



Educational Resources

A Newsletter of
KAHN EDUCATIONAL GROUP, LLC; Certified Educational Planners

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Editor: September Frederick

College Admissions • Day/Boarding Schools • Special Needs • Summer Programs • Crisis Intervention

Texas Vote Curbs a College Admission Guarantee Meant to Bolster Diversity

The Texas Legislature voted [this spring] to scale back a program under which Texans who graduated in the top 10 percent of their high schools were given automatic admission to the state university of their choice. The action put limits on a 10-year-old experiment to increase diversity in the colleges.

The University of Texas, Austin, a top-ranked institution, had sought changes to the program for years because it allowed admissions officials almost no latitude in putting together a class and endangered some important but less popular departments, like music. In 2008, 81 % of the incoming fall class were admitted under this rule.

Suburban parents with students at schools with rigorous standards also complained that the law discriminated against their children, since it was harder to make the cut at such schools than at smaller, rural and some urban schools. An odd coalition of lawmakers from the inner cities and rural towns had for years beaten back efforts to weaken the program, arguing that it had ensured more of their students a chance at a first-rate education; and that minorities and rural students had increased in number at the flagship university.

That coalition finally cracked this year under pressure from suburban factions in the Legislature and after heavy lobbying by university officials, who vowed to recruit minorities aggressively.



The law given final approval by the Senate caps the number of students let in under the rule at three-quarters of the class, giving university officials discretion over the makeup of the last quarter. Sponsors of the bill had wanted a lower cap — 50 percent — but their colleagues in the House would go no lower.

Supporters said it was not a moment too soon. The state has only three top-rated universities — the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University and Rice University — and it had been projected that the entire incoming class at the Austin campus would be made up of top-10-percent students by 2013.

The law was adopted a decade ago after a federal appeals court ruled that affirmative action was illegal in Texas college admissions. The formula took advantage of the fact that the state's schools were so divided by race that a top 10 percent threshold would assure admission to many graduates of predominantly Hispanic and black high schools who once might have been overlooked, as well as rural schools.

Since 1999, the number of white students in the undergraduate class at the Austin campus has dropped by 3,500, while the number of minorities has risen by 3,800, according to statistics provided by the university. The undergraduate population has remained about 37,000. Bill Powers, the president of the University of Texas, Austin, said that, left untouched, the previous law would have forced the university, in the long run, to accept more students than it had the capacity to teach. What is more, the automatically admitted students tended to opt for popular majors, and it had become a struggle to find talented students for programs like architecture, engineering, music, art and geosciences, he said.

While still restrictive, Mr. Powers said, the new law would give admissions officers more flexibility to reach down into high school classes for students who may be brilliant in some regards, like in music, but not in the top 10 percent.

By JAMES C. MCKINLEY Jr.
NY Times, May 30, 2009

When Visiting Colleges this Summer

Keep these tips in mind...

- ❖ For students in grades 9 and 10, much depends on whether they are ready to begin thinking about college at a time when they're not even halfway through with high school. Let your child take the lead.
- ❖ After your visit, e-mail your contact person to say that you visited and want him or her to know that you enjoyed it. Ask a question or two if you have a real one. Go to your local college fair in the fall, where this same person will likely be staffing a table. Stay in contact without being a pest.
- ❖ Definitely check in with the admissions office and get on the mailing list.
- ❖ A productive visit could mean some or all of the following: taking a tour, sitting in on a group information session, or walking around on your own. At some point, ask your child if she/he would like to split up and look by themselves. Sometimes kids are more comfortable without mom and dad in tow.
- ❖ Interviews, if offered, are a great way for students to get answers to questions they would not be able to find on line. Today, only some of the small colleges still do so; public institutions virtually never grant interviews. An alternate approach is to ask for the e-mail address of the admissions officer responsible for your region.

COLLEGE RESOURCES AT A GLANCE

Make plans to attend these upcoming college fairs:

August 15, 2009
Colleges that Change Lives
College Fair
Marriot Houston - Westchase
Houston, TX
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

September 30, 2009
Fall Performing and
Visual Arts College Fair
Rice University
Alice Pratt Brown Hall
Houston, TX
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

October 6, 2009
Catholic High Schools
College Fair
Strake Jesuit
Houston, TX
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Check out Examples below of Blogs,
Virtual Tours, and Sample Class
Lectures:

Multiple Schools:
www.thecollegeblognetwork.com

Baylor:
https://bearspace.baylor.edu/Group_BaylorProud/www/about.html

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Resources on the Web

ON-LINE APPLICATIONS:

www.ezcollegeapps.com
 Common Application:
www.commonapp.org
 Texas Common App:
www.applytexas.org

SPECIAL INTEREST SITES:

Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life- www.hillel.org
 Council for Christian Colleges and Universities: www.cccu.org
 College Athletic Association (NCAA): www.ncaa.org
 Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco
 Athletic Coach Database: www.collegecoachesonline.com

COLLEGE FAIRS:

www.nacac.com/fairs.html

DIRECTORIES OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY WEBSITES

www.allaboutcollege.com
www.careersandcolleges.org
www.college-access.net
www.petersons.com
www.collegeview.com/collegesearch/
www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/
www.mycollegeguide.org

DIRECTORIES OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

www.clas.ufl.edu/CLAS/american-universities.html
 BY STATE:
<http://collegiateway.org/colleges.html>
www.collegeview.com

TESTS AND TUTORING:

SAT Info: www.collegeboard.org
 ACT Info: www.actstudent.org
 Princeton Review: www.review.com
 Kaplan Tutors: www.kaptest.com/tutoring

FINANCIAL AID / LOAN CALCULATORS:

www.fastweb.com
www.finaid.org/calculators
www.nasfaa.org
www.freescholarship.com
www.college-scholarships.org

GENERAL LD AND AD/HD:

Assoc Higher Education & Disability:
www.ahead.org
 ADD Assoc.: www.add.org
 Learning Disabilities Online:
www.ldonline.org
 Learning Disabilities Assoc.:
www.ldantl.org
 National Center for LD:
www.ncld.org
 Council for Exceptional Children:
www.cec.org
 International Dyslexia Assoc.:
www.interdys.org

ADVOCACY AND LEGAL:

Wrightslaw: www.wrightslaw.com
 Disability access information:
www.janejarrow.com

TRAVEL NEWS

As you know, my travel schedule takes me all over the U.S. to visit colleges, boarding schools, therapeutic schools and programs, and special needs facilities. I recently visited New York, Colorado, Arizona, and Utah. My upcoming trips this summer and fall will take me to Vermont and Connecticut. I do check my voice mail daily and will try to return all phone messages within 24 hours. Thank you all for your patience.

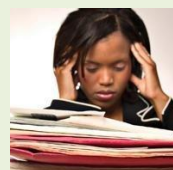


Lindy



Considering a Vacation from your child's ADHD medication for the summer?

Here are some considerations



Many parents hope that a summer break from stimulants will help their children eat more and put on inches and pounds. Actually, there is little evidence that ADHD medicines have permanent impact on ultimate height. Some children who use stimulants may not grow as quickly as their peers, but they often catch up eventually. Still, when parents feel a medication break would be beneficial, an important question to ask themselves is **"will hyperactivity, distractibility, or impulsivity interfere with your child's success in summer camp or other activities?"** Be sure to think of each part of the summer,

- **If summer camp is planned:** Would ADHD behaviors make it difficult for your child to relate to peers and adults, or to participate successfully in group activities?
- **If the plan is for a relaxed summer at home playing with neighborhood friends:** Would ADHD behaviors make home life difficult or impact negatively on play activities and peer interactions?
- **If you're planning family activities and long car rides:** Would these behaviors make it difficult for your family to endure the trip?

Remember that medication is not prescribed to make others happy or comfortable; it is used to help your child have positive, successful life experiences. Recurring failure at activities or unsuccessful peer interactions can devastate a child's social confidence and self-esteem. Think about what how it would feel to be told constantly: "stop that," "sit still," "behave yourself," "pay attention," or "keep quiet!" If that's likely to happen to your child without medication, don't discontinue it.

If you conclude that a full medication vacation won't work, there still may be circumstances that can allow for short medication breaks. If your child can maintain equilibrium under some conditions and uses short-acting medicines, such as Ritalin, Dexedrine or Adderall, you may be able to target these medications for the most challenging activities or events. If he or she uses a long-acting medication that lasts 24 hours, discuss with your prescribing physician a plan for phasing off.

