

# PUZZLE PIECES

RUSH NEUROBEHAVIORAL CENTER • SUMMER 2008



## Can Preschool Children Develop Executive Function Skills? Research says, YES!



Meryl Lipton, MD, PhD  
Executive Director

I want to share with you a recent conversation I had with a parent of one of my patients here at RNBC. This experience underscores, once again, how much we learn from the parents of our patients at RNBC. This parent is a CEO of a major company in Chicago. We were discussing the need for our schools to incorporate training in executive

functioning into the regular school operations – for all students and in all subjects. His child is a high school student and his parental perspective highlighted how important executive functioning skills are not only for preparation to handle the demands of continued education, but for handling the demands of continued life expectations in today’s world.

This father and very successful businessman paused for a moment, sighed, then reflected on how pressured he is within his hyper-busy business work environment and how pressured his children are within their hyper-busy academic and extra-curricular schedules, in addition to keeping up with their social lives. He reiterated the even-more important role in today’s world played by the executive function tools of organization, planning, goal-setting, decision-making, the ability to focus one’s attention and regulate one’s behavior. He asserted that, as the challenges of performing effectively increase for him and for his children, the need to employ these executive functions becomes more pronounced.

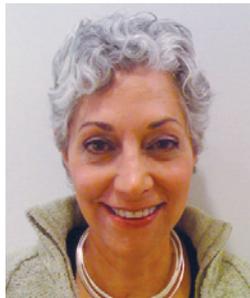
I told him that RNBC, through the Educational Services Department’s Program for Executive Functions, was

Continued on page 2

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Words of Advice .....	7
New Speech and Language Services .....	8
Executive Function Summer Workshops.....	11

## Understanding the IEP Process: A Six Step Guide



Barbara Resnick, MS.  
Educational Specialist/  
School Liaison

This article is the second in a three-part series designed to educate and assist parents as they work with their child’s school. Part I focused on a typical scenario involving a student’s parents and school communicating about learning concerns. In this series, the process described resulted in a decision to conduct a psychological and educational evaluation by the school. The prior article reviewed the evaluation process as well as the Domain Meeting to determine specific assessment areas. This article concentrates on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process and current legislation surrounding the IEP meeting.

### 1. Preparing for the IEP Meeting

After a formal evaluation is conducted, the educational team reviews the results and prepares a report. Parents are sent the *Parent/Guardian Notification of Conference* form inviting them to a meeting at their child’s school to discuss testing results and possible eligibility for special education services. Often this date is confirmed with the parents before the notification is sent. Along with this invitation, the district must also send a copy of the *Procedural Safeguards*, which informs parents of their rights and needs to be carefully reviewed before the meeting. If the parents are not able

Continued on page 2



## Can Preschool Children Develop Executive Function Skills

continued from page 1

teaching these very skills to students in elementary, middle, and high school. I mentioned that we were even working on a college-level executive functions program. He listened carefully, then looked me in the eye and said, “Well, with all the new information about the importance of early childhood education, what are you doing for preschoolers? Shouldn’t you really start there?”

I was startled. We had measurable success with grade school students at Ogden School (a unique Chicago Public School), teaching executive function skills to students as young as kindergarten, but extending this concept even younger – to preschoolers – seemed like a stretch.

Of course, he was right. I can see his smile in my mind as I read *Science Magazine’s* recent report on new research conducted by four researchers in British Columbia. The Canadian researchers found that executive function instruction “... improves preschoolers performance in regular classrooms with regular teachers at minimal expense.” In fact they noted that, “Executive functions are more strongly associated with school readiness than are intelligence quotient (IQ) or entry-level reading or math skills ... (and) kindergarten teachers rank skills like self-discipline and attentional control as more critical for school readiness than content knowledge.”

The impact doesn’t end there. The research team also found that executive function skills “are more important for academic achievement through the school year. Working memory and inhibition independently predict math and reading scores in preschool through high school.” (Science 30 November 2007: Vol. 318. no. 5855, pp 1387-1388) As we know from our work in executive functions with school-aged children, it’s always true that the most effective instructional practice does not center on one or the other. Best practice in education is not executive function **OR** learning specific content. It is having strong executive function skills **WITH** learning subjects.

So, thanks to my patient’s dad, at RNBC we are making plans to add a special preschool addition to our already developed Executive Function Curriculum for Elementary, Middle and High School. And, if you have a preschooler who will be in class in the fall, you might check to see if executive function skills are part of what they will learn when they go back to that big adventure.

