

NYU CHILD STUDY CENTER

CHANGING THE FACE OF CHILD MENTAL HEALTH

APRIL 2006

This monthly newsletter provides parenting and mental health information, as well as upcoming events and programs by the NYU Child Study Center.

ASK THE EXPERT: ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

By Howard Abikoff, Ph.D., Pevaroff-Cohn Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Director, Institute for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity and Behavior Disorders and Richard Gallagher, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry

Q: What is Organizational Skills Training?

A: Organizational Skills Training (OST) is a general term for the methods developed by professionals and teachers to teach individuals how to improve organization. At the NYU Child Study Center, we apply the term to our specific effort to teach children afflicted with ADHD routines to improve their organization, time management, and planning skills (OTMP skills). We are gearing up for a full-fledged controlled study in which we will be testing our methods with 180 children to determine if OST is a useful tool in helping kids with ADHD.

Q: How does organization affect a child's experience at school?

A: Children are variable in how well they manage their materials, books, and assignments; how well they meet deadlines and prepare for tests; and how well they plan their actions to reach their academic goals. When children have problems in these areas, our research suggests lowered productivity, lessened ability to pay attention, and greater family conflict over school work. For some children, we know that the problem of keeping track of assignments is the single biggest reason why they are doing poorly in school, even if they are quite bright.

Q: How do you know if your child needs help?

A: There is no definitive answer to this question, but we would suggest that a problem is present if keeping track of papers, homework, and supplies is interfering with a child's achievement. Or, if a child fumbles with the usual routines for writing down assignments or comes home with only half the materials needed to complete homework then there may be a problem.

Q: What is the main challenge in organization for children with ADHD?

A: We believe the main challenge for teaching children afflicted with ADHD resides in the frustration these children have with boring routines. Staying organized requires steps that are repetitive and pretty uninteresting. We work with these kids to see the benefits of such routines, and we emphasize how the routines can be completed quickly when they are well-practiced.

Q: What can you do to help your child improve his or her organizational skills?

A: Although the following ideas are still a subject of research, many parents have found them helpful: Make sure your child knows what to do and when to do it. Provide a reliable way to list homework and due dates.

- Help your child create a way to store and transport papers to and from school. Provide a folder or binder, making sure your child can use it easily.
- Include a brief time in your schedule to review assignments with your child. Ask your child to connect each task with all the needed materials (e.g. books, worksheet, pencils, etc.).
- Create a consistent place for your child to complete homework. Stock that location with necessary supplies.
- Have your child pack everything away when homework is complete. Doing this the night before school helps avoid mishaps that can happen in the rush to get ready in the morning.
- Help your child find a specific time to study and complete assigned work each day. Although the actual time may change according to the schedule of after-school activities, the discussion about scheduling a regular time should build time-management skills.

For more information on the NYU Child Study Center, call (212) 263-6622 or visit www.AboutOurKids.org.



To be added to or unsubscribe from our mailing list, please contact csc-communications@med.nyu.edu

In addition to our clinical services for children and adolescents, the Center offers a variety of programs and services for parents, educators and mental health professionals:

- **ADHD Institute Family Education Series**
This series of workshops is designed to help parents and other family members better understand their child's diagnosis of ADHD and learn more about the most current, evidence-based treatments and interventions. For more information, call (212) 263-8915, or e-mail ADHD@AboutOurKids.org.
- **The Sunny and Abe Rosenberg Foundation Lecture Series: *Advanced Seminars for School Professionals***
This series of free professional development seminars will provide school-based practitioners updates on recent advances in children's mental health. To register, e-mail nyuschoolpartnership@med.nyu.edu or call (212) 263-2744. **Upcoming lecture: Selective Mutism: Suffering in Silence— May 10, 2006.**
- **Help for socially anxious teens.** Does your teen spend too much time worrying about what others think? Does shyness interfere with socializing or making new friends? Does it stop the teen from doing what he or she would like or needs to do? The NYU Child Study Center is offering a state-of-the-art treatment program for teenagers who experience social anxiety. For more information, contact Katherine Dahlsgaard, Ph.D., at (212) 263-0662.

Current Clinical Studies:

- The NYU Child Study Center is currently evaluating **children and adolescents ages 7-18 with tic disorders or Tourette's Disorder** to determine if they qualify to participate in a research study and receive specialized, professional care at **no cost**. For more information, call Rachel Shechter at (212) 263-3654.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids in Adolescents with Depression**
Adolescents, ages 12-17 (inclusive) with depression, are being evaluated for participation in a new NCCAM/NIH-funded study conducted by Vilma Gabbay, M.D. This study examines the efficacy of fish oil (omega-3 fatty acids) in the treatment of adolescent Major Depressive Disorder (MDD). For more information, please contact Beth Rabinovitz at (212) 263-3654, or e-mail beth.rabinovitz@med.nyu.edu.
- **A study of decision-making processes and brain function in adolescents with and without an anxiety disorder.** If you know an adolescent between the ages of 13 and 17 who might be interested in participating in a research study during which pictures of the brain will be taken using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), please pass along a flyer (available at the Child Study Center reception area, 577 First Avenue) or have the parent contact Sara Hefton at (212) 263-0661 or sara.hefton@med.nyu.edu. Subjects will be compensated for participation.

Events Calendar

Designer Spring/Summer 2006 Fashion Show & Luncheon

With special guest designers Sari Gueron & Peter Som

When: Thursday, April 6, 2006

Where: 59th St. and Lexington Ave.

Designer Collections, 4th Floor

Time: 12:00 – 2:00 pm

Cost: Patron tickets for \$150; Benefactor

Tickets for \$300.

Contact: (212) 263-2747

ADHD Parenting Workshop

Sibling issues: Something can be done!

When: Thursday, April 20, 2006

Where: NYU Child Study Center

577 First Avenue

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 pm

Cost: \$15 per family

Contact: (212) 263-8696 or

ADHD@med.nyu.edu

Fourth Annual Child Mental Health Event

Autism Spectrum Disorders: Panel and Discussion

When: Monday, May 8, 2006

Where: NYU School of Medicine

550 First Ave., Farkas Auditorium

Time: 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Cost: Free

Contact: (212) 263-2744 or

RSVP@AboutOurKids.org

Fourth Annual Adam Katz Memorial Lecture Series

"Dealing with Dyslexia: The Power of High

Expectations" with Gaston Caperton,

President of the College Board

When: Thursday, May 18, 2006

Where: The Dalton School, 108 E. 89th St.

Time: 5:00 – 6:30 pm

Cost: Free

Contact: (212) 263-2744 or

RSVP@AboutOurKids.org

For more information on Child Study Center events, please visit www.AboutOurKids.org