



Center for Learning Newsletter

Center for Learning
And
Behavioral Solutions, Inc.

Volume 1, Issue 2
May 1, 2007

COMMITMENT TO LIFE LONG LEARNING

In March, Drs. Ansari and Koch attended two exciting conferences dealing with cutting edge developments in the fields of reading disorders and neuropsychology. The first conference was held by the International Dyslexia Association and was entitled "Reading Disabilities in Childhood and Adolescence: What Research has taught us about the Core Learning Deficits and How to Provide Effective Intervention." The presenter was Maureen Lovett, Ph.D., an internationally known researcher (based at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada) in the area of interventions for reading disorders. Their attendance at this conference was part of C4L's ongoing efforts to stay abreast of approaches that are based on solid research (such as those interventions based on the Orton-Gillingham approach—a systematic, intensive, multi-sensory approach to reading remediation). **One of the most validating and inspiring aspects of this conference was the realization that Metacognition: To think about**

thinking" continues to be recognized as the core of the most effective remedial programs. Solid educational practices are those which promote the development of the following skills:

- Thinking about thinking
- "Self-talk" and "self-regulated learning"
- Conscious awareness of strategy use
- Student understanding of strategies
- Engaging the student by involving them in the selection process, application of the strategy, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy



More recently, they attended a multi-day conference in San Diego entitled, "Advances in the Neuropsychological

Assessment and Treatment of School-Aged Children with Cognitive Deficits." Several nationally known neuropsychologists presented, including Erin Bigler, Ph.D. He captivated the audience with his talk on the neuroanatomy of the brain and the use of imaging technologies (such as functional MRI's and PET scans) to determine brain function and to assess the effects of brain injury. Other topics of interest included ADHD in girls, recent developments in neuropsychological testing, and the social problems commonly associated with cognitive deficits.

Conferences such as these serve to invigorate and inform the Drs. and staff at C4L to fulfill three key professional responsibilities: **To be life-long learners who never grow complacent regardless of whatever success they are fortunate enough to encounter**, to remain active in their clinical practice, helping to identify the issues that are sabotaging children's success, and implementing strategies to address

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these issues, providing an outreach to the community in terms of presentations to schools, parent groups, and organizations in an effort to share their knowledge with those who will benefit from it.

TAKE TIME TO GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD

**Do you ever feel like you can't understand your teenager?
Do you ever feel like they can't understand you?**

Summer is a great time to try and get reacquainted with your child. As parents we are rarely capable of planning a meaningful communication with our children. These opportunities happen when you least expect them. On this same note, one of the most important assets you can provide for your child is positive family communication. Starting when they are young is the best way to keep the lines of communication open when they hit adolescence.

Schedule family time. Not just the hour before bedtime but real family time, days, weeks doing an activity together. Have a family meeting and brainstorm ideas. This way the children can be involved and take ownership in the planning. Adults modeling that they value family time together will lead children to as well.

Ask Questions. Sometimes you have to ask questions to find out what your children are thinking. During school months most of the conversations revolve around school work and school activities. The summer is a great time to talk about your child's interests and aspirations. What are they thinking about and what's going on in their lives? According to Richard Carlson, author of *Don't Sweat The Small Stuff ...And It's All Small Stuff*, the people you communicate with will feel much more relaxed around you when they feel heard and listened to. So be ready and seize the moment when it arises!



Dr. Diana Karjoo



FAMILY CIRCLE:



Dr. Roberta Knox

COMPROMISE FOR FAMILY SUCCESS

"Success" as a family refers not to a goal achieved but rather to the ongoing process of effectively functioning together as a group toward mutual goals and flourishing in this process. The family is an organism unto itself, composed of the individuals within. Sometimes the preferences or goals of the individual may be different from or conflict with those of the family as a unit. **Compromise is an operative word for a successful family.** Working together to come to an understanding or a solution is how families succeed.

Compromise gets a bad rap; however, it is an important concept in family success. It refers to cooperating and this involves both giving and taking. For example, sometimes Mom chooses the destination for an outing, sometimes Dad does. This week, Son will need more attention with a large project for school and next week, Daughter requires a lot of hands-on homework assistance. The family is living and breathing and ever-changing as the family members enjoy different activities and each other, working together and making choices on behalf of the family's benefit.

Compromise refers to balance, which leads to stability and strengthens family bonds. We are constantly making choices during the day and balancing our needs and wants as well as considering those of others within the family. Compromise is the opposite of confrontation and requires active listening as well as effectual discussion. This looks different with different ages of children, of course, but it is a principle that can be applied and adapted to all kinds of family configurations and parenting styles.

WILL YOUR CHILD BE READY FOR KINDERGARTEN IN THE FALL

"C-a-t... Cat."

Children are now reading in Kindergarten. They are being accelerated through a curriculum faster than what we can remember experiencing at their age. According to the California State Content Standards, kindergartners will:

- **KNOW** about letters, words, and sounds. They [will] apply this knowledge to read simple sentences.
- **IDENTIFY** the basic facts and ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
- **LISTEN** and respond to stories based on well-known characters, themes, plots, and settings.
- **WRITE** words and brief sentences that are legible.

Research has proven that early intervention is the key to a child's success. It is imperative that we begin to teach children effective learning strategies early on. There are red flags to keep your eyes open to see if your child will need extra support before kindergarten:

- Does your child struggle with rhyming?

- Does your child have a history of ear infections?
- Does your child need you to repeat things often before he/she understands you, or follows your verbal directions?
- Does your child lack interest in books that are read to him/her?

The Center for Learning offers a variety of programs to match your child's needs. **It is important to understand what a child's strengths and weaknesses are, as well as to work with their different personalities in order to tailor a program that will build the skills necessary for reading and writing development.**

Please contact our office if you are interested in learning more about our Kindergarten Readiness programs.

"Positive learning experiences in Kindergarten prepare students for successful learning in later grades and encourages lifelong learning."

Meet the Team: Christina Ozaki

C4L is comprised of a diverse group of individuals who come to us with varying strengths and backgrounds. We would like to introduce you to one of our stars, Christina Ozaki, our Director of Educational Services.

Christina earned her Bachelors degree in Psychