



Educational Resources

A Newsletter of
KAHN EDUCATIONAL GROUP, LLC; Consulting and Placement Services

• 6717 Vanderbilt, Houston, TX 77005 •

Fall 2010
Volume 6, Issue 3
Editor: Jennifer Chung

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

The College Admissions Crash

A major demographic shift is dramatically changing the college admissions game. Pundit Kathleen Kingsbury reports on the population dip that means it's easier to get into college this year.

It may be easier to get into college this year than it has been in a decade.

Yes, you read that right. True, more Americans are expected to attend college this fall than ever before. Yet, even as those freshmen begin to move into the dorms this week, admission officers on those very same campuses are bracing for another, very different reality: the start of a long decline in the number of new high-school graduates across the U.S., according to the [Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education](#). It could take up to another full decade to reach 2008's peak of 3.3 million again.

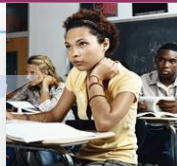
If history is any indication, this slump will yield good news for families. Applicants could soon find lower admission standards, a slowing of tuition increases, and fewer college dropouts. Schools, though, face a more difficult task ahead. Already battered by the economic crisis, some won't be able to weather a drop in cash flow if enrollments tumble. What's more, going forward, the high school seniors that colleges need to attract will

look very different from today. Graduating classes will have dramatically larger numbers of Hispanics and Asians, many of whom will be the first of their families to go to college.

Schools saw a similar downturn in the mid-1980s and early '90s. "When the Baby Bust generation was graduating high school, it was a very good time to go to college," says John Nelson, an analyst for higher education at the credit agency Moody's. Not only was it easier to get into college—if you were a particularly desirable candidate, it was easier to get in cheap. Colleges competed harder for the best and the brightest by resorting to tuition discounting, usually through generous financial aid packages.

When high-school graduation rates do begin to climb again in 2015, there will be 54 percent more Hispanic graduates than 10 years prior, according to WICHE estimates. For Asians, that figure rises nearly one-third. Considering pure demographic data, schools will have to push more students to leave home for college than ever before. (Currently about 72 percent of students enroll in colleges in their home state, according to the College Board.)

www.thedailybeast.com



COLLEGE RESOURCES AT A GLANCE

September 29, 2010
Fall Performing and
Visual Arts College Fair
Rice University
Alice Pratt Brown Hall
Houston, TX
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

October 5, 2010
Catholic High Schools College Fair
Strake Jesuit
7:00 p.m.

October 13, 2010
Lamar High School College Fair
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

October 13, 2010
Spring Branch ISD College Night
Northbrook High School
6:00 p.m.

October 14, 2010
Bellaire High School College Fair
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

October 20, 2010
The High School for the Performing
and Visual Arts
Art College Information Share
6:30 p.m.

SENIORS

CONGRATULATIONS to All of You on
Your Successful Admissions!

JUNIORS

Prepare videotapes, audiotapes and art
portfolios as needed. Request info
from colleges. Begin writing
application essays. Continue to prep
for SAT/ACT. Make sure to visit
colleges of interest.

The Science of Roommates



FIRST-YEAR roommates matter. Though they may go their separate ways sophomore year, their reach can ripple throughout the college years and after.

A growing body of research is identifying how much these roommates may influence each

other, in ways temporary and longstanding, negative and positive. A lack of previous bonds at school make first-year students perfect subjects for social scientists and economists.

PUTTING ON THE 'FRESHMAN 0.5'

Students fret about the myth known as the Freshman 15. The reality involves far less added poundage.

A new study of Marquette University freshmen who had been randomly assigned to rooms found that women with heavier roommates actually gained less weight on average than those with thinner roommates — a half-pound versus two and a half pounds.

The reason? Four of five overweight roommates were dieting and exercising, and those habits often rubbed off on a roommate, regardless of her size, says Olga Yakusheva, an assistant professor in economics at Marquette and a co-author of the study. Even thin women were weight watching. Dr. Yakusheva says, pointing to cultural pressures.

MOOD SWINGS

Feelings are contagious. "Each happy friend a person has increases that person's probability of being happy by 9% and each unhappy friend decreases it by 7 percent," says Nicholas A. Christakis, a co-author of "Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives." This mood contagion seems to occur when the student keeps his feelings bottled up. Dr. Eisenberg says.

