



PUZZLE PIECES

RUSH NEUROBEHAVIORAL CENTER • SPRING 2008



“All I Do Is Homework, Homework, Homework...”



Meryl Lipton, MD, PhD
Executive Director

The other day in RNBC clinic Tommy, a fourth grader, complained about “just not having enough time for anything I like... all I do is homework!” Even Tommy’s mom seemed concerned, stating, “We have so much homework that it’s hard for us to get it all done each night.”

As I thought about their comments, it became painfully clear to me that Tommy and his mother – and I suspect many of you – have some significant homework problems.

I asked Tommy for a listing about how he spends his after-school time. His extremely tight schedule sounded all too familiar. Tommy plays soccer (60 minutes), practices piano (30 minutes), does his thirty minutes of nightly reading and completes his other homework (60-120 minutes), eats dinner (20 minutes) and prepares for bed (15 minutes). He has little time to play with his friends, work on his model airplane or play his favorite video games. During his jam-packed evenings he becomes irritable. He is frustrated about all the demands and expectations placed on him. Simply put, he just wants more time.

Tommy’s mom added perspective: “There is just so much to get done after school that there is no peace in our house. I never get to sit and talk with Tommy. ...He becomes so overwhelmed that getting his homework done requires me to act like a policewoman.” She added quietly, “and to be honest I end up doing much of the work...I will do anything to get it done so he can just go to sleep.”

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Advocating for your Child: The School Evaluation Process

This article is the first of a three-part discussion designed to educate and assist parents as they work with their child’s school. Part I focuses on interacting with the



Barbara Resnick, MS.
Educational Specialist/
School Liaison

school through the various stages related to conducting a psychoeducational assessment battery. Part II, which will be featured in the next newsletter, will give parents a better understanding of the procedures followed during an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) or a 504 meeting and will explain the different forms generated at the meeting. Part III will appear in the fall newsletter and will address the topic of “Response

to Intervention” sometimes called “School-based Problem Solving.”

Getting Started

For a parent whose son or daughter is struggling academically, emotionally or socially, finding the right help becomes a primary concern. Securing the appropriate school accommodations and/or support services is fundamental to a child’s success. In my role as Rush NeuroBehavioral Center’s Educational Specialist/School Liaison, I am often asked by parents for recommendations about how to begin this process.

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Homework, Homework, Homework continued from page 1

Let's really think about the subject of homework, since Tommy and his mother are not the only families with these issues. What is the history behind assigning homework? What role does homework play for your child? Does homework have positive outcomes? What can parents do to be helpful?

What does the history of homework tell us?

Did you know that in 1901 Congress banned homework for children in kindergarten through eighth grade because at that time children needed to use after-school hours to complete farm chores? That situation had changed by the 1950s. The "Sputnik age" pressured the educational establishment to catch up to and surpass the scientific knowledge of the USSR. Ultimately, homework, which had been gaining in common practice since the early part of the 20th century, acquired increased prominence.

Homework used to be governed by the rule of tens. Accordingly, a child in first grade received 10 minutes of homework, and each year another 10 minutes was added, so by fifth grade a student received 50 minutes of homework. However, today the amount of homework given to students each night has risen significantly and in the period between 1944 and 1999, the time expectations for nightly homework assigned in the early grades has increased from 44 minutes to two hours, or 300 percent.

Furthermore, the focus on academic accomplishments continues to escalate. Parents of older students tell me that they worry about their child getting into the right college, while parents of younger children worry about getting their child into the best pre-school. The stress of those competitive scenarios finds its way into the classroom and is reflected in homework expectations.

Why is homework important?

What are the intended outcomes of significant amounts of nightly homework? On the positive side, homework is intended to strengthen what students have learned in school. It is used to extend what students know and to integrate a student's abilities. It is also seen as a means for teaching self discipline.

One might assume there is a measurable, positive outcome from this large amount of homework assigned on a regular basis. A review of the literature on homework reveals a mixed picture. The data does not clearly show a relationship between duration of completed homework and achievement, especially in younger, school-aged children.