By Larry Silver, M.D., ADDitudeMag.com

VOLUNTEER: **SPECIAL OLYMPICS**

Volunteers are the lifeline of the Special Olympics program.

More than 1.5 million individuals worldwide, dedicate their time, to Special Olympics.

These volunteers serve as coaches, officials, committee members, competition assistants and more. For information on events, volunteering or participating in events visit

www.specialolympicstexas.org

or contact Renee Klovenski at

713-290-0049 or

rklovenski@sotx.org.

2009 **CALENDAR OF** **EVENTS**

Sept. 26, 2009
(9:00am-3:00pm)

Regional Bocce
Tournament

Location: The Kinkaid
School

Address: 201 Kinkaid,
Houston, TX 77024

October 3, 2009
(9:00am-3:00pm)

Area Aquatics Meet
Location: Galena Park
Natatorium

Address: 15027
Wallisville, Houston, TX

October 5, 2009
(time TBD)

Regional Golf
Tournament
Location: Cypress Lakes
Golf Club

Address: 18700
Cypresswood Dr.
Cypress, TX

The Value of Boarding School for Middle School age Girls

The years between ages 11 and 15 are a time of intense physical, social and emotional change. Many parents find that their lovely child has become a moody stranger-seemingly overnight. While most teenagers (and parents) weather this middle-school aged storm without too many scars, some teens become very angry or aggressive toward parents or others or start to make choices that can be dangerous. Sometimes boarding school is an option for those troubled teens that need more structure and support than they are getting in their present environment.

Some of the benefits of a boarding school environment for middle school aged girls are:

- She can make a fresh start in a new environment before problematic behaviors are deeply rooted. Here, she is removed from negative influences and has an opportunity to learn, grow, and be a leader.
- There is 24-hour structure and supervision by professional staff trained to work with problematic behaviors.
- Boarding schools generally have smaller classes with more opportunity for academic success. Gaining academic ground will help to assure readiness for both high school and college.
- If an all-girls school, your child will have the opportunity to achieve and learn better, away from the distraction of and need to impress boys.
- If she attends a therapeutic boarding school, she will have an opportunity to participate in activities that will foster social and emotional growth.



THE BEST VALUES IN PRIVATE COLLEGES

Despite shrinking endowments, these colleges and universities deliver affordable, high-quality educations. For some students, they're cheaper than state schools.

A year or so ago, a host of wealthy private institutions looked deep into their endowments and offered to share more of the wealth with their students. They beefed up financial aid, including replacing loans with grants for students who qualify, and expanding aid to families with higher incomes. Now, with the economy reeling, colleges across the board face shrinking bank balances and the same out-of-sight costs for utilities, construction and staff benefits that have helped keep tuition increases outpacing inflation for the past decade. Not surprisingly, schools with the biggest endowments are among the hardest hit.

Will those circumstances affect your ability to cover the college bills? If you expect to receive significant financial aid, probably not, says David Warren, the president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. Colleges with minimal endowments -- the vast majority -- continue to offer aid through a mix of loans, work-study programs and grants funded by gifts. Billion-dollar-plus institutions have enough left in their coffers to make good on last year's promises.

Meanwhile, colleges both rich and not so rich are cutting outlays to keep operations running and financial aid flowing to families hit by the economic downturn. You can expect many schools to freeze construction projects, leave staff vacancies open and hit up donors to help families cover the higher costs, says Warren. "Nobody pretends it's easy, but it is the way to make more money available for student aid and protect the core of the institution, which is academics."

Top educations, generous aid

To find colleges that deliver the goods during tough times, look to Kiplinger's 100 best values in private colleges and universities for 2008-09. These institutions, led by Pomona College among liberal-arts colleges and the California Institute of Technology among universities, provide a top-quality education at an affordable price, usually with generous financial aid.

If you earn too much to qualify for need-based aid -- and remember, that's a good thing -- you can still find great deals within our rankings. Many of the institutions on the list offer hefty scholarships to a few outstanding students or smaller merit awards to a bigger pool. Emory, ranked No. 9 among universities, provides a full ride, including room and board, to 86 students and covers from two-thirds to full tuition for an additional 131 students, out of a total enrollment of 6,700. Davidson (ranked No. 4 among liberal-arts colleges) bestows \$2,000 toward the cost of attendance on 20% of each incoming class.

