provided an occasion to celebrate the perseverance of those who have shaped the organization’s ability to touch the lives of thousands of children and families faced with the challenges of neurobehavioral issues. The need for the services the Center provides is vital given the astounding reality that twenty percent of all children face life with neurobehavioral challenges.

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 Co-Chairs: Ann FitzSimons, Patti Heller, and Bette Cerf Hill. The event raised an RNBC record of \$1,027,000 for the purpose of serving children with brain-based neurobehavioral issues through outreach, education, training, and research. RNBC looks forward to continuing its important work to ensure the opportunity for success for EVERY child.

Please visit www.rnbc.org to view the speeches given by Alex Mahoney and Dr. Mel Levine at the October 18, 2006 Awards Dinner.

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Joan Cusack and Jerry Kleiner, 2006 Living Proof Award recipient

Mr. Brainstorm

Jerry Kleiner's ADD hasn't prevented him from building a restaurant empire; it might just have enabled it

By Peter Gianopulos.

Reprinted with permission from North Shore Magazine - October 2006 issue

Speed, man, speed. *Alacrity*. You're moving in *s...u...p...e...r...s...l...o...w* motion, and you don't even know it. By the time you finish reading this article, Jerry Kleiner will probably have lapped you. Twice. By now, he's probably made three cell phone calls, hatched an idea for another new restaurant, caulked something and grabbed lunch.

Try to speed it up. *Go. Go. Go.* Try to embrace it. The energy of it all. Your ability to multitask. Your admittedly MTVshort attention span. Your inability to sit down for . . . (quick stand up). Your 48framespersecond imagination. Try to use what the experts are calling your "Attention Deficit Disorder" to your advantage.

Because if you want to understand why Jerry Kleiner, owner of six baroquely appointed restaurants, is being awarded with this month's Living Proof Award by the Rush Neurobehavioral Center, you're going to have to pick up the pace. Rush doesn't honor people who are shackled by their developmental disabilities; they celebrate those who transcend them. So imagine that you process the world the way Kleiner does. You're a Pentium in a world of Commodore 64's. Just try it.

Ready. Set. (Hold your breath.) Quick. Quick. Quick. Exhale. Now go.

You own six restaurants in areas previously regarded as "shady" by people who have rap sheets the length of Santa's list come the 24th of December. The names of the restaurants are Gioco and Red Light and Carnivale and Opera and Marche and the Victor Lounge. (Are you keeping up here?) You built them in previously "seedy" neighborhoods, like the Fulton Meatpacking District and the South Loop, because you saw potential where everybody else saw ruin. That's the advantage of never slowing down to breathe. You plunge ahead where others would fear to tread.

You consider these buildings "blank canvases" and yourself the artist. After all, you weren't a good student in school, where all your teachers were prattling on about formulas. And as far as you're concerned, formulas are handcuffs. They're slow and methodical. You believe in the chaotic act of creation. The speed of it. The challenge.

Even though your restaurant Marche is a circus of bold colors and wrought iron accents, you consider yourself an heir of the Renaissance masters – partly because guys like Michelangelo and da Vinci seemed to be so curious, so frantically alive, that they were interested (much like you) in *everything* – history, design, art, fashion, science and food. Plus they had an appreciation for stone, luxurious fabrics and vivid colors and woodwork. And you do, too. Notice the exposed brick and crumbling limestone interior of Gioco and the rainbow-hued stained glass and neon lamp shades at Carnivale.

When you were a kid living in Russia (until you were 7 and migrated here), you always had custom-tailored clothes on your body but not always food on the table. So – and to be honest, you haven't devoted too much time to thinking about this – you found your niche (after a brief spell in fashion design) in the restaurant industry, where everyone was hungry. And one type of cuisine wasn't enough. Marche is a French Bistro. The Victor Lounge serves sushi. Opera and Red Light are Asian. And Gioco, of course, Italian.

Wait, a yellow light. You're circling around again to the secret of your success. "You get your ass up in the morning, find out truly what makes you happy, program that into your system. And go."

And you ask yourself about this ADD and wonder: Is it really a deficit, or an asset in a crushed-velvet and milky-pearl disguise?