ONE TOO MANY

"Peer pressure is intense in that first year of college, probably more intense than in any other year of life," says Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, a research psychologist at Clark University and author of "Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road From Late Teens Through the 20s." "Everyone around you is a stranger and you want to fit in," he says. "One way to find that place is to go along with what other people seem to be doing and what they seem to want you to do."

ROOMMATES AND RACE

Research at Ohio State University has found that black students with high SAT and ACT scores earn better G.P.A.'s when assigned to white roommates — perhaps, the study speculates, because a white roommate smoothes the adjustment both socially and academically at the largely white university. (For the white students, there was no G.P.A. bump.)

New York Times 7/23/10

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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 toured schools in Texas, Utah, Tennessee and Idaho. My upcoming trips this fall will take me to Hawaii, North Carolina, Mississippi and Michigan. 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



Vanderbilt University



New residential quad at TCU



New dorms at TCU

Statistics about College Depression



Since it is going back-to-school season, I thought I'd educate you on some alarming statistics about depression among college students.

Here are the facts, just the facts:

One out of every five young people and one out of every four college students or adults suffers from some form of diagnosable mental illness.

About 19 percent of young people contemplate or attempt suicide each year.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among people ages 15-24, and the second leading cause of death in college students ages 20-24.

Over 66 percent of young people with a substance use disorder have a co-occurring mental health problem.

Teens diagnosed with depression are five times more likely to attempt suicide than adults.

Over two-thirds of young people do not talk about or seek help for mental health problems.

44 percent of American college students reported feeling symptoms of depression.

From 1980 to 1986, the suicide rate for African-American males ages 15-19 increased more than 100 percent.

Four out of every five young people that contemplate or attempt suicide exhibit clear warning signs.

80-90 percent of people that seek the necessary form of mental health treatment can function the way they used to.

Stereotypes are one of the largest barriers preventing young people from seeking the help they need.

An estimated 5 million young females suffer from eating disorders each year, and eating disorders are the deadliest mental illness, claiming more lives than any other illness.

www.PsychCentral.com



CHILD ANXIETY AT THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Children are mostly anxious about friends and, to a lesser extent, schoolwork. Regression may show up in different ways, depending on the age of the child. Old behaviors that you thought the child had outgrown will reappear, including things that make them more dependent on you.

Acting Out: Plan For It: Parents can handle or even prevent the regression by expecting it to happen and having a plan ready. **Acting Out:** Name It: Help your children to recognize their anxiety by pointing out and naming the behavior. **Acting Out:** Write A Note. As school approaches, try writing your child a note voicing your own excitement and any anxieties about the child starting school. Mention things like finding good friends and learning to try one's best.

CBS News

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.

2010 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 25, 2010
(9:00am-5:00pm)

Regional Bocce
Tournament

Location: TBA
Address: TBA
Houston, TX

October 2, 2010
(9:00am-4:00pm)

Area Aquatics Meet
Location: University of
Houston—Campus
Wellness and Recreation
Center

Address: 4500 University
Drive, Houston, TX
77204

December 3-4, 2010
(8:00am-6:00pm)