What can parents do?

One of the first steps is for you and your child to conduct some research to help better identify the problem. The following questions can begin the discussion. Keep in mind that each answer should reflect the specific needs of your child: 1. Is too much homework being assigned? 2. Are the assignments too long? 3. Is the work in one or more subject areas too difficult?

Next, think about who is doing your child's homework. Homework is assigned for the student. Your child is the person to begin and complete their homework. Your role as a parent may include supporting your child's efforts by helping organize his/her homework time, but you should not be the person doing the homework. When parents do their children's homework, the child may perceive a negative message that s/he is not capable of completing the work and is not responsible for it.

Let's also deal with an often heard concerned parent comment: "What if s/he doesn't turn in his/her homework?" Usually if homework isn't turned in, there is a natural consequence of grade reduction. Experiencing natural consequences is often the most effective means of shaping a child's behavior.

What should be done if, after investigating, you conclude that the amount of homework is excessive? Opening and maintaining a dialogue among family members and between school and parents is an important step in beginning to resolve questions about the amount of assigned homework. Having this conversation with your child's teacher could result in agreeing on a specific time limit for your child to complete a reasonable amount of homework each night.

Working with problem-areas in a pro-active manner is usually the first step toward finding a solution. On the adjacent page you will find an example from the RNBC Executive Functions Curriculum Notebook explaining a notation system from an assignment notebook. You can use or adapt this system as a first step in providing more effective homework support for your child.

Here is a key take away: Your child's learning strengths and weakness need to be understood by yourselves, your child's teachers, and your child. That information should guide the development of a homework program that ensures a positive learning experience. Your child should meaningfully engage in his/her homework and experience a sense of accomplishment based on timely homework completion.

In the end, developing and maintaining a balanced home and educational life is a continuing process. The role of homework grows as children move upward through the grades. Too often the importance of family and individual time gets lost in the mix of things. The key word is balance. Reasonable amounts of useful homework are important, but so are family and individual time, play and fun.

RNBC Mission Statement

Rush NeuroBehavioral Center serves the medical, psychological and educational needs of children with neurobehavioral issues with a special emphasis on social-emotional learning disorders.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS CURRICULUM IDEA

Make Your Planner Work for You

Use the following planner entries from the Executive Functions Curriculum to help your child better manage homework.

Write NH if no assignment is given.

Cross out or check off complete assignments.

Record all important information about every assignment.

Prioritize assignments (Tip: Do the hardest assignments first).

Highlight and break down long term assignments into manageable pieces.

Record after-school activities so you can better plan your time.

Getting Help For Your Child

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The first step is contacting the school to request a psychoeducational evaluation. The person to whom you direct your request could be the principal, school psychologist, case coordinator or district special education administrator, based on the district's procedural system. After locating the correct contact person, parents should then formally (in writing) ask that an evaluation be initiated.

At this point in the school process three pathways are delineated: (1) The school agrees to explore the parent request for an evaluation, (2) Parents request a meeting with their child's teacher to put together an informal plan to address the areas of concern, which may include contacting the district representative to discuss the possibility of going through the "response to intervention" or "school-based problem solving" process, (the topic of Part III in the fall issue of the RNBC Newsletter) and (3) The district provides written notice declining the parent request for an evaluation. Pursuing a private or independent evaluation is an option especially related to the third response by the school, but the choice by parents to seek a private evaluation could be incorporated into the other two scenarios, as well.

The School Evaluation Process, Step One: The Domain Review Meeting

When the child's school district agrees to evaluate your child, as a first step, you are invited to a Domain Review Meeting. This meeting must be held within 14 school days of the initial request. At the Domain Meeting a team of staff members along with the child's parents determine what type of assessments (or additional evaluation procedures) are necessary to get a full understanding of the student. Parental input is an integral part of the Domain process. The composition of the team will vary depending upon the nature of the child's symptoms and other relevant factors. The domain meeting may involve the parents and one representative from the school, or parents may meet with a number of school professionals. The following areas or "domains" are discussed at the meeting: Health, Vision, Hearing, Social/Emotional Status, General Intelligence, Academic Performance, Communication Status and Motor Abilities. (See the adjoining page for a sample Domain Meeting form.)