We would like to extend a special thank you to Friends of the Center

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How to Evaluate a Website

By Laura Wood

“The share of online Americans who say the internet has greatly improved the way they get information about health care has grown to 20%, up from 17% in March 2001” (Pew Internet & American Life, Apr. 26, 2006). Many of us hear about a neighbor, friend, or even family member’s recent diagnosis and want/need to know more. In this day and age, going to the internet for information is a quick and easy way to find answers, but can we be sure that the information is reliable and current? Some sites claim to have a “miracle cure” or “best kept secret.” As we’ve come to know through extended media research, such claims can be red flags. But, what about websites with more subtle statements that offer “support and resources” or “an educator’s guide to...?” How do we know if they truly are good sites? How can you be sure you’re getting the best information available? Below are a few points on what to look for, though running through a 16-minute tutorial from the National Library of Medicine will teach you how to effectively evaluate websites. Your health may depend on it!



Always check the “About Us” link

This link should lead to most answers needed to evaluate a website. Is there contact information if you have questions about their content? Is their purpose to favor or sell a product, not just offer information? Is the information medical research with original sources of data, or is it merely medical opinion? Missing information can be important clues to the health information you’ll receive from the site.



Also check the “Privacy Policy”

Even if you don’t enter any personal information on their site, they may still collect details about you. Review their privacy policy to know how your information will be used.



Review several sites

If a site uses content that seems too emotional or too good to be true, trust your intuition and remain cautious. For a more accurate understanding of the health issue, and a wider view, it is important to check out several sites.



Follow up with your doctor

Sharing the information you find with your doctor is very important. Patient/Provider partnerships lead to the best medical decisions.

The National Library of Medicine tutorial on evaluating internet health information can be found at: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/webeval/webeval.html>.

Checklist of Questions

From Evaluating Internet Health Information, a tutorial from the National Library of Medicine



Provider

Who is in charge of the Web site?
Why are they providing the site?
Can you contact them?



Quality

Where does the information on the the site come from?
How is content selected?
Do experts review the information that goes on the site?
Does the site avoid unbelievable or emotional claims?
Is it up-to-date?



Funding

Where does the money to support the site come from?
Does the site have advertisements?
Are they labeled?



Privacy

Does the site ask for your personal information?
Do they tell you how it will be used?
Are you comfortable with how it will be used?

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

Parent Connections

2007 Schedule:

February 21, March 14, April 11 and May 9

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

Parent Connections is held at RNBC, 9711 Skokie Blvd., Suite D, Skokie.

There is no fee to participate in this program.

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.



Chicago Public Library Partnership

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. 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 847-763-7933. CPDU credits are available.

Tuesday, March 27, 7:00 p.m.

What is Typical Speech and Language Development in Young Children And When to Seek Help

The range of normal speech development is wide during the pre-school years. It's often difficult for parents to know if their child under the age of 7 or 8 is within an average ability range or is having difficulty with speech and language acquisition. Making the decision to seek professional assessment and consultation can be difficult and confusing for parents. Dr. Georgia Bozeday will review situations that merit parental consideration of outside assistance.

Tuesday, April 24,

Dr. Michael Balthazor will be our guest speaker. Topic TBA

More Educational Opportunitites

March 16-17, 2007

Meryl Lipton, MD, PhD. and Joseph Palombo will present at the NLDA Symposium in San Jose, California.

For more information visit: www.nlda.org

August 2nd and 3rd, 2007

Drs. Meryl Lipton, Clark McKown and Georgia Bozeday will present at The Mind Institute in Sacramento, California.

For more information visit: www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/conferences

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 847-763-7944.

By Barbara Resnick, MS



Barbara Resnick, MS

Often, the time spent completing homework is not only difficult for the child, but difficult for the parents as well. There are many things a parent can do to make the “dreaded homework hour (or two)” less stressful for all involved. Helping your child get started, teaching and modeling various strategies, clarifying assignment expectations and requesting modifications from teachers may seem daunting initially. However, the desired result from your support may enable your child to complete homework more effectively, efficiently and independently.

Support for Reading

- Substitute appropriate reading material where possible (use lower level book to explain concepts, complete research)
- Use books on tape
- Use a bookmark to improve visual tracking
- Sharp contrast of print to paper (copy assignments on yellow or orange colored paper or highlight information)
- Enlarge print
- Use hard cover rather than paperback books
- Purchase an extra set of textbooks for home
- Allow your child to write notes and highlight in text
- Teach your child to read and highlight instructions before beginning assignments
- Review post-reading assignment expectations prior to doing the reading assignment
- Pre-teach reading concepts to be covered
- Create “purpose for reading assignment” sheet (as you read look for, highlight or jot down personality traits of the main character)

Support for Spelling

- Present one spelling concept at a time (long “A” sound)
- Review and pretest one spelling concept at a time
- Write words in a tray filled with salt or shaving cream
- Use clay or Play Doh to write words

Support for Vocabulary

- Limit number of new vocabulary words presented at one time
- Highlight vocabulary words on worksheets
- Give page numbers to help your child locate and find meaning of vocabulary words
- Ask your child to draw pictures that define vocabulary words
- Ask your child to act out new vocabulary words

This checklist provided by RNBC www.rnbc.org



Support for Math

- Teach your child to read and highlight instructions before beginning assignments
- Request that your child be allowed to complete fewer problems (every other, even only)
- Copy problems from the book or workbook for your child
- Copy problems on a lined piece of notebook paper turned so that the lines are vertical. Use the vertical lines as a grid, writing one number in each space
- Give adequate space to complete problems
- Draw a box around each problem
- Limit the number of problems written on page
- Use different colored pencils for addition, subtraction and multiplication signs
- Break down problems into steps
- Write steps on a sequence card
- Let your child use the sequence cards to complete HW
- Use manipulatives to represent numbers and/or a number line, multiplication chart or calculator to enable your child demonstrate that he/she understands the concept
- Story Problems
 - Teach math vocabulary i.e. addition, plus all together, in all
 - Highlight relevant information (only numbers needed to complete problem and process required)
 - Use visual representation (drawing pictures)

This checklist provided by RNBC www.rnbc.org



Tutoring Services at RNBC

RNBC offers tutoring in Executive Function skills for children in elementary, secondary, and higher educational settings. Most tutoring sessions take place at the Center during after-school hours. Tutoring sessions address issues related to organizational and time management concerns, often within an academic context.

It's not too early to be thinking about summer learning support. Summer can be an optimal time for students to learn and develop better practices in the areas of organizational skills and time management strategies. RNBC will be putting together a schedule of offerings for summer tutoring in Executive Function skills. Students will be able to sign up for individual or group sessions during the months of June and July 2007.

For more information, please call Georgia Bozeday, Director of Educational Services, at 847-763-7959.

RNBC is Moving!



**Come Grow with us at
Our New Location**

**4711 W. Golf Road
Suite 1100
Skokie, IL 60076**

**Moving
March 5th, 2007**

The center will be closed March 2 & 5

Rush NeuroBehavioral Center
Rush Children's Hospital
9711 Skokie, Blvd., Suite D
Skokie, IL 60077

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Cutting Edge Research: RNBC's Social-Emotional Assessment Project

By Clark McKown, PhD

In the last Research Corner, we briefly noted that we had entered a partnership with a small local school district (with a total of 144 students in grades K through 8). With participating children, we are administering tests of social-emotional cognition, including their ability to read nonverbal cues and solve social problems. The range of tests we are administering covers a broader spectrum of social-emotional competencies than is represented in any study we have seen. We are also collecting information about children's peer relationships. Our research goal is to evaluate the suitability of these individually administered tests for clinical purposes. Our educational goal is to screen participating children and use what we learn to identify appropriate strategies for promoting social-emotional health.

Since the last Research Corner, we have made tremendous progress with our partners. The parents of 60 children have agreed to have their children participate in the project. We are nearly finished with our first round of data collection involving intensive testing of all participating children. Early in the new year, we will conduct behavioral observations, and in the spring, we will again interview children. In addition, we will ask for parents and teachers to complete questionnaires about all participating children. For each child, we will have a tremendous amount of information about how they think, feel, and act, particularly in the context of peer relationships.

We stand to gain a tremendous amount from this partnership. In the next two months, as we begin analyzing the fall data, we will provide information to participating school staff and families so that they can better understand how their children are faring socially. The educational goal of this project is to help our partner district understand and educate its students as effectively as possible.

We will also begin to analyze the data to learn how our measures work. By the spring, we will have the data we need to take a first look at the relationship between children's performance on tests of social-emotional cognition and their peer relationships. Our goal is to identify a brief battery of individually administered tests that clinicians and educators can use to understand why a child struggles socially. This would represent a great leap forward from the current state of the art. It would also represent the kind of data RNBC clinicians can use to identify "best practices" in the assessment of children's social-emotional cognition. Ultimately, our goal is to provide educators and clinicians with the tools they need to efficiently create specific intervention plans to support children's social and emotional development.

The biggest challenge we face in accomplishing these goals is numbers. To fully understand how these measures work, we need at least twice as many students to participate in this research project. We will be working in the coming months to increase the number of participating students and perhaps schools so that we may serve the needs of more students even as we gather the data we need to do rigorous science. Stay tuned!