Area Bowling
Tournament

Location: Copperfield
Bowl

Address: 15615 Glen
Chase Drive
Houston, TX 77095





FAST FACTS ABOUT HUFFING



- "Huffing," or inhaling volatile substances, is becoming increasingly popular among children, especially among 12- to 14-year-olds (*Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 1998; 152(8):781--786).
- Alarming, about 20% of eighth-graders report having done it (*International Journal of Addiction*, 1993; 28:1613--1621).
- Besides sudden cardiac arrest (the most common cause of death from inhalants), huffing can kill quickly in a number of other ways. Motor vehicle accidents, falls, and other traumatic injuries are common and horrible. Others die from suffocation, burns, suicide (from the depression that can follow the high), and from choking--on their own vomit.
- **Huffing can kill the very first time children experiment with it.** About 22% of those who die from huffing do so the first time they try it (*Human Toxicology*, 1989; 8: 261--269).
- When huffing doesn't kill quickly, it damages the body each time--especially the brain. Huffing can cause memory loss, impaired concentration, hearing loss, loss of coordination, and permanent brain damage. Chronic use can cause permanent heart, lung, liver, and kidney damage as well.
- Solvents (found in glues, paints, and polishes), fuels (such as butane), nitrites (found in deodorizers), and almost any kind of aerosol spray can be responsible.
- Most huffing takes place with friends (although kids who sniff correction fluid in class when their teachers turn away are not uncommon). Be observant of your child and his or her friends.
- Inhalants gradually leave the body for 2 weeks following huffing--mostly through exhaling. The characteristic odor is the biggest clue. Be on the lookout for breath or clothing that smells like chemicals. Look for clothing stains. Watch for spots or sores around the mouth.
- Nausea, lack of appetite, weight loss, nervousness, restlessness, and outbursts of anger can all be signs of inhalant abuse. A drunk, dazed, or glassy-eyed appearance might mean your child is abusing inhalants right now.
- If you suspect or discover that your child is huffing, **get professional help.** Treating inhalant abuse is very difficult and requires expert intervention. Withdrawal symptoms may last for weeks. The relapse rate without a long-term (2-year) program is very high.

www.DrGreene.com

ORAL PIERCING AND HEALTH

Not too long ago, teens wanted to avoid the moniker "metal mouth," but the oral piercing trend seems to have overshadowed that social fear. Now piercing the tongue, lip or cheeks is a fairly popular form of self-expression. People interested in this trend, however, should be aware that it is not without health risks.

PROCEDURE-RELATED RISKS

Infection. Infection is a possibility with any opening in skin or oral tissues. Given that the mouth is teeming with bacteria, oral piercing carries a high potential for infection at the site of the piercing. Handling the jewelry once it has been placed also increases the chances of developing an infection.

Prolonged bleeding. Damage to the tongue's blood vessels can cause serious blood loss.

Swelling and possible nerve damage.

Swelling is a common symptom experienced after oral piercing. Unlike an earlobe that is pierced, the tongue is in constant motion, which can slow and complicate the healing process. There have been some reports of swelling subsequent to tongue piercing that has been serious enough to block the airway.

Bloodborne disease transmission. Oral piercing also has been identified by the National Institutes of Health as a



possible factor in transmission of hepatitis B, C, D and G.

Endocarditis. In addition, oral piercing carries a potential risk of endocarditis, a serious inflammation of the heart valves or tissues. The wound created during oral piercing provides an opportunity for oral bacteria to enter the bloodstream, where they can travel to the heart. This presents a risk for people who have cardiac abnormalities, on which the bacteria can colonize.



JEWELRY-RELATED COMPLICATIONS

Injury to the gums. Not only can the metal jewelry injure the gums, but also, if it is placed so that it makes constant contact with the gums, it can cause the soft tissues to recede.

Damage to the teeth. Contact with the jewelry can chip or crack teeth. Likewise, teeth that have restorations can be damaged if jewelry strikes them.

American Dental Association

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 9, 2010	September 8, 2010	September 22, 2010	September 11, 2010	August 6, 2010	August 7-20, 2010
November 6, 2010	September 30, 2010	October 14, 2010	October 23, 2010	September 17, 2010	Sept 18- Oct. 1
December 4, 2010	October 29, 2010	November 11, 2010	December 11, 2010	November 5, 2010	Nov. 6-19, 2010
January 22, 2011	December 14, 2010	December 29, 2010	February 12, 2011	January 7, 2011	Jan. 8-21, 2011

Concordance between ACT Scores and SAT Scores

ACT Composite	SAT CR + Math	ACT English/Writing	SAT Writing
36	1600	36	800
34	1540-1590	34	770-790
32	1400-1430	32	710-720
30	1330-1360	30	660-680
28	1250-1280	28	620-630
26	1170-1200	26	590-600
24	1090-1120	24	550-560
22	1020-1040	22	510-520
20	940-970	20	470
18	860-890	18	430-440

Changes to the Common Application Effective 08/01/10

- Short answer going down from 1500 to 1000 characters
- Students will be able to self report best scores from individual sittings of SAT/ACT and self-report GPA, rank, and current courses
- In the future plans section some colleges will ask about the highest degree the student intends to earn
- Colleges have the option to suppress some information
- Questions about foreign language proficiency and religious preference

ON TAKING THE SAT/ACT



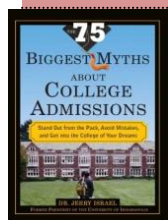
The ACT and the SAT are both designed to measure how ready students are to succeed in their first year of college. The primary difference between the two is the way they go about measuring college readiness. The ACT is an academic achievement test, while the SAT is a reasoning skills test. The SAT measures critical thinking skills, such as how students think, solve problems, and communicate. The ACT measures what students have learned in school and the specific skills and knowledge that are taught in core classes.