The team will discuss the following personnel and assessments to decide which are relevant and should be included in your child's evaluation:

- School nurse -- hearing or vision screening and other health evaluations
- School psychologist -- intelligence and achievement testing
- School social worker -- a social-developmental history
- School educational specialist -- supportive cognitive and other learning testing
- Speech/language professional -- communication skills
- Occupational and Physical therapist -- gross and fine

- motor abilities
- Classroom teacher -- evaluation of classroom performance

When parents make a private evaluation available to the school, Illinois school law dictates that this independent educational evaluation must be considered by the district in any decision made with respect to the provision of a free, appropriate public education. Upon reviewing the evaluation(s), the district can decide if the findings are relevant to the child's ability to access the school curriculum. The school team determines if they will accept any part of the information in the private report, within the relevant domains, in lieu of conducting a school evaluation. For example, if the parent provides a private report from a psychologist presenting general intelligence and academic scores, the team might accept these results from a private source and determine that no further testing is needed in these domains.

The designated recorder at the meeting will complete the Parent/Guardian Consent for Evaluation Form for each domain, describing the assessments determined as necessary and explaining why, in certain areas, assessments are not mandated. At the conclusion of the meeting, parents are asked to sign a consent form enabling the district to conduct the evaluations stated in the Domain Review and agreeing that no further information is necessary. (A Domain Review meeting is also convened when a child who is currently receiving special education services is up for his/her triennial review.)

Next Steps

Upon completion of the assessments identified in the Domain Review, but no later than 60 school days following the date of written consent, the determination of eligibility shall be made as part of the IEP (Individual Educational Plan) meeting. Part II of this discussion, appearing in the next newsletter, will examine procedures for an IEP meeting or a 504 plan meeting, including a discussion about the sections of an IEP and the information included in that document.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS TUTORING SERVICES

RNBC offers tutoring in executive function skills for students in elementary, secondary, and higher educational settings. Most tutoring sessions are scheduled individually or in small groups and take place at the Center during after-school hours. Tutoring sessions address issues related to goal-setting, planning, organizational skills and time management strategies.

For more information,
please call Cate Gonley, at 847-763-7933



~ Sample ~
**Parent/Guardian Domain Meeting Form
 For Evaluation/Re-evaluation**

Name of Student:

Date:

Date of Birth:

DOMAIN	RELEVANT YES/NO?	EXISTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD	ADDITIONAL EVALUATION DATA NEEDED	SOURCES FROM WHICH DATA WILL BE OBTAINED
HEALTH Current or past medical difficulties affecting educational performance.				
VISION Visual problems that would interfere with testing or educational performance. Date and results of last vision test.				
HEARING Auditory problems that would interfere with testing or educational performance. Date and results of hearing test.				
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL STATUS Information regarding how the environment affects educational performance (life history, adaptive behavior, independent functioning, personal and social responsibility, cultural background).				
GENERAL INTELLIGENCE Data regarding intellectual ability, how the child takes in information, understands information, and expresses information.				
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE Current or past functional performance data pertinent to current educational performance.				
FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE Current or past functional performance data pertinent to current functional performance.				
COMMUNICATION STATUS Information regarding communicative abilities (language, articulation, voice, fluency) affecting educational performance.				
MOTOR ABILITIES Fine and gross motor coordination difficulties, functional mobility, or strength and endurance issues affecting educational performance.				

For more information consult the ISBE website http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/nc_english.pdf to view state form number ISBE 34-57 B/C

Eleventh Annual Awards Dinner Is Huge Success

The eleventh annual RNBC gala, held October 18, 2007, at the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago, honored Pearl H. Rieger, co-founder of RNBC and life-long advocate for children with neurobehavioral issues. The event was co-chaired by Nancy and Steven Crown and Betsy and Andy Rosenfield. The opening and closing remarks featured Dr. Meryl Lipton, RNBC Executive Director, and Roger Plummer, immediate past and founding chair of the RNBC Advisory Board.

The night began with a special pre-dinner discussion titled, "Conversations with Pearl Rieger and Dr. Ami Klin." Carol Marin, a political columnist for the Sun Times and well known in Chicago for her prestigious work in television journalism currently with both NBC and WTTW, and formerly CBS, moderated the session. Ms. Marin opened by describing her real-life connection with Pearl which set the stage for an in-depth question and answer session, focusing on current issues in learning disabilities and special education. For the final part of this segment, Rieger and Marin were joined by colleague Ami Klin, Ph.D., Harris Associate Professor of Child Psychology and Psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center, Yale University School of Medicine, and this year's recipient of the Pearl H. Rieger Award.

The Pearl H. Rieger Award pays tribute to an individual or institution that has made a significant difference in the lives of children with neurobehavioral issues. Dr. Klin was recognized for his direction of the Autism Program at Yale which provides a broad range of diagnostic and treatment services. This interdisciplinary program engages in research encompassing behavioral, brain and genetics investigations.



Carol Marin, Dr. Ami Klin and Dr. Meryl Lipton



Ami, Pearl and Eric award recipients

"I thought he was a most appropriate recipient," Rieger affirmed. "He is a very warm man, and [during the dinner] he presented his subject in a concise, understandable matter."

This year's Creating the Future Award was presented to Eric Cooper, the Managing Director of Cooperfund, Inc. and founder of Spring Education Resource Center. As a child, Cooper was diagnosed with a learning disability. Cooper credited Rieger with providing the guidance to overcome the educational challenges, enabling him to realize his current level of professional achievement.

"Pearl's vast knowledge and explicit insight was the key that unlocked the door to my future. It was not simply the diagnosis...it was the understanding that there was, in fact, a why to my struggles, and more importantly there was a plan for what do next. "Pearl handed me that key," said Cooper. "Without her, my life would be radically different."

The awards dinner also marked Pearl Rieger's formal retirement from RNBC, stepping down from her position as an RNBC psychoeducational diagnostician and head of the Pearl H. Rieger Fellowship Training Program. A notable figure at RNBC since its launch 11 years ago, Rieger will be missed not only by her associates, but also by those whose lives she has impacted forever. Pearl will continue to work with individuals within her private practice.

The fundraising efforts of the evening were also most successful, raising more than 1.2 million dollars. RNBC would like to thank everyone who contributed to the gala this year and express deep appreciation for those who provide on-going support in so many and varied ways. Finally, RNBC wishes to recognize the tireless work of this year's co-chairs, Nancy and Steven Crown and Betsy and Andy Rosenfield, who helped create a joyous and heartfelt eleventh annual celebration of the RNBC mission.



Betsy Rosenfeld and Nancy Crown

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A Memo to Parents: Considerations About the Summer Camp Experience



Jonathon Levin, LCSW

This is the time of year when parents begin deliberating over the question of whether to send their children to summer camp. Regardless of how the school year is going for your child, the idea of sending your child to camp can be a stressful experience. Parents of children who have learning difficulties or disorders involving social-emotional and behavioral concerns are especially cautious about choosing a summer experience.

Whether a child is in a stable state or in a more fragile condition, making the decision to send children to camp can feel like a risky proposition. When parents consider the summer camp experience, they often think first about all the things that could be problematic for their child. Parents ask questions like, "Will my child be safe? Will the camp be able to handle his/her behavior? What if my child gets worse at camp? Will my child make friends? Will one of the adults at camp serve as an advocate for my child?"

Instead of working to get answers to these questions, sometimes parents become so worried that they just decide to just keep their child home for the summer. Initially such a decision provides relief and avoids dealing with all of those unknown and seemingly overwhelming factors. I would suggest, however, that sending your child to camp, especially a child who has neurobehavioral issues, could be an important and worthwhile intervention. Before making this decision, parents need to calmly ask the difficult questions, and, at the same time, consider the benefits of sending their child to camp, while realistically assessing what situations their child can handle. This process will lay the groundwork that leads to a positive camp experience.

Benefits of Sending Your Child to Camp

Two main reasons for engaging in the camp experience emerge. The first consideration is that children with neurobehavioral issues often have accompanying social issues. They often have trouble making and keeping friends. In the right camp experience, social skills are constantly being taught and used. Kids are working together, using teamwork and developing leadership skills. Through these efforts, children who attend camp are often being exposed to great role models.

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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.

Practical Strategies to Help Children with Brain-Based Social-Emotional Challenges

Friday, February 29, 2008



EMILY RUBIN
MS, CCC-SLP

A full-day symposium focusing on High Functioning Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Nonverbal Learning Disability, and other Social-Emotional Learning Disorders.

Hosted by Rush NeuroBehavioral Center and Oakton Community College.

How to Register

By Mail: Send a check for tuition (payable to Oakton Community College), or pay by credit card (MasterCard, VISA, Discover). Mail to Alliance for Lifelong Learning, P.O. Box 367, Skokie, IL 60076.

In Person: Mon - Fri., 8:30 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. at the Des Plaines or Ray Hartstein campuses.

By Fax: Complete the registration form, include credit card number and expiration date, then fax to 847.635.1448.

Group Discount: A 10 percent discount is offered to two or more participants from the same organization (registrations must arrive together).

Registration Form

Practical Strategies (HUHA96-001) \$ 150.00

TOTAL \$ _____

Nonrefundable payment must accompany registration form.

Name _____ Sex: Male Female

Social Security Number _____ - _____ - _____ Birth Date ____/____/____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Office Phone _____

E-mail _____

(used ONLY for notification of upcoming educational opportunities, NEVER shared)

Last College Attended _____

Most Credits/Highest Degree Earned _____

Profession _____ License No. _____

To monitor compliance with civil rights legislation, federal agencies require colleges to describe their racial populations. Please check the category that best describes your racial/ethnic background.

Black (African American) White (Caucasian) Asian or Pacific Islander
 Amer. Indian/Alaskan Hispanic (surnamed American) Other/no answer

For Credit Card Payment Only, check one: Discover VISA MasterCard

Credit Card No. _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

For credit cards only, fax to: 847.635.1448.

No confirmation of enrollment will be sent. This form may be photocopied.

A Memo To Parents

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The second benefit impacts the whole family. The time your child spends away at camp (day or overnight) provides opportunities for both the child and the family to form identities and interests separate from one another. This feature of camp, residential or day camp, is especially important for those children whose challenges significantly impact the whole family. Of course parents worry about our children when they are away, but having this time and space to grow and breath separately can be very valuable for all family members.

You Know Your Child Best: Be Realistic

Parents know their children best. They know what strengths and weaknesses their child has. Parents know what their child's interests are. Parents also are often keenly aware of what experiences are difficult for their children, and often have the best strategies to help their children handle difficult situations. So when selecting a camp, it is important for parents to take everything they know about their child and use it to make a thoughtful choice. For example, your child may not be the "best athlete", but he/she may be a great artist who makes the team signs. If your child has a strong interest in building, search for a camp that has many opportunities for crafts and construction. The built-in emphasis on non-academic areas inherent in the camp experience can often reinforce other interests and culminate in the best social skills group ever!

Camp is a time to nurture a child's strengths and provide options for the child to have new experiences in a non-threatening environment. By emphasizing your child's interests and strengths and being realistic about your child's limitations, a camp experience can greatly help your child build confidence. Making your child an active participant in the camp-selection process will help bridge the adjustment gap when it comes time to actually go off to camp. Show your child the camp website. Discuss with him/her what the camp has to offer, and also what the camp may lack. If the camp allows it, take your child to visit the camp and talk to camp personnel. The more active your child is in evaluating and selecting the camp, the more likely that your child will feel good about going to camp.

Ensuring a Positive Camp Experience

Once the decision has been made to send your child to camp, parents often ask how much information they should share with the camp personnel. In most instances, sharing information about your child with the camp staff will help build a greater likelihood of success at camp. Work together to help the camp personnel understand your child's needs and those strategies that prove most effective. When possible, succinctly provide written information regarding the following areas: medication, behavior, preferences, social and emotional considerations.

You, your child, and the camp personnel should form a team to handle any ups and downs inherent in the camp experience, and to address any specific areas pertinent to your child. Toward this end, look for camps that have personnel who are interested in hearing about and planning for your child. Look for those camps that ask questions about mental health issues, ask questions about your child's fears, and other personal questions. Camps that want to talk to your child's therapists or other support members are those that will often be more equipped to meet your child's needs.

Finally, parents should identify one or two people from the camp who will serve as their primary contacts while your child is at camp. Parents need a point person to go to when there are concerns, to pass along information, or seek assurance that their child is ok.

Making the decision to send your child to camp is not easy. However, by choosing the right camp for your child, being realistic about what your child can handle, and working together with the camp staff, the summer camp experience can be a positive social experience for your child which carries over to yield stronger social and emotional behaviors during the following school year.

Website Summer Camp Resources

Campresources.com

Mysummercamps.com

Kidscamp.com

Teen Social Program

June 16th-19th, & June 23rd-26th
1-4pm each day

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

This is a group experience designed for high-school aged boys and girls with a history of social-emotional learning issues. Together, we work to create an environment to support self awareness, increase social skills, to learn coping strategies, and to promote 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 fifth year we are offering this successful concentrated summer program. Jonathan Levin, LCSW, Nadine Wengroff MS, CS, and Greg Stasi, PHD will lead the group. The program will also be assisted by graduate students from The Family Institute at Northwestern University.

If this group sounds right for someone you know, please contact Jonathan Levin at RNBC, 847-763-7958.

CENTER SPOTLIGHT

RNBC is thrilled to welcome two new professionals . . .



Ilene Milgram, M.S.
Administrative
Director

Ilene Milgram, M.S., recently began at RNBC in the position of Administrative Director. Ilene will be working closely with Executive Director, Dr. Meryl Lipton and Associate Executive Director, Dr. Clark McKown. Ilene received her Masters in Health Systems Management from Rush University. Her latest experience includes over ten years in healthcare administration.

As Administrative Director for the Rush Neurobehavioral Center, Ilene will assist in creating an infrastructure to support research efforts at RNBC. She is very excited to being a part of a growing research center and will support the evolving process of grants. This involves the understanding of issues ranging from the Federal regulatory environment to grant budgeting and financial management, to ethics and conflicts of interest.

Ilene will also work together with the staff to develop a quality assurance plan, policies and procedures at RNBC. This begins by identifying the organization's goals and values. She believes that healthcare professionals and organizations must listen to, and integrate, the requirements of the individual, family and community in order to identify and anticipate future health needs and initiatives.

Ilene's background is quite diverse. She was both a preschool teacher and then a substitute teacher for elementary-age students before returning to school herself and making a career change to the arena of non-profit healthcare administration. Most recently, Ilene was the Director of Operations at Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center.



Dr. Michael Strambler
Postdoctoral Research
Fellow

Dr. Michael Strambler, postdoctoral research fellow at RNBC, conducts research focused on advancing the assessment of social-emotional learning and its application in schools. He works on the social-emotional learning assessment project where he conducts assessments as well as designing ways of evaluating aspects of social health through examining the social networks of children. He also co-directs a project with Dr. McKown in the Oak Park school district. This project consists of a professional development series for

teachers focused on social-emotional learning strategies with a goal of reducing the ethnic achievement gap through promoting student engagement.