### 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.*

## Understanding the IEP Process

continued from page 1

to attend, they can contact the school and ask that the meeting be rescheduled. If the parents do not request a date change and do not attend the meeting, the meeting can proceed without the parents in attendance.

**Special Note:** Considering the amount of information to be discussed, many parents find it helpful to ask for a separate meeting before the IEP is held to review the evaluation results.

Parents can also request to see a copy of the evaluation results before the meeting date. Reviewing the results in advance, in a separate meeting and/or in written form, provides an opportunity for parents to absorb the information in a non-stressful environment, ask questions, and prepare topics for more in-depth discussion well ahead of the IEP meeting.

Generally, the school professionals who have completed evaluations attend the meeting and present their findings. Parents are encouraged to contact any team members with whom they are unfamiliar ahead of time and discuss the role they had in their child’s education. If the meeting cannot be completed within the allotted time constraints, the parent and/or school can request that the meeting be reconvened at a later date. Students are encouraged to attend some or all portion of their IEP meeting to begin developing self-advocacy skills, especially by the time they reach upper elementary grades.

**Special Note:** Parents are also entitled to bring additional participants, including a friend, a relative, a private evaluator, or an advocate.

## 2. Convening the Meeting

Following an introduction of all in attendance, the *Student Identification Information* and *Parent/Guardian Information* form is reviewed, which can be completed prior to the meeting. Parents are asked to carefully check over this page to make sure all the information is correct, i.e. address, telephone numbers, date of birth. On the bottom of this page is a place for participants to sign in.

**Special Note:** One’s signature in this location provides a record of attendance at the meeting and does not indicate agreement with any decisions made during the meeting.

Each of the evaluators reviews his/her results and generally prepares a written report documenting their findings. Written and oral reports from a private evaluator can be submitted at this time. An advocate or a school representative can also participate in reviewing all information presented at this meeting. Any sections from a private evaluation that the school accepts can be entered on the *Documentation of Evaluation Results* form, along with evaluation data gathered by the school.

**Special Note:** The school has the right to accept or reject, in part or in whole, the information presented from private evaluations.

### 3. Primary Eligibility

Once all evaluators have presented their testing/screening results, the team (including the parents) reviews the *Eligibility Determination* (All Disabilities other than Specific Learning Disability) form. The team determines if the child meets criteria for identification under the following disability categories:

Autism, Cognitive Disability, Deaf/Blindness, Deaf, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disability, Hearing Impairment, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impaired, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and/or Visual Impairment Including Blindness.

The child will qualify for services if, after the team's analysis of the testing data, and the team is able to identify one or more of these disabilities as the primary cause of the adverse affect on the child's school performance.

**Special Note:** The reauthorization of IDEA 2004 and subsequent regulations by the State of Illinois has resulted in more stringent requirements for determining if a child qualifies for services under the Specific Learning Disability Classification.

If the child's suspected disability is due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math or limited English proficiency, he/she cannot be considered to have a specific learning disability. Additionally, a child cannot be considered to have a specific learning disability if any of the following exclusionary criteria are the primary basis for the child's difficulties:

Visual, hearing or motor disability, cognitive disability, emotional disability, cultural factors or environmental or economic disadvantages

**Special Note:** Next, the team determines if the child meets the following Inclusionary Criteria. There are three parts to this section and each question must be answered by all members of the team:

(1) Is the child progressing at a significantly slower rate than expected or is the student currently making an acceptable rate of progress

but only because of the intensity of the intervention that is being provided?

(2) Is the child's performance significantly below the performance of peers or expected standards?

(3) Are the child's needs in any areas of concern significantly different from the needs of typical peers and of an intensity or type that exceed general education resources?

**Special Note:** To be eligible under the categorization of a Specific Learning Disability, the team must be able to answer "yes" to each of these questions. They also must be able to identify the school performance areas that are affected by the Specific Learning Disability, i.e., reading decoding, math calculation. If the answer is "no" to any of these questions, the child does not have a Specific Learning Disability and cannot qualify for service under this designation. All present at the meeting must then sign to indicate the report reflects his/her conclusion regarding the designation of a specific learning disability.