The ACT is made up of four core sections – English, Math, Reading, and Science – plus an optional essay writing exam. The SAT comprises three tests: Writing, Critical Reading, and Mathematics. Unlike the ACT, the SAT's writing exam is mandatory.

The scoring scales are different for the two exams also. Each of the three SAT tests is scored on a scale of 200-800 and no average is issued to students. Each of the four required ACT tests, in contrast, is scored on a scale of 1-36. Students also receive an ACT composite score, which is an average of the four scores. ACT writing scores are reported separately.

Nationally, the two exams are now taken by an almost equal number of students. In the US high school graduating class of 2009, 1.53 million took the SAT while 1.48 million took the ACT. It is not known how many took both tests. Six states (Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, North Dakota, and Wyoming) now administer the ACT to all 11th grade students as part of their statewide assessment systems.

LINDY'S BOOKSHELF



75 BIGGEST MYTHS ABOUT COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

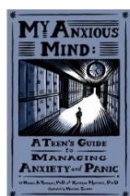
By: Dr. Jerry Israel

This must-have book gives students the edge they need to avoid wrong turns and wasted time and get a few steps ahead in the application process. Former university president and 30-year admissions expert Jerry Israel examines 75 things people think they know about getting into college—and why they're just not true. Examples include:

- Colleges are very choosy about who gets in
- You can find all kinds of students on any campus
- Colleges have a well-thought-out financial assistance strategy
- Colleges only know what you tell them about you.

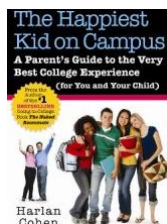
MY ANXIOUS MIND

By: Michael A. Tompkins, Ph.D. and Katherine Martinez, PsyD



Anxiety can make everything seem unmanageable—from dealing with family and friends to managing schoolwork and extracurricular activities. It's been estimated that between nine and 15 million teens in the United States suffer from phobias, panic attacks, or extreme worry or anxiety. That's a lot of teens! "My Anxious Mind" helps teens take control of their anxious feelings by providing cognitive-behavioral strategies to tackle anxiety head-on and to feel more confident and empowered in the process. "My Anxious Mind" also offers ways for teens with anxiety to improve their inter-personal skills, whether it be with friends, family, or teachers; manage stress; handle panic attacks; use diet and exercise appropriately; and decide whether medication is right for them.

****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 HAPPIEST KID ON CAMPUS

By: Harlan Cohen

The Happiest Kid on Campus gives parents everything they need to know about the experience they'll have as their child leaves for college, and what they can do to ensure that their child has an incredible and meaningful college experience. Using Cohen's trademark style, with tips, statistics, quotes, and stories from parents and students, as well as expert advice, this guide tackles the most important topics on parents' minds, including:

- What parents should NEVER say or do when dropping their child off on campus
- When to visit, how often to visit, what to expect when visiting.

THE STRONG SENSITIVE BOY

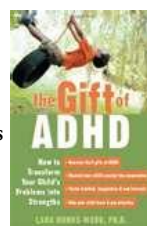
By: Dr. Ted Zeff



Does your son tend to be disturbed by loud noises, violence, and crowds, fearful of new situations, easily hurt by criticism, or hesitant about playing aggressive games? Your son may be one of the 20 percent of all boys with a finely tuned nervous system. Our sensitive boys tend to be creative, kind, gentle, appreciating beauty and feeling love deeply. Therefore, it's particularly challenging for sensitive boys to grow up in a culture where boys are taught to act tough, aggressive, and unemotional. Dr. Zeff offers practical advice on how to help your son increase his self-esteem and thrive in the family, at school, with friends and in sports.

THE GIFT OF ADHD: How to Transform Your Child's Problems into Strengths

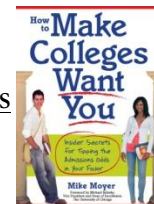
By: Lara Honos-Webb, Ph.D.



A diagnosis of ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) does more than label a child's behavior problems—it affects his or her self-esteem, relationships and future, says psychologist Honos-Webb. The way parents and teachers treat an ADHD child can mean the difference between a successful life and an unnecessarily difficult one. While most people are familiar with the dramatic behavioral symptoms of ADHD—severe inattention and impulsiveness—there is a less-reported flip side: children with ADHD exhibit exceptional strengths that Honos-Webb sees as opportunities. These gifts include emotional sensitivity toward others, passion and exuberance, unusual problem-solving skills and a love of nature.

HOW TO MAKE COLLEGES WANT YOU

By: Mike Moyer



Perfect for students of all academic levels, this essential guide shows students how to get a leg up on the process by understanding what colleges are looking for to fill out their classes and how to stand out from the crowd to become the type of applicant that colleges go after, instead of the other way around.

- Striking the Nerve: Decode what colleges believe in, and then match those values.
- Your Application Team: Getting parents, teachers, and counselors to boost your odds.

FREEDING YOUR CHILD FROM ANXIETY:

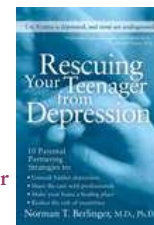
By: Tamar E. Chansky, Ph.D.



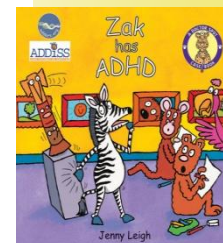
If you are the parent of one of the millions of children with worry and anxiety: help is on the way. Anxiety is the number one mental health challenge facing our children today. Fortunately, there is good news for these kids and the parents who suffer along with them - anxiety disorders are also the most treatable mental health condition. With the powerful cognitive-behavioral treatments now available, there has never been more hope for anxious children's bright future. Empowering and insightful, *Freeing Your Child from Anxiety*, gives children - from preschool to high school - the action plan and the tools to take charge, unplug from anxiety, and plug into sound, realistic thinking. Learning the lessons from parents, children can reduce anxiety and even prevent anxiety disorders from taking hold.

RESCUING YOUR TEENAGER FROM DEPRESSION

By: Dr. Norman T. Berlinger



Dr. Berlinger's tips will help concerned parents differentiate true depression from moodiness, be alert to suicide risks, monitor medication effectiveness, and spot signs of relapse. One in eight teens is depressed, but *Rescuing Your Teenager from Depression* shows that there are ways parents can help.



For children with attention deficit disorder (ADHD) and learning disabilities, back-to-school time can be overwhelming. Below are some tips to face these challenges:

A 3-step plan for success before school starts

1. Reread your child's current IEP or 504 Plan. What goals have been met? Which areas remain trouble spots?
2. Schedule a meeting with your child's support team. Bring anything that will illustrate your child's abilities: educational assessments, report cards, notes from the teacher, tests, or homework assignments.
3. Together, decide which goals you'll focus on this year. Which strategies delivered results? Which ones didn't?

3 important conversations to have before school starts

1. **Talk to your child:** Educate your child about her ADD while accentuating the positive. Remember that with challenges, ADD also brings positive traits, such as creativity and enthusiasm.
2. **Talk to the teacher:** Dr. Ned Hallowell says that building rapport with the teacher is key to a student's success. Whether you write a letter or meet in person, explaining your child's situation (such as ADHD medicine or accommodations) will enable the teacher to meet your child's needs. Then, meet again a month later.
3. **Talk to the doctor:** If your child is taking medication, or if you're considering a trial period, talk to the prescribing doctor to make a plan just before school starts. This will give you the time to fine-tune the dose and timing. After a few weeks, have a second conversation with the doctor to compare notes.