Dr. Strambler most recently came to RNBC from the Institute for Juvenile Research at the University of Illinois, Chicago, where he completed his internship in clinical psychology. He earned his doctorate from the psychology department's Clinical Science program at the University of California, Berkeley. He brings a background of clinical practice and applied research in addition to an interest in how social settings influence academic self-concept and how social-emotional learning strategies can be employed to promote it. Dr. Strambler has received awards from the Ford Foundation and W.T. Grant Foundation. He has also conducted numerous presentations and has co-authored an academic book chapter and scientific journal article. He is excited about joining the RNBC team for the rich opportunities it presents for further exploring his research interests in the promotion of achievement and social-emotional outcomes in children.

Executive Functions Summer Groups

MIDDLE SCHOOL (entering grades 6, 7, & 8)

July 14-17, 2008
Time: 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
or
August 4-8 2008
Time: 3:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

SESSION INFORMATION

Summer groups will develop strategies in: Materials Management, Time-Management, Planning and Scheduling, Goal Setting, Note-Taking, Test Preparation. The Cost of each workshop will be \$450.00, including materials.

HIGH SCHOOL (entering grades 9, 10, 11, & 12)

July 21-24, 2008
Time: 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
or
August 11-14, 2008
Time: 3:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.



Clark McKown, Ph.D.
Associate Executive Director

The Key to Assessment and Services at RNBC: They are Evidence-Based

RNBC employs two main pathways to helping children and families. The first resource is through assessing the nature of children's neurobehavioral challenges. The second area is

through providing recommendations for or directly administering services to children. Making judgments about the best way to approach assessment and the best kinds of interventions to provide or recommend is central for each of the professionals from all disciplines here at the Center. As part of this process, parents also engage in similar decisions regarding what kind of assessment and treatment to pursue for their child. At RNBC we follow evidence-based practice. Likewise, as parents, it's extremely important to understand how to gather evidence-based information.

What is the value of understanding evidence?

Understanding the evidence of what works is good practice for everyone. When professionals know how to weigh and judge evidence of what works, making well-informed decisions becomes easier. When parents know how to weigh and judge evidence of what works, they become better consumers of services and better advocates for their children. When practitioners and parents uncover and understand the evidence, the big winners are the children who get the best assessments and treatments.

What is good evidence?

In judging what works, there are many kinds of evidence available to practitioners and parents, including:

- Peer-reviewed scientific research on the effectiveness of assessment and treatment practices,
- Professional associations practice parameters outlining recommended assessment and treatment practices, and
- Professional word-of-mouth about what works.

Often, the children we see are more diagnostically complex or unclear than the children included in scientific studies. Nevertheless, in most cases, it is possible to apply general assessment and treatment principles, firmly rooted in scientific and professional evidence, to every individual child. As practitioners, we continually draw on these and other sources of evidence to decide how to proceed in each child's best interest.

How do parents discuss the evidence with professionals?

When parents meet with a clinician, they should feel free to ask which proposed diagnostic and treatment strategies are evidence-

based and what aspects of the recommended approaches have the strongest evidence of effectiveness.

Parents should expect open, clear explanations of the evidence on which a clinician is making recommendations and a candid assessment of both what is strongly supported by the evidence and what is less strongly supported. In general, parents should expect clinicians to engage in this conversation in a friendly and informative manner. Parents should walk away feeling confident in the clinician's approach to decision-making.

How can parents make sense of anecdotal accounts?

Caveat emptor! With the vast amount of information available today via the Internet, passionate and heartfelt anecdotal parent accounts of what works abound. Some of these approaches may appeal mostly to fulfilling parents' hopes, but are not supported by respectable research. Charismatic celebrities sometimes passionately champion unproven approaches. Weighing the quality of the available evidence can often be a difficult task, particularly when confronted with a passionate and persuasive alternative practice that sounds sensible.

It is understandable that parents might be persuaded to divert time and money to alternative treatments even when there is little hard evidence of their usefulness. Before choosing one of these less carefully evaluated assessments or treatments, parents should consult with trusted members of the professional community to help weigh the potential benefits and drawbacks of such a choice.

What other kinds of evidence should parents keep in mind?