New on the lists

Among universities making an appearance on our lists for the first time are Lehigh (No. 26), in Bethlehem, Pa.; the University of Rochester (No. 33), in Rochester, N.Y.; and Pepperdine (No. 35), in Malibu, Calif. Joining the list of the liberal-arts colleges: Reed (No. 44), in Portland, Ore.; Gettysburg (No. 47), in Pennsylvania; and Hillsdale (No. 50), in Hillsdale, Mich. Thomas Aquinas College (No. 33), in Santa Paula, Calif., and Loyola College of Baltimore (No. 47 among universities) rejoin us after a year's absence.

Best Values In Private Liberal Arts Colleges

Rank	School	Enrollment	Total Cost	Cost after need-based aid	Cost after non need-based aid	Avg. debt at graduation
1	Pomona College, Claremont, Calif.	1,522	\$46,580	\$16,980	\$46,580	\$11,300
2	Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa.	1,491	\$48,914	\$21,411	\$14,350	\$13,196
3	Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.	1,997	\$48,330	\$16,611	\$48,330	\$9,727
4	Davidson College, Davidson, N.C.	1,674	\$43,950	\$25,741	\$29,452	\$28,100
5	Washington & Lee Univ., Lexington, Va.	1,778	\$48,212	\$22,191	\$27,672	\$16,784

Best Values In Private Universities

Rank	School	Enrollment	Total Cost	Cost after need-based aid	Cost after non need-based aid	Avg. debt at graduation
1	California Institute of Technology, Pasadena	913	\$45,777	\$19,613	\$18,679	\$6,268
2	Yale, New Haven, CT.	5,311	\$46,950	\$15,676	\$46,950	\$12,237
3	Princeton, Princeton, NJ	4,918	\$46,895	\$18,222	\$46,895	\$5,592
4	Rice, Houston, TX	3,051	\$42,036	\$21,315	\$34,858	\$12,249
5	Duke, Durham, NC	6,394	\$48,915	\$22,410	\$23,754	\$23,392

Kiplinger's Personal Finance, May 2009

Find this article at:

<http://articles.moneycentral.msn.com/CollegeAndFamily/CutCollegeCosts/TheBestValuesInPrivateColleges.aspx>

IMPORTANT TEST DATES TO REMEMBER!!

www.collegeboard.com

www.actstudent.org

SAT TESTING			ACT TESTING		
SAT & Subject	Registration Deadlines		ACT	Registration Deadlines	
Tests Dates	Regular	Late (fee required)	Tests Dates	Regular	Late (fee required)
October 10, 2009	September 9, 2009	September 23, 2009	September 12, 2009	August 7, 2009	August 8-21, 2009
November 7, 2009	October 1, 2009	October 15, 2009	October 24, 2009	September 18, 2009	Sept 19- Oct. 2
December 5, 2009	October 30, 2009	November 12, 2009	December 12, 2009	November 6, 2009	Nov. 7-20, 2009
January 23, 2010	December 15, 2009	December 30, 2009	February 6, 2010	January 5, 2010	Jan. 6-15, 2010



TIPS FOR THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

Spend Time Planning for Your Teacher Recommendations

Be sure to pick teachers that really know you well so they'll be happy to "reserve" their time to write for you. Likely, these teachers will be writing for several of your peers, too, so make sure you ask them now, so they'll be freshest when they write your letters.

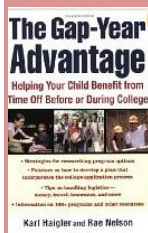
Pick your teachers with the following criteria:

- Teachers that know you best and can really talk about your work in and out of class.
- Teachers in your favorite subject areas can be good, but not always. A great recommendation can come from a teacher who has watched you struggle and attest to your determination and hard work.
- Teachers you are sure like you (no kidding!).
- Teachers who watch you work - not just study for an exam and ace it.
- Teachers that fit the criteria outlined by the school to which you're applying. If a school asks for a humanities teacher and a math/science teacher, that's what you have to choose. (But that doesn't mean you can't ask a third person, like your foreign language teacher, to write a recommendation for other schools, if you're sure he'll have great things to say about you.)