3 keys to consistent routines at home and school that lead to academic success

1. **Consider your child's daily rhythms.** Avoid homework wars by having your child complete her homework sooner rather than later—if not immediately upon coming home from school, then certainly before supper. If your child's an early riser, the morning (before school) is a terrific time to get homework done.
2. **Have a plan of attack.** This includes the what, where, and when your child will do her homework. Pick one dedicated homework location, such as the kitchen table if she need frequent reminders to stay on task. Help her stay organized by keeping all supplies at that location. Then, each day, strategize together: How much work has to be done? What looks easy? What looks hard?
3. **Reward accomplishments and good behavior.** Try small, tangible rewards for small, tangible feats. With the assignments your child really hates, such as math, there's nothing wrong with offering a small treat – from a grape to a gold star—for each successfully completed sentence or math problem.

Understanding Dysgraphia

What is dysgraphia?

Dysgraphia is a specific learning disability that affects how easily children acquire written language and how well they use written language to express their thoughts.

What causes dysgraphia?

Research to date has shown orthographic coding in working memory is related to handwriting. Orthographic coding refers to the ability to store unfamiliar written words in working memory while the letters in the word are analyzed during word learning or the ability to create permanent memory of written words linked to their pronunciation and meaning. Children with dysgraphia do not have primary developmental motor disorder, another cause of poor handwriting, but they may have difficulty planning sequential finger movements such as the touching of the thumb to successive fingers on the same hand.

Throughout K-12, students benefit from strategies for composing:

- planning, generating, reviewing/evaluating, and revising compositions of different genre including narrative, informational, compare and contrast, and persuasive; and
- self-regulation strategies for managing the complex executive functions involved in composing.

www.wrightslaw.com



results in irregular letter sizes and shapes, a mixture of upper and lower case letters, or print and cursive letters

contributes to difficulties in using writing as a communication tool

causes writing fatigue

Dysgraphia

interferes with communication of ideas in writing

results in unfinished letters and letter inconsistencies

TIPS FOR COLLEGE APPLICANTS

1. Prepare for Interviews

An interview is the chance for the committee to have you evaluated by someone not in your community, but if you are who you say you are, there are no surprises. Think about the following to give yourself stories and material: favorite classes, favorite activities and extra curriculars, strengths and weaknesses, something at which you excel.

2. Thank your Interviewers

You can write a formal e-mail, or you can write a note on a notecard and send it via snail mail. A handwritten note is the warmer, more personal choice, but if it comes down to an e-mail or nothing, send the e-mail. Mention: you appreciate his time, you learned a lot—cite something new you learned, you hope you can ask him further questions.

3. Ask for Teacher Recs

Speak with the teachers who know you best and check if they will be willing to write the recommendations for you. Pick the teachers who know you best, prepare a brief outline of your activities outside of class, check in before the deadline arrives.

4. Meet with Your Guidance Counselor-Pronto!

You'll need to ask your guidance office to submit your grades and a letter from your guidance counselor to your schools. Ask: How much time do you need in advance of the application deadlines? What information can I provide you with about my achievements that might make the recommendation portion easier to complete?

5. Plan SAT Subject Tests

These subject tests are to assess your real learning in subjects

beyond just Math and English. SAT Subject Tests are often best taken in the spring of a school year after you have covered most of the topics. More selective colleges require SAT Subject Tests. If you're considering applying to score optional schools-colleges that don't require the SAT or ACT-sometimes the SAT Subject Tests can be helpful. Think about your intended course of study; some programs like Engineering require subject tests in math and science. Consider taking tests to demonstrate your strengths. If you're a big reader, take Literature.

6. What to do on a School Visit

Think of your school visits as fact-finding missions: attend the formal information session and take the official tour; ask the admissions officer questions; and wander the campus without a guide.

7. Interact with Schools-Contact Students

How can you REALLY assess a school? The students, of course. Look on schools' Admissions Web sites for some way to contact current students. Ask: what do students do for fun during the week and on weekends? Is there a Greek system, and do most students rush? What are some of the fun traditions? What do the students like best and worst about the school?

8. Go to School Web Sites and Request Information.

Getting on the mailing list and into the database is important for both you and the school. The more info you can share, the more targeted the info you'll receive. Sure, you can learn a lot about the college's location and academics, but you can also take a peek into dorms, find out about food, or drop in on academic support programs, and even check out the clubs. Look for the school's online chats and blogs.

www.hundredsofheads.com



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