There is another important kind of evidence in determining what works. All helping professionals engaged in treatment monitor the progress of their patients. When treatments are psychosocial, often this monitoring is informal, involving interviews with patients and parents. Sometimes, progress monitoring is more formal, consisting of periodic data collection to evaluate in a more "objective" way how children are responding to treatment over time and to determine whether the treatment needs to be modified to improve a child's response. Parents should be informed about how professionals are monitoring their child's response to treatment, and should feel confident that the progress monitoring procedures employed are providing adequate information to determine the level of success of the treatment and decide on next steps.

Who can parents turn to for help in weighing the evidence?

Professionals regularly turn to one another for consultation about evidence-based procedures. Similarly, parents of children with neurobehavioral disorders should identify professionals in their lives whom they feel comfortable consulting. Parents should seek this kind of help as they weigh the diagnostic and treatment options carefully to make the best evidence-based decisions possible for their child.

PARENT CONNECTIONS

2008 Schedule: March 19 • April 16 • May 21

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. There is no fee to participate in this program. Gatherings are held at Rush NeuroBehavioral Center, 4711 West Golf Road, Suite 1100, Skokie, Illinois 60076 from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm.



Sulzer Regional Library
4455 N. Lincoln Ave. Chicago, IL 60625

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY PARTNERSHIP

Tuesday, February 26, 2008 at 7 pm

Why Worry? Identification and Treatment of Anxiety in Children.

Dr. Greg Stasi

Tuesday, March 11, 2008 at 7 pm

Technology Tools for School Success

Dr. Jeanne Beckman author of The Tech Psychologist's Guide

Tuesday, April 22, 2008 at 7 pm

Autism: From Diagnosis to Treatment

Dr. Lori Tall and Dr. Greg Stasi

*Please check our website at www.rnbc.org for updates and additional information.

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. 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.

Executive Functions Teacher Workshop Monday April 28, 2008, 8:15am - 3:45pm Oakton Community College Skokie Campus

Participant's Name _____

School Name _____ Grade(s) subject(s) taught _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Program Fee is \$150.00 which includes breakfast, lunch and an Executive Functions curriculum notebook.

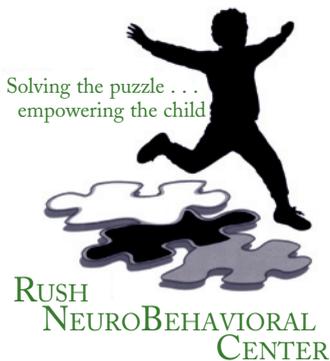
Do you want to receive future mailings Yes No

Please make checks payable to RNBC. Send program fee and non-refundable registration to the address below by April 11, 2008

**Rush NeuroBehavioral Center
Attn: Cate Gonley
4711 W. Golf Road Suite 1100, Skokie, IL 60076
Phone: (847) 763-7933, Fax: (847) 933-0874**



Rush NeuroBehavioral Center
 4711 W. Golf Road, Suite 1100
 Skokie, IL 60076



Speech and Language Services Added to RNBC

To provide more comprehensive services for children and adolescents, RNBC will add a range of speech and language services. RNBC is pleased to announce that Sara Panian, speech and language pathologist, has joined the RNBC staff. These new services in speech and language areas will include both diagnostic and treatment opportunities in the areas of receptive and expressive language development, pragmatic uses of language within social settings, as well as individual and group speech and language therapy.

School consultation for speech and language concerns will also be featured within the context of these added services.

Ms. Panian comes to the Center with diverse professional experience. She received her Master's degree in audiology and speech sciences from Michigan State University. Sara has had extensive experience providing speech and language evaluation and treatment services to children with neurobehavioral disorders, including autism-spectrum disorders.

Dr. Lipton, RNBC Executive Director, reflected the Center's excitement about adding these services. "We are delighted to be able to offer speech and language diagnostic and treatment services at RNBC. In keeping with our design as an interdisciplinary setting, Sara will bring her expertise in speech and language into the collaborative framework here, working with psychologists, physicians, social workers, and educators."

RNBC STAFF

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