



SPECIAL EDUCATION QUARTERLY NEWS

By Tracie Ostrander, OTR/L

Spring 2024
Lauri McCoy,
Elementary Principal

Bea Baily,
Substitute CSE
Chairperson

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Dear Families,

This is my chance to tell you all how wonderful it has been to serve you and your children as the Director of Special Education. At the April 2024 Board of Education Meeting, I was officially appointed as the Deposit Elementary Principal. I feel really lucky to serve Deposit families and children in this new way. Currently, we have Beatrice Bailey serving as our substitute Director. She served here in this role before I started here in 2015. She is a pro at working with families, schools, agencies, and children. She has led your CSE meetings this Spring effectively and well. We are so lucky she was able to come back to assist us!

In the meanwhile, I am not leaving the District, and I am here for your children in the Elementary building. I hope you will reach out with any questions, concerns, or compliments regarding the Elementary in the coming months and years.

Thank you all so much for your support and willingness to work with me as a team member!
Have a great summer!
~ Lauri

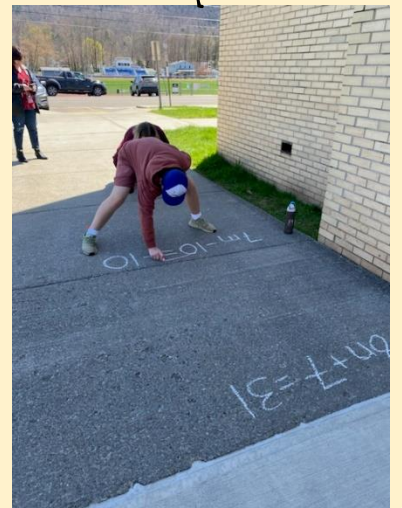


Welcome back, Bea!

ENJOYING THE BEAUTIFUL WEATHER WHILE SOLVING TWO-STEP EQUATIONS!



Real World Math students got a sneak peak at next year's Algebra course with Alycia McNally and Danielle Vagts!



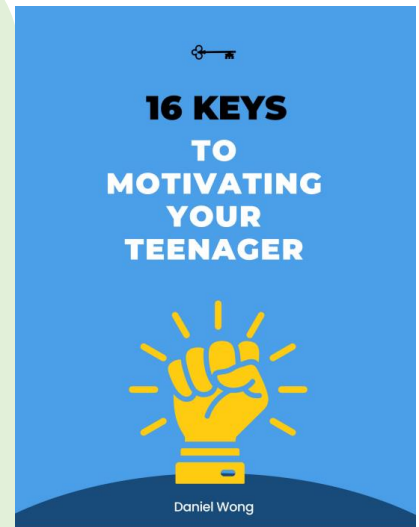
16 KEYS TO MOTIVATE YOUR TEEN

Do you feel like your teen:

1. Lacks motivation, focus or direction?
2. Doesn't work hard enough?
3. Doesn't plan for the future?
4. Hasn't taken responsibility for his or her life?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, check out this free e-book written by specialist Daniel Wong.

<https://www.daniel-wong.com/16-keys-to-motivating-your-teenager/>



Does your child ever get **STUCK**?

BRCASD is providing families with free of cost subscriptions to:



- **Interactive e-learning course for parents of autistic children**
- **Learn how to support your child in developing executive functioning, flexibility and behavior regulation skills**



Families in our 7-county region: If your child is age 8-11 and is on the autism spectrum, and you think your family could benefit from this program, fill out our interest survey by following the link or QR code.

<https://nysrcasd.org/events/1220/registrations/new>

Visit <https://www.unstuckontarget.com/product/> for more information about the program.

