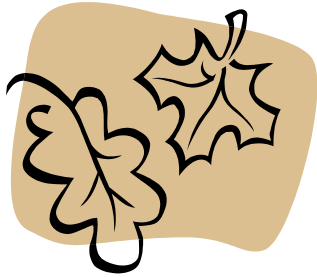




Pediatric Development
Center



Newsletter
November 2008

We provide occupational therapy evaluation, treatment and consultation for children with developmental delays, autism/Asperger, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, sensory processing disorders, attention, behavioral concerns, handwriting, and other areas of weakness.

Contact us for further information:
125 Presumpscot St.
Portland, ME. (207) 699-5531

Parent Support Group:

We want to support parents in any way we can and would like to have a monthly meeting to discuss your concerns. Please call the office to let

us know when would be good for you and we will put together a meeting.
699- 5531

Good Books:

The Organized Student

by: Donna Goldberg & Jennifer Zweibel
Learning Disabilities Handbook by Joan Harwell

Take Five, Staying Alert at Home and School

by: Mary Sue Williams & Sherry Shellenberg

Strategies for Middle School

Taken from "a work in progress" compilation of information gathered by Kimberlee Wing, OTR/L

Some students have significant difficulty with sensory regulation and internal organization, impacting their ability to adequately manage themselves in time and space. They are likely to become easily overwhelmed by touch, movement, visual and auditory input, reducing their ability to adequately adapt to changing demands of their environment. These feelings and concerns can follow them into their adult lives. Fortunately, many strategies can be implemented in the home and classroom to help students even as they take on the challenges of middle school and high school:

* When transitioning to a new school it will be helpful for the student to have a tour of the building and become familiar with where their locker will be, and to acquaint with the various classrooms and teachers. Knowledge of their schedule and what their day will be like will assist them with confidence and reduce their anxiety regarding the transition to the new school.

* Transitions from class: due to feeling overwhelmed by the number of children in the hallways, the visual and auditory overload, as well as the confusion, the student would benefit from traveling between classes several minutes before the other students. Having a watch with an alarm which alerts 3- 5 minutes before the end of class would allow them to maneuver the halls before the other students. Being at the next class early would allow them to be at a more optimal level for learning, rather than being overwhelmed due to the transition.

* Classrooms should ideally be organized and free of visual or auditory distractions. Having a space available for students to go which provides a visual and auditory free environment, such as a cubicle, is also helpful.

* Homework assignments can be posted in the same location in each classroom and specific classroom rules and expectations can be gone over and provided in writing.

* Large open rooms such as the gym or cafeteria are likely to be overwhelming. Allowing a student to eat lunch in a small room with a few peers will allow them to participate in the social aspect without a sense of being overwhelmed. This means they will be better able to transition to afternoon classes and will be more alert for learning.

* Have an assignment notebook to write all assignments as well as to plan out long term projects. It may be important to initially connect with their teachers to make sure they have gotten assignments correct.

* Meeting regularly with the guidance counselor, social worker or classroom aide to go over assignments and to assist with organization of work may be helpful.

* Develop strategies to insure homework assignments have been adequately interpreted and followed up with. Teach to underline or circle the work that tells

what to do: write, look, learn, etc.

* Once home, develop a routine of immediately organizing their backpack to take out all important papers from the day, including notes to parents and assignment book. Also organizing materials and time needed to do homework.

* Use of color coding, such as specific colored notebooks for specific subjects, with matching colors for folders/poly sleeves/dividers and highlighters.

* Highlight important information using different colors to indicate the type of information read or the level of importance, etc. Examples: Yellow for facts/data; Blue for examples; Green for history; Orange for characters; Pink for what is not understood, etc. Put highlighted information into an outline.



* Teach mnemonic devices or association to assist with memory. Assist with visualization techniques to remember information. Examples: sing spelling words; develop acronyms for sequences of facts, etc.

* Determine the student's most successful method

of indicating what they know and provide alternatives or choices for them to demonstrate their knowledge.

* Provide assistance to find their best process for writing a report. Some helpful ideas:

> Idea web, taking the main idea and developing thoughts about the main idea

> Determining who, what, where, when, why, & how

> Develop an outline or template to put information into logical sequence

> Story mapping

> Use a time line or sequence chart

> Cinquains can be used as a method of organizing thoughts to embellish on a topic:
1st line- 1 word- noun
2nd line- 2 words- describe the noun
3rd line- 3 words- actions
4th line- 4 words- feelings
5th line- 1 word- noun (another word for the first word)

* Difficulty with math may be related to weakness with organization and sequencing. The visual layout of the math problems may need to be addressed. Difficulty with word problems may be

evident due to their abstract nature and it will be important to teach how to put the problem into a visual format, such as drawing out the problem. Use real life situations to understand math problems. For example: when finding the area of an object, use a room as a model and lay it out on paper to show how each square foot is determined. Also, provide charts and a calculator.

*Observe body language of wiggling, lying across the desk, tipping in the chair, tapping, talking to self, chewing on clothes or objects, needing to go to the bathroom or to get a drink regularly. These are all indicators of attempts to self regulate. Sensory organizational strategies through movement, touch, chew, visual and auditory can be used to assist with self regulation.