### 4. Secondary Eligibility

If a child meets the specific learning disability criteria, he/she may also have a secondary disability from the list presented on the *Eligibility Determination* (All Disabilities other than Specific Learning Disability) form. For example, he/she may have a secondary speech or language impairment or be categorized as other health impairment due to ADD/ADHD. **If the child does not meet the criteria of a Specific Learning Disability, one of these other categories can be reexamined to qualify the child for services. If no disability is found, the child is determined to be ineligible for service.**

**Special Note:** Parent's have the right to disagree with the school's decision and the law has established a due process hearing system to address parent objections. Prior to a formal hearing, parents are encouraged to agree to mediation through the Illinois State Board of Education to informally help both parties resolve the disagreement.

### 5. Writing Goals

If eligibility in one or more disability categories has been determined, the meeting moves to the formal writing of the Individual Educational Plan. The IEP should include the child's strengths, present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (*Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance Form*). This information can be obtained from the current evaluations, state-wide assessments and/or input of the classroom teachers. Any parental concerns should also be noted. The effects of the child's disability on involvement and progress in the general education curriculum must be detailed as well.

The Team then writes Annual Goals which must be specific, measurable and address the deficits identified in the test results in all pertinent Domain areas. Illinois Learning Standards should be used as one of the criteria when writing goals. For each goal, the child's current level of academic performance must be stated and individual benchmarks be developed. The benchmarks are the steps toward reaching the annual goal. For each benchmark an evaluation criteria, evaluation procedures, and schedule for determining progress must be determined. Goals are reviewed according to each grading period, usually three or four times a year. Progress is recorded and discussed at a parent-teacher conference, at an IEP meeting or is mailed to the home. Once a goal is met it must be rewritten to reflect continued growth. A child may have only one goal or may have many goals, depending on his/her areas of need.

### 6. Accommodations & Supports

*The Educational Accommodations and Supports* form describes the specific supplementary aids, accommodations and modifications to which the child is entitled. Accommodations are specific adjustments made to the regular school curriculum, based on the student's learning difficulties. The Assessment form lists the testing and other accommodations the child requires for class-based, district-wide and state-academic-assessments. Some common accommodations include:

extended time, test read to student, books on tape, use of word processor for note-taking, templates and other graphic organizers

provided to help structure assignments and notes, use of a word bank for vocabulary assistance, shortened assignments and/or tests

Modifications are made when the regular curriculum is determined to be unsuitable for the student and a mostly different curriculum is substituted. Some common modifications include:

- shortened assignments and tests based on a substitute curriculum,
- restructured assignments or tests, construction of a separate and parallel curriculum, use of an off-grade-level curriculum

*The Educational Services and Placement* form explains in what areas the child will participate in the general education curriculum (with and without supplementary aids) and the amount of special education and related services the child will be receiving. The specific number of minutes for each special education and related service must also be listed.

Based on the IEP goals, Educational Placement is determined and can be in the general education classroom with resource support provided either in the classroom (push-in) or outside of the classroom (pull-out), in a self-contained special education classroom, or in a special education or therapeutic school.

**Special Note:** Parents have the right to have their child attend, to the maximum extent appropriate and with modifications and accommodations, classes with other students who are not special education students, i.e. the “least restrictive environment.” Placement considerations must always first consider “the least restrictive environment,” which is the general education classroom the child would attend if not disabled. Only after the regular classroom is ruled out because it does not meet the child’s needs, can a more restrictive environment be considered. Regardless of placement, your child also has equal opportunity rights to participate in nonacademic services and extracurricular activities with supplementary aids and services.

The final IEP form, *Parent Notification of Conference Recommendations* is a review of the decisions made at the meeting. It records whether

the child qualifies for an IEP and, if eligible, the type of special education services for which he/she is eligible.

**Special Note:** Before services can begin, the parent(s) is required to sign the *Notification of Conference Recommendations* form and in doing so indicates that he/she is in agreement with the decisions made at the meeting.

## Legal Considerations

An IEP is a legal document. It is governed under IDEA, the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, which assures that services meet state and federal requirements. A school district is obligated to provide the services, supports, accommodations and number of minutes documented in the IEP. Progress is to be monitored on a consistent basis through data collection. If a child is not making gains on his/her goals, these goals need to be reevaluated and possibly revised. Although IEPs are written for one year, a parent does not have to wait for the Annual Review meeting to share concerns. IEP Review meeting can be called at any time and changes can be accomplished through IEP revisions.

## 504 Plan Eligibility

A child, who does not qualify for an IEP, may be entitled to a 504 Plan. A 504 Plan is written in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and details the accommodations and modifications a child needs to gain equal access to programs and education. A 504 Plan is monitored through regular education. Goals are not written and a special education case manager does not support the child in a regular education class or in a resource room. A 504 Plan might be appropriate for a child with ADD/ADHD who is performing at the expected level, but needs extended time and preferential seating to access the curriculum. 504 Plans are reviewed and modified on a yearly basis. As in an IEP, parents can request a 504 review at any time.