THE ANXIOUS GENERATION PART ONE

In the book The Anxious Generation, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt lays out the facts about the epidemic of child/teen mental illness that hit many countries at the same time. He then investigates the nature of childhood, including why children need play and independent exploration to mature into competent, thriving adults. Haidt shows how the "play-based childhood" began to decline in the 1980s, and how it was finally wiped out by the arrival of the "phone-based childhood" in the early 2010s. He also explains why social media damages girls more than boys and why boys have been withdrawing from the real world into the virtual world, with consequences for themselves, their families, and their societies. He suggests these 4 main rules:

- No smart phones before high school. Haidt says kids' brains are not ready for the addictive nature of a smartphone before high school, so giving them one earlier is unhealthy. ...
- No social media before 16 years old. ...
- No phones at school. ...
- More independence, free play and responsibility in the real world.

TECHNOLOGY:

1. The book says that today parents overprotect children and adolescents in the real world and under protect them in the virtual world. Do you see this happening? Where?
2. What problems do smartphones, social media, and screens solve in your family, and what problems do they create?
3. Do you have any tech rules in your home? Do they work? Are there some that you have heard of, or would like to try?
4. What would you like to change, if anything, about your kids' relationship with smartphones and social media? What about video games and other screen-based activities?
5. How are your kids different online and offline?

PLAY:

1. The book says that one problem with a phone-based childhood is that it replaces the hours children would otherwise spend playing in the real world: "Children are, in a sense, deprived of childhood." Do you agree about this for children in general or your own? What exactly are kids missing out on?
2. Think back on your own childhood. What are your most thrilling memories? Could your child have a similar experience today?
3. What did you get from "just playing" as a kid?
4. "Free play" means playing without adults organizing or even supervising. What reservations do you have about allowing your own children more unsupervised time?

SOME POSSIBLE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE:

1. Partner up with a few other families to delay giving your child a smartphone until high school. Give them a flip phone instead.
2. Partner up with a few other families to delay giving your child access to social media until age sixteen.
3. Set tech boundaries in your household. For example, no screens during mealtime or before bed. Consider leaving phones/tablets out of reach. (Buy an alarm clock.)
4. Take turns with other families to host a screen-free game, craft or play night.



AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

April was Autism Awareness month with the theme "Celebrate Differences". The DCS faculty supported this cause in raising awareness about autism acceptance and promoting inclusion and connectedness for people with Autism.

OUT OF THIS WORLD!

Students in Mrs. Molino and Mrs. Bosworth's Integrated Co-Teach class recently published books about the solar system! They celebrated by hosting an Author's Day party and invited family and staff to celebrate!



The 'Jacks' mentor program went to the Senior Center to watch a k-9 demonstration. The students socialized with the seniors and learned about the k-9 program. Ms. Gottshall, Ms. Megivern and Ms. Wright led the trip.



Simple Ball Games for Kids

FUN WAYS TO PRACTICE TOSS AND CATCH

SCARF TOSS: Scarves give ample time for the hands and eyes to coordinate to work on catching. Have kids toss colorful scarves up in the air and catch with one or two hands. They can also practice tossing between partners or playing a game in which a bunch of scarves are tossed up at once and the child tries to catch the color scarf that is called out by a leader.

VELCRO TOSS AND CATCH: Try a set of sticky velcro paddles to make throwing and catching practice even more fun. These have the added benefit of hand strengthening and midline crossing work when kids try to pull the ball off once they catch it!

PLASTIC BAG TOSS: A cost effective tool for teaching kids to toss and catch? Plastic bags! They float through the air and allow for extra reaction time. Toss your bag up with your right hand. Can you catch it with that hand? Toss your bag up with your left hand. Can you catch it with that hand? Can you toss the bag up with one hand and catch it in the other? How many times can you toss and catch it up without letting it touch the floor? Can you toss your bag up high, run under it, and then catch it? Can you toss your bag up high, spin around, and then catch it before it hits the ground? Can you toss your bag back and forth with a friend?

BEANBAG TARGET TOSS: Grab a handful of colorful beanbags and have kids work on throwing underhand or overhand to hit same color targets made of chalk, hula hoops or pieces of paper.