Top 5 Mistakes to Avoid on College Applications

- 1.) Misspelling and Grammatical Errors**
Failure to proofread, or rushing through your application can lead to small mistakes that can make a big -- and unfavorable -- impression. After filling out the application, let your friends, parents and counselor review it.
- 2.) Not Reading Carefully**
Read the application directions carefully before beginning. Skipping the instructions may result in an incomplete or incorrectly filled out application.
- 3.) Writing Illegibly**
You want to put your best foot forward when applying to college. Sloppy handwriting indicates a lack of attention to detail. Type your applications when possible, but if not, take your time and use a black ink pen.
- 4.) Not Applying to Enough Schools**
Applying to several schools, rather than just one or two, gives you more options. If you aren't accepted to your first choice, or if it is too expensive, you have alternatives.
- 5.) Using an Inappropriate E-mail Address**
Your e-mail address should be simple and professional, for example your first initial and last name. You won't impress the admissions rep with Cutegirl@funtimes.com.

LINDY'S BOOKSHELF



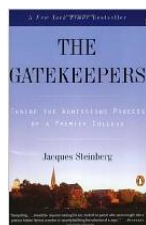
THE GAP YEAR ADVANTAGE:
Helping Your Child Benefit From Time-off Before or During College
By: Karl Haigler & Rae Nelson

A complete resource, *The Gap-Year Advantage* provides parents with all the advice, tips, and information they need to help students develop and implement a gap-year strategy. With answers to commonly asked questions such as "What do colleges think of gap years?" and "Can I be certain my child will go or return to college after taking time off?" the authors offer guidance on researching program options, creating a gap-year time-line that complements the college-application process, communicating with students about their goals, and handling logistics such as travel, health insurance, and money.

THE LAUNCHING YEARS:
Strategies for Parenting from Senior Year to College Life
By: Laura Kastner

This book - a must-read for parents coping with the two-year transition from high school to college - is an insightful and lively tour of the bumpy road involving college applications, senioritis, freshman freedom, and parent/child separation anxiety. First it opens a window onto the world of young people leaving home, exploring application procrastination, senioritis, college choice, ambivalence about independence, and freshman freak-outs. At the same time, it holds up a mirror to parents, to help them discover deeper truths about themselves with--and without--their children.

****ALUMNI- Please share your news with us about the events in your life. Tell me about moves, weddings, promotions, etc. Email me at lkahn@educationalconsulting.com.**

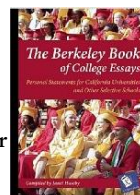


THE GATEKEEPERS:
Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College
By: Jacques Steinberg

Given an unprecedented opportunity to observe the admissions process at Wesleyan University, Mr. Steinberg accompanied an admissions officer for nearly a year as he recruited the nation's most promising students. "The Gatekeepers" follows a diverse group of students competing for places in elite colleges. Several high school seniors allowed the author to record their thoughts and concerns as he followed the progress of their applications. Using real names, applications and interviews, Steinberg follows the applicants from their first encounter with Wesleyan to their final acceptance or rejection.

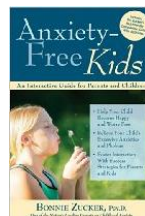
THE BERKELEY BOOK OF COLLEGE ESSAYS:
Personal Statements for California Universities and Other Selective Schools
By: Janet Huseby

With college admissions more selective than ever, the personal statement has become an essential part of the application process. In *The Berkeley Book of College Essays: Personal Statements for California Universities and Other Selective Schools*, compiled by Janet Huseby, learn how Berkeley High youth from every walk of life wrote about their eclectic interests, lifestyles, and hardships, and how their real experiences won them real acceptance into top colleges. Includes: *Over 60 actual essays written by successful California university and other selective school applicants *A variety of prompts and essay formats



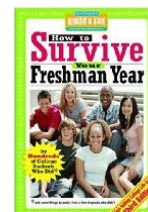
ANXIETY-FREE KIDS:
An Interactive Guide for Parents and Children
By: Bonnie Zucker

Anxiety-Free Kids offers parents strategies that help children become happy and worry free, methods that relieve a child's excessive anxieties and phobias, and tools for fostering interaction and family-oriented solutions. Using a unique companion approach that offers two books in one—a practical, reader-friendly book for parents and a fun workbook for kids—this solutions-oriented guide utilizes the cognitive-behavioral approach to therapy by integrating the parent in the child's self-help process. Readers will find that this book covers the six most commonly occurring anxiety disorders in childhood—generalized anxiety, separation anxiety, specific phobias, social phobias, panic disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.



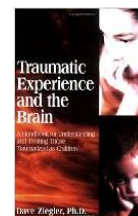
HOW TO SURVIVE YOUR FRESHMAN YEAR:
By Hundreds of College Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors who did
By: Hundreds of Heads

For parents and students alike - particularly if this is the first child off to a higher education - going off to college can be emotional and difficult. For students, this book may be a lifesaver. For parents, it's a relief to have reminders reiterated in print. Written by hundreds of past freshmen and upperclassmen, this book is filled with words from the trenches. Although there's plenty of conflicting advice, it's going to give the Class of 2012 a few things to ponder and some direction in this time of thinking amok.



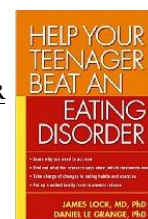
TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE AND THE BRAIN:
By: Dave Ziegler

Traumatic Experience and the Brain is the result of Dr. Dave Ziegler's three decades of experience with children traumatized by abuse and/or neglect. This book details the effect of such trauma on the developing brain, describing how it actually rewires one's perceptions of self, others, and the world. It is a book of hope for foster, natural, and adoptive parents of such "broken" children and the therapists, teachers and social workers who attempt to help them.



HELP YOUR TEENAGER BEAT AN EATING DISORDER:
By: James Lock, MD, PhD & Daniel Le Grange, PhD

If you are the parent of a teenager who is struggling with an eating disorder, you probably feel confused, anxious, and filled with questions. This book, written by two eating disorder experts, will help you find some answers. It clearly explains what eating disorders are about and which treatments work best, and gives practical suggestions and encouragement. The book helps parents understand eating disorders by delving into the complexity of these disorders, the distorted thinking behind a teenager's behavior and what the research says about the best ways to treat anorexia and bulimia. The authors address ways to make treatment work, drawing on experiences they've had with families they have helped.



Impacting the Brain of the Traumatized Child

Have you noticed that your child or one you are working with does not think like other children do? If so there may be a good reason for this. From brain research we know that impacting the child's brain is the key to success in helping troubled children. Changing the brain starts with understanding a few principles and then investing energy into interventions that are not as complicated as you might think, or as some would have you believe.

Many troubled children have faced traumatic experiences of one type or another. A simple definition of a traumatic experience is any event that overrides the ability of the individual to cope with the situation. When our ability to internally cope with an event is lost, a cascade of events takes place in the brain that nearly always has strong and predictable results.

Short-term consequences of a traumatic experience can include mental, emotional and behavioral problems. The first is a "fight or flight" response. Other short-term effects of trauma can include emotional instability and a heightened need for support and comfort or a heightened state of fear. As difficult as the short-term results of trauma can be, long-term problems are generally much worse, due to how they can affect every aspect of the child's life. Long-term consequences include: the inability of the child to self-regulate emotions and behavior, heightened states of arousal, hyper-sensitivity to any situation that is a reminder of the traumatic event and a significant barrier to trusting others. In turn these impacts can produce: anger, violence, hyperactivity, difficulties in concentration, an inability or resistance to trust anyone and a lack of empathy and selfish thought patterns. These issues then produce social difficulties at home, at school and in the community, as well as serve to cut the child off from family, friends and any type of support system.

Does this sound familiar? When the above problems continue without disruption, the child starts down a path of isolation, pushing away anyone who can provide support and help. A support system is a key factor in healing from abuse and coping with the stresses of life. These negative impacts of trauma make every period of life more difficult. As these individuals mature they do not seize life, but instead, life seizes them.

Strategies to Alter the Child's Brain

After trauma, children often have difficulties with stress management, they overreact frequently, they do not seem to learn from past experiences, and they come up short in nearly all areas of reasoning or executive functioning. Therefore the solution is to change the child's brain to learn how to regulate or control the reactive center of the brain and use executive brain functions. Of course this is much easier said than done, but it is very doable.