*Watch for Part III in the Fall 2008 newsletter which will address “Response to Intervention” often referred to as “School-based Problem Solving”.*

## FRIENDS OF THE CENTER

Dean Buntrock	Samuel Gotoff
Rosemarie Buntrock	Fred A. Krehbiel
Joan Cusack Burke	David Miniati
Miles Collier	Susan Blankenbaker Noyes
Parker Collier	Abby McCormick O’Neil
Carey Cooper	Andrew Rosenfield
Cheryl Kraff Cooper	Betsy Rosenfield
Philip H. Corboy	Jack Sandner
Nancy Crown	Gregory J. South
A. Steven Crown	Molly South
Mary A. Dempsey	Jonathan P. Ward
Christina Gidwitz	Margo Ward
Ronald J. Gidwitz	

## ADVISORY BOARD

Julie Vander Weele, Chairperson	Michael Friedman
Roger Plummer Founding Chairman	Jan Kiefer Goldsmith
Harvey Alter	Keith Goldstein
Daniel Alvarez II	Mary Hasten
Arthur Balourdos	Patti Heller
Ann Bartram	Bette Cerf Hill
Suzanne Bessette-Smith	Bill Jacobs
Leslie Bluhm	Linda R. Jacobs
Amy L. Carbone	Robert Kohl
Chrissy Collins	Susan Lucas
Kevin M. Collins	Molly Perry
Kathleen Cowie	Joanne Plummer
Ann FitzSimons	Theodore Schmidt
	Alan Sebulsky
	Carla H. Westcott
	Laurie Yorke



~ Sample ~

# IEP Summary Report

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF MEETING: \_\_\_\_\_

## INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (CONFERENCE SUMMARY REPORT)

DATE OF MOST RECENT EVALUATION: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ DATE OF NEXT REEVALUATION: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### PURPOSE OF CONFERENCE (Check all that apply)

- Review of Existing Data     Reevaluation     IEP Review/Revision     Manifestation Determination     Termination of Placement
- Initial Eligibility     Initial IEP     Transition     Graduation     Other (e.g. FBA/BIP) \_\_\_\_\_

### STUDENT IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

STUDENT'S ADDRESS (Street, City, State, Zip Code)			STUDENT'S DATE OF BIRTH	SIS ID NUMBER
<input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE	ETHNICITY	LANGUAGE/MODE OF COMMUNICATION USED BY STUDENT	CURRENT GRADE LEVEL	ANTICIPATED DATE OF HS GRADUATION
PLACEMENT (To be completed after placement determination) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO    Placement is in Resident School			DISABILITY(S)	MEDICAID NUMBER
RESIDENT DISTRICT			SERVING DISTRICT	
RESIDENT SCHOOL			SERVING SCHOOL	

### PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

(1) PARENT'S NAME <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Surrogate Parent	(2) PARENT'S NAME <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Surrogate Parent
(1) PARENT'S ADDRESS (Street, City, State, Zip Code)	(2) PARENT'S ADDRESS (Street, City, State, Zip Code)
(1) PARENT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER (include Area Code)	(2) PARENT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER (include Area Code)
(1) LANGUAGE/MODE OF COMMUNICATION USED BY PARENT(S) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    Interpreter	(2) LANGUAGE/MODE OF COMMUNICATION USED BY PARENT(S) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    Interpreter

### PARTICIPANTS

**Signature indicates attendance.** Check appropriate boxes to indicate which meetings were attended. Anyone serving in a dual role should indicate so on the following lines. If a required participant participates through written input or is excused from all or part of the IEP meeting, the required excusal and written report, as necessary, is attached.

ELIG. REVIEW	IEP	ELIG. REVIEW	IEP
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Parent		School Social Worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Parent		Speech-Language Pathologist
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Student		Bilingual Specialist
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	LEA Representative		Interpreter
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	General Education Teacher		Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Special Education Teacher		Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	School Psychologist		Other (specify)

If the parent(s) did not attend the IEP meeting, document the attempts to contact the parent(s) prior to the IEP meeting.

### PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

Explanation of Procedural Safeguards were provided to/reviewed with the parent(s) on \_\_\_\_\_

Transfer of Rights - Seventeen-year old student informed of his/her rights that will transfer to the student upon reaching age 18.  Yes     NA

Parent(s) were given a copy of the:     Evaluation report and eligibility determination     IEP

District's behavioral intervention policies     District's behavioral intervention procedures (initial IEP only)

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF MEETING: \_\_\_\_\_

## A Message From Sue Hans, NSSED Parent Mentor

In 2005 the Northern Suburban Education District (NSSED) and its Association of Parents and Staff received an Illinois Board of Education grant entitled the Parent Mentor Grant. The primary purpose of the grant is to provide programs and services that help support collaborative partnerships between parents and educators.

I had the good fortune to be hired as the NSSED Parent Mentor and help to develop the program. In our third year, we are very pleased with how actively both parents and staff utilize the resources we have to offer.

The Parent Mentor program provides:

- 1) parent-friendly training for families who are just starting in the special education process and for those needing a refresher course;
- 2) parent and staff training in communication skill building and effective, collaborative problem solving;
- 3) information to help families locate community resources;
- 4) individual consultative services to help parents better prepare for participation in their child's IEP meeting; and
- 5) individual consultative services to either parent(s) or staff around a specific communication problem.

For more information please visit [www.nssedparentmentor.org](http://www.nssedparentmentor.org).

All parent mentor consultative services are offered free of charge. In working with parents preparing for an IEP meeting, the services are intended to help them articulate their interests and specifically, write a parent report for the rest of the team. Rather than have me attend IEP meetings, parents have found it more effective if we use the consultative time to prepare them more fully for the meeting. As a part of that work, I developed a set of guidelines for writing a parent report. (See box below.)

As a parent of four children, three with disabilities that require an IEP, I have walked in the shoes, maybe not your particular ruby red slippers, but I have a good sense of what the experience feels like. I often describe parenting a child with special needs like this: Raising a typical child is like learning to drive, once you have learned how, you don't have to relearn with each new car, it is somewhat automatic. However, learning how to navigate with a child with special needs is like getting into a stick-shift car, with a bad clutch, in a city you don't know, with lots of hills, in the dark." If there is anything I can do to help you, please give me a call or send me an email: Susan Hans, NSSED/APS Parent Mentor, 847.831.5100 x 228 or [shans@nssed.org](mailto:shans@nssed.org).

Other parent mentors in the northern region of Illinois are: Eva Bell, Waukegan School District 60, [ebell@waukeganschools.org](mailto:ebell@waukeganschools.org); Joy Bux, SEDOL, [jbux@sedol.k12.il.us](mailto:jbux@sedol.k12.il.us), Deb Durrbeck, CUSD 200 – Wheaton, [ddurrbec@cusd200.org](mailto:ddurrbec@cusd200.org); Maribel Huerta, Chicago Public Schools, [mhuerta@cps.kil.il.us](mailto:mhuerta@cps.kil.il.us)

### Guidelines for Preparing a Parent Report



1. Begin with a short narrative that individualizes your child, is relevant to the education process and is specific to the IEP. Include short anecdotes that help you tell your child's story in the narrative. It helps avoid spending valuable time in the telling stories that are relevant and may be emotionally precious, but get the meeting off track. Your narrative may be very subjective, that is ok, a great deal of the input to the process is subjective.
2. Follow the section of the IEP in your report. This will keep you organized and on topic and you are more likely to have input to all of the sections that are areas of concern.
3. Organize your report into bullet points and short statements that are well written and to the point. Long rambling paragraphs become indecipherable.
4. If you put forth any problems that you would like addressed, also provide the interests you would like to have met in the possible solutions.
5. Incorporate the data and opinions of outside therapists and evaluators into your report. This information should be assimilated into one cohesive and thoughtful report, yours.
6. Be sure to include positive feedback on things that are working well for your child. This helps to ensure that those concepts and ideas aren't left by the wayside in any new planning and goal setting.

Remember to get a copy of your report to the special education administrator or program supervisor in advance of your IEP meeting.



## MASTER PIECES

Selections from Children and Young Adults



### Words of Advice From An Older Brother

Liam,

Hey, it's Alex. Hope you are having a good year in school. I know making the transition to middle school was tough- to be honest with you, making that transition for me was harder than making the transition from middle to high school. You really have to stay organized, and I know you can, it's much easier than you think it is. Here is the basic outline about the system, and what you **HAVE** to do to make it work. I promise, it's very easy, but you can't take shortcuts!