LAUNDRY BASKET BASKETBALL: Empty out a laundry basket and use it as a moving target for this fun game. Have a friend hold the basket while you try to throw rolled socks into it from different distances. Encourage the friend to make it challenging by moving the basket high and low or side to side. Once you have finished throwing the sock balls, have your friend try!

TIC TAC TOE TOSS: Create a tic tac toe board with tape or chalk on the ground. Place a mark 5' behind the board and encourage kids to use an underhand toss with a bean bag or rock to try to hit a spot on the board. If you miss, you have to wait until your next turn to try again. The first to get 3 in a row on target wins!

STRATEGIES TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH *Sensory Challenges*

SENSORY CHALLENGE: DAILY LIVING SKILLS **DIFFICULTY WITH SLEEP**

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INSTRUCTIONS:

The Does Your Child? Section offers educational information about characteristics of children with the above mentioned sensory/behavior challenge. Your child may present with one or many of these characteristics.

The Try This! Section offers simple strategies for helping your child cooperate and develop skills. Not all suggestions are appropriate for every child and family. Only use strategies that apply to your child's age, developmental level, and situation. It is suggested to use this checklist while consulting with a professional who has explained and is monitoring these strategies.

>>> DOES YOUR CHILD?

- Cry or Avoid going to bed.
- Have trouble getting to sleep and staying asleep.
- Demand to sleep with you.
- Appear irritable due to lack of sleep during the day.

>>> TRY THIS!

DIFFICULT TO WAKE CHILD:

- Be sure to start early enough so that rushing doesn't create extra stress.
- Play suitable music to help arouse your child.
- Open the curtains and blinds.
- Offer an arousing smell or taste such as a lemon or orange.
- Slowly pull off blankets.

DAYTIME STRATEGIES:

- Establish an appropriate sleep-wake schedule.
- Determine if the length and/or timing of your child's daytime nap is disruptive to his night-time sleep.
- De-sensitize your child to getting into bed and falling asleep by practicing with putting dolls to sleep.
- During the day play separation games such as "Hide and Seek" and "Peek a Boo" to help your child get comfortable with missing you and knowing you will return.
- Help your child get comfortable leaving Mom and Dad during the day. Practice saying good-bye by leaving the house for just a few minutes then returning.
- A high activity level earlier in the day (5-6 hours before bedtime) helps a child sleep better. If he or she is too inactive in the first half of the day your child may not sleep well at night.

STRATEGIES TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH *Sensory Challenges*

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»» TRY THIS!

EVENING ROUTINES:

- Avoid allowing your child to participate in a lot of random "running around" just prior to bed. It is too alerting. If too active just before bed he/she may not be able to fall asleep.
- Establish a strict bedtime routine. The routine may include a warm bath, listening to a book, quiet music, being rocked, tucked in, and finally lights out.

BEDTIME ENVIRONMENT:

- Let your child wear soft, comfortable pajamas.
- Provide "white noise" such as the sound of a fan.
- Soft music with repetitive rhythm can be very calming and help induce sleep.
- Provide soft bedding such as flannel or soft cotton sheets/blankets.
- Be sure sheets are not cold. Try placing the blanket(s) into the clothes dryer to warm them.
- Some children prefer heavy blankets that are folded under the mattress for firm coverage.
- Some children prefer sleeping inside a sleeping bag placed on the bed.
- Some children prefer being surrounded by heavy pillows or large stuffed animals.
- Some children are calmed by placing an article of a parent's clothing inside the child's bed during the night.
- Cuddling a transitional object such a Teddy Bear may be helpful.
- Your child might sleep better if the top of his head is up against a firm surface such as the headboard.
- To help calm your child before bed try providing deep pressure to his body. Offer firm pressure or a "squeeze" to his/her back or limbs.
- Avoid rocking your child to sleep, driving him around until he falls asleep, or placing him in front of the television until he falls asleep. Doing so will be harmful in the long run. He/she needs to be placed in his crib or bed before he is sound asleep. Your child needs to learn how to cope with soothing himself to sleep. Your child may cry briefly, but this is not unusual.