The general goal of interventions that alter the reactive parts the brain is to help the child react less and think more, such as:

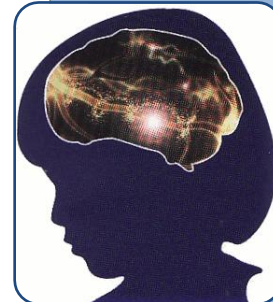
- **Get on the same page with the child.** Temporarily do the child's thinking for him or her. Do what you can to let the child know that you understand the struggle he or she has, and that you have a plan to help.
- **Help the child learn self-regulation.** Teach self control by identifying feelings and use skills to modify these feelings.
- **Teach relaxation.** A key step is to teach relaxation. Relaxing involves the use of mental abilities to calm down, stop intrusive thoughts, take deep breaths, and dozens of other strategies that children can learn.
- **Provide structure.** Predictable rules and structure for traumatized children provide an external order that eliminates the pressure of internal chaos and this comforts the child.
- **Make predictions.** Tell the child your prediction of what they will feel and how they will act in certain situations. The use of predictions can disrupt the habits of reactivity.
- **Develop a stress plan.** A stress plan begins with an acknowledgment (usually from the parent) that reactivity to stress is beginning to occur. Outline steps toward relaxation, such as picking a place and knowing when to reduce stress.

The primary goal of all interventions to impact the brain of the traumatized child is to reduce reactivity and increase higher reasoning centers. At the point the child moves away from reacting to the situation, the following interventions can promote even higher order brain functions.

- **Promote executive functions.** All interventions that encourage use of higher reasoning centers of the brain promote executive functions.
- **Encourage thinking.** Anything that encourages the child to think is a good strategy. Writing, drawing and making choices all require higher order reasoning.
- **Use your words.** When children are encouraged to verbalize thoughts and feelings they must use higher brain regions.
- **Teach self-mastery skills.** Work with internal control such as: visualize calming images, yoga, breathing exercises and aerobic activities like walking or jogging.
- **Use repetition.** Any helpful intervention to impact the brain must be repeated many times to be effective. It is the repetition that builds capacities within the brain by literally forming new neurological structures that over time can replace negative habits where the child has become stuck.

Basic concrete steps like those described can be the most helpful and effective for the child because they alter the brain in positive ways. If you want to know more about how the brain works and how to help it work even better after trauma, my book "Traumatic Experience and the Brain" can outline the next steps. Every traumatic experience has a negative influence on the brain but also remember that every successful experience of coping has a significant impact on the brain as well. The ideas and examples provided here are doable and they work with some of the most damaged children. Therefore, I am confident that with practice these concepts and approaches can work with most children.

By Dave Ziegler, PhD



**Looking for
further
reading on
this topic:**

**See Lindy's
bookshelf
on page 6
for more
from this
author**

Celebrity Commencement Speeches

For students across the country, and their families, spring graduations are an exciting event. Some schools use this as an opportunity to add a touch of lighthearted entertainment to this momentous occasion by inviting celebrity commencement speakers. Check out these links for video clips of both poignant and amusing commencement speeches from some of our favorite celebrities.

TV Guide's top 5 Celebrity Commencement Speeches <http://www.tvguide.com/news/celebrity-commencement-speeches-1006279.aspx>

Includes:

- Ellen DeGeneres, Tulane University, 2009
- Stephen Colbert, Knox College, 2006
- Jodie Foster, University of Pennsylvania, 2006
- Will Ferrell, Harvard University, 2003
- Conan O'Brien, Harvard University, 2000

The 12 Funniest Celebrity Commencement Speeches <http://glamour-news.blogspot.com/2009/05/12-funniest-celebrity-commencement.html>

Includes:

- Dolly Parton, University of Tennessee, 2009
- Larry Tribe, NYU, 2008
- Jodie Foster, University of Pennsylvania, 2006
- Barack Obama, Arizona State University, 2009
- Bill Clinton, Knox College, 2006
- Jimmy Fallon, College of St. Rose, 2006
- Seth MacFarlane, Harvard University, 2006
- Chuck Norris, Liberty College, 2008
- Conan O'Brien, Harvard University, 2000
- Sascha Baron Cohen, Harvard University, 2004
- Stephen Colbert, Knox College, 2006
- Will Ferrell, Harvard University, 2003



"...I have two last pieces of advice. First, being pre-approved for a credit card does not mean you have to apply for it. And lastly, the best career advice I can give you is to get your own TV show. It pays well, the hours are good, and you are famous. And eventually some very nice people will give you a doctorate in fine arts for doing jack squat."



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