1) If Mom hasn't made one for you already, get a three ring binder, and then put individual folders/sleeves for your homework and problems in. Label those sleeves with each class that you have. Preferably the sleeves are two-sided, so you can put homework and other assignments in both sides of them. Put the homework that you **HAVE TO TURN IN** for each class in the front of each class folder (so you can just open up your folder and have it ready to hand to the teacher instead of looking for it), and put the homework **THAT YOU ARE WORKING ON** in the back of the folder for each class.

2) Get three-ring binders for each class (besides your main three-ring folder with all of your current work in it), and once work is done or the teacher hands it back to you, you can put it in there just in case you need it later. That way you don't clutter up your folder (like I did in middle school and high school) and you know where everything is! You can keep those three ring binders in your locker at all times unless you need them to get old work from them.

Here are tips that **YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW** while you are at school:

3) If I know you at all Liam, you are very outgoing and very social, and right after the bell goes off at the end of class, you want go pack up and leave as soon as possible. Please, for your own good, take at least a minute to make sure that you put all of the assignments that your teacher gave you for that class in the **WORKING ON** part of the folder in your main three-ring binder. Don't just stuff it in your backpack or folder. In the end, if you do this, you'll actually get to hang out with your friends more, because you won't be looking for your stuff all the time when you could be hanging out with your friends. Spending one minute to get organized after every class (I do it still at college- I am always one of the last people out of the classroom, I promise) will save you so much time!

4) Also, try to get to class a couple minutes early. Have all your work out and books out that you will be working on in class. It's such a good habit to have for high school and college especially! Once again, if you have all your stuff out before class, you can always talk to friends once you've done this. It's probably a lot easier to ask a friend how he's doing while he's sitting down rather than while he's running to class.

5) Don't make excuses! Just go to class and give yourself plenty of time to get there. I promise that your friends will not think less of you if you just say hi to them while you're walking to class instead of talking to them for a longer period of time. I stopped and talked to people a lot in high school, and I was late to class a lot. Plus, being late annoys the teacher and maybe not now, but later in high school and college, will annoy students. As I said, I really think the best way to get to know people is to get to class early and talk to them and ask them what they're doing on the weekend, or how their sports are going, or whatever. And to your credit, only this year have I made a vow to try to show up early not only class, but practice and study sessions as well. You'll also learn a lot better if you've given your brain some time to adjust to class rather than unpacking your bag as the teacher is talking.

You'll do great Liam, and get great grades if you just follow this. Don't make the same mistakes that I made! That's the good thing about having an older brother- he makes mistakes for you! It really made middle school miserable for me, even though I was just as smart as anybody in my class.

Love, Alex



Alex  
Mahoney



Liam  
Mahoney

### Currently Recruiting for Fall Social Development Groups

These groups are designed to support children who struggle with friendships. RNBC groups are run by psychologists, social workers, and educational consultants.

For more information, please contact Nadine Wengroff at 847-763-7944.

## New RNBC Speech and Language Services

Parents are often unsure of when to consider a speech and language evaluation for their child. The answer varies depending on the child's age. "Clearly, there are developmental differences," explained Sarah Panin, RNBC's Speech and Language Clinician, in a recent interview. "What we expect from a four-year-old is very different from what's expected of a seven-year old. It's important to consider a child's developmental level and look at the milestones for that age group. Of course, we then take into consideration individual variations, as well."

Once it has been determined that an evaluation would be beneficial, a battery of tests is developed to help capture the most complete picture of a child's communication abilities. Sarah added, "A good evaluation is going to not only look at what may be one or two concerns expressed by the parents or teachers, but also at the other areas of communication that may be influencing the big picture."

When considering how to structure a plan for speech/language therapy, Sara individualizes her treatment to each child based on their developmental level and specific needs, as well as their areas of strength. "You need to determine what a child can do, before you start talking about what they aren't doing. With this information, you create a treatment plan, building on his/her strengths, and based on the next steps in the child's speech and language development."

### RNBC offers the following speech/language clinical services at the Center:

**Evaluations...** that are comprehensive and designed to investigate overall communication skills, as well as pinpoint specific areas a child may be experiencing difficulties with. Based on a parent intake and review of records, an individualized battery of tests will be selected for each child.

**Therapy...** that addresses a child's individual needs in the areas of: expressive and/or receptive language (using and understanding language), pragmatic language (using language in social settings), articulation/motor speech (the production of speech sounds cognitive aspects of communication) which includes memory, attention, and problem solving.

**Consultations...** that are not diagnostic in nature, but are instead meant to provide basic impressions of a child's speech and language skills, as well as recommendations regarding the need for comprehensive testing and/or treatment.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact RNBC at (847) 933-9339

### Typical Early Childhood Communication Development

	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade
<b>Listening</b>	Follows 2 oral directions in a sequence	<b>Listen to and understand age-appropriate stories</b>	Respond to instructions	Follow 3-4 oral directions in a sequence
	Understands differences in opposites like "up-down" "big-little"	<b>Follow a simple conversation</b>	Complete 2-3 step directions in a sequence	Understand direction words
<b>Speaking</b>	Understands simple "wh-?" questions			Correctly answer questions about a grade-level story
	Uses sentences that give lots of detail ("I like to read my books")	Be intelligible to most people	Be easily understood	Be easily understood
	Tells stories that stick to topic	Retell a story or talk about an event	Use most parts of grammar correctly	Ask and answer "wh" questions
	Many sentences have 4 or more words	Show interest in and start conversations	Ask and respond to "wh" questions	Clarify and explain words and ideas
	Talks about activities at school or a friend's house	Participate appropriately in conversations	Stay on topic and take turns in conversation	Give directions with 3-4 steps
		Give directions	Stay on topic, take turns, and use appropriate eye contact during conversation	
		Start conversations	Open and close conversation appropriately	

For more information visit [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)



## CENTER SPOTLIGHT

RNBC welcomes two new professionals . . .



Sara Panian,  
MA, CCC-SLP/L  
Speech-Language  
Pathologist

**Sara Panian**, MA, CCC-SLP/L, Speech-Language Pathologist, joined RNBC in January 2008. Sara is currently contributing to both the research and clinical work being done at the Center.

Clinically, Sara's services include comprehensive evaluations and individualized treatment in the areas of expressive and receptive language, pragmatic language use, articulation/motor speech disorders, as well as cognitive aspects of communication. Consultative services are also offered.

Sara's participation in RNBC's research projects includes co-facilitating an educational group for parents of children with social-emotional learning difficulties. In order to expand on the work that is currently being done at the Center, Sara is also investigating the assessment of social-emotional learning in preschool populations.

Sara received her Master of Arts degree in Audiology and Speech Sciences from Michigan State University. Her clinical background includes extensive experience working with children diagnosed with neurobehavioral disorders, including autism spectrum disorders. She is also trained in the P.R.O.M.P.T.® treatment approach for the remediation of motor speech disorders, such as apraxia. Sara is delighted to be joining the team at RNBC and contributing to the exciting and promising work being done with the children they serve.



Daniel Alderson  
Research Assistant

**Daniel Alderson** recently joined RNBC as a research assistant. He is working within our Research Department, focusing on both the school-based and clinic-based assessment portions of the Social Emotional Learning Initiative. To help us strengthen our assessment of social functioning, Daniel is gathering data from several schools as well as here in the Center through a battery of social-emotional tests. Through data management, he will assist in providing necessary validity in the individual assessment of a child's

social functioning. In addition to his involvement of our Social Emotional Learning Initiative project, Daniel assists in data collection and management of all our other current research projects.

Upon receiving his Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Indiana University, Daniel worked as a research assistant in the Clinical Psychology department here at Rush University Medical Center. While at the downtown campus, he ran research studies involving circadian rhythms disorders. When not at the Center, you can find Daniel researching the relationship between music and the brain through the role of scholar, vinyl record collector, and live music venue patron.

Daniel is pleased to be a part of RNBC's interdisciplinary team, helping us fulfill our mission of obtaining the best possible understanding and treatment of our children.

## Teen Summer Social Development Program

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

**The program session runs 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.



Clark McKown, Ph.D.  
Associate Executive Director

## Social-Emotional Success and Academic Skills

Parents, educators, clinicians, and scholars often find themselves contemplating a singular question: when it comes to children's academic learning, how much does social success matter? On the one hand, it seems clear that social interaction is the lifeblood of learning, which leads to the conclusion that social success should strongly influence what children learn. On the other hand, nearly everyone can remember a schoolmate or a famous intellectual whose ability to connect was extremely limited but who nonetheless seemed to learn effortlessly. It is often these very tangible and contradictory images that give rise to the question.

The answer to the question of whether social-emotional success matters in the classroom will shape what happens in homes and schools. The answer to this question may guide parents in the experiences they create for their children in and outside of the home. It may guide what State Boards of Education require from local schools.

### What does the research tell us?

Stepping back from anecdote and personal recollection, there are several intriguing lines of scientific evidence that suggest that social emotional success and academic development influence one another.

### Studies from Children with Learning Disabilities Perspective

One line of research involves children with learning disabilities. Children with dyslexia are more likely to have difficulty with peer relationships than their non-dyslexic peers. Whether this is a secondary consequence of processing impairments associated with reading disorders, because of the stigma associated with having a learning disability, or because of some other factor is largely unknown. What is clear however, is that for children with dyslexia, social and academic success are linked.

### Studies from School-based Programs Perspective

Another line of research suggesting a link between social and academic success comes from the many, many school-based programs designed to promote children's social competence. Researchers at the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning ([www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)) have conducted an exhaustive review of research on the link between school-based programs to promote children's social-emotional learning and social and academic outcomes. They found that, averaged across a great many studies that include thousands of students in hundreds of classrooms, children who are in schools that are designed to promote social success do better academically.

### Studies from Typical Development Perspective

A third line of evidence comes from studies of typical development. For example, in our own research with typically developing elementary-school students, we have found that the better children are able to read, interpret, and reason about social information, the more academically competent their teachers rate them.

It is our feeling at the Rush NeuroBehavioral Center that social-emotional and academic success are mutually influential, and that nurturing development in both arenas should be a cornerstone of parenting, educating, and treating the whole child.

## Accepting Students for Two Current Research Projects

RNBC is currently offering social-emotional learning assessment in the clinic. The data will be used to learn more about social-emotional assessment as a component of a comprehensive evaluation. If you are a parent who is interested in having your child participate in this study, please contact Adelaide Walker at (847) 763-7936. She will contact you with more information.

An intervention-based social skills group is currently being offered at RNBC. The focus of the group will be to assess the impact of interventions on children's social skills. If you are interested in having your child participate in the research social skills group, please call Adelaide Walker at (847) 763-7936. She will contact you with more information.



## 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

# Executive Function Skills Summer Workshop for Students

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

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

July 14-17, 2008  
Time: 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.  
-or-  
August 4-7, 2008  
Time: 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

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

Participants will develop strategies over a course of four days in:  
Materials Management ♦ Goal Setting ♦ Note-Taking ♦  
Test Preparation ♦ Planning and Scheduling

The cost of each workshop will be \$450.00, including materials



Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Method of payment

Check Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Check Number \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on the card \_\_\_\_\_

Send program fee and non-refundable registration to the address below:

Rush NeuroBehavioral Center

Attn: Cate Gonley

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

Phone: (847) 763-7933, Fax: (847) 933-0874

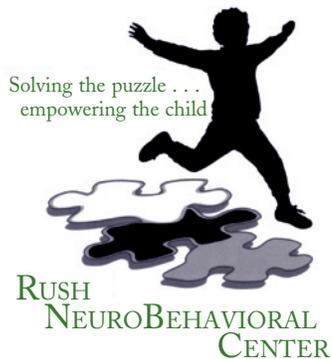
Space is limited. Please register early for an available slot.



## Executive Functions Teachers Workshop

Monday, October 6, 2008, 8:15 am -3:45 pm  
Oakton Community College Skokie Campus

Please visit our website at [www.RNBC.org](http://www.RNBC.org) for updates or call Cate at 847-736-7933



# Save-the-Date

## Rush Neurobehavioral Center Twelfth Anniversary Awards Dinner

**Thursday, October 16, 2008  
Four Seasons Hotel Chicago**

**For more information please contact  
Elizabeth Cohen at 847/763-7935.**

### RNBC STAFF

Meryl E. Lipton, MD, PhD  
Executive Director

Clark McKown, PhD  
Associate Executive Director  
Research Director

Daniel Alderson	Sarah Minton, MAT
Deneb Arellano	Joseph Palombo, MA
Michael Balthazor, PhD	Sara Panian, MA, CCC
Georgia Bozeday, EdD	Barbara Resnick, MS
Elizabeth Cohen, CFRE	Pearl Rieger, MA
Leslie Baer Cohen, PhD	Nicole Russo
Bernadette Evans-Smith, PhD	Michael Smith
Kiersten Fischer	Gregory Stasi, PhD
Julie Gidaspow	Michael Strambler, PhD
Cate Gonley	Lori G. Tall, PsyD
Sharelid Gonzalez	Craigan Usher, MD
Lori Johnson	Adelaide Walker, EdM
Jonathan Levin, MA, LCSW	Nadine Wengroff, MS, CS
Joshua F. Mark, LCSW	Laura Wood
Ilene Milgram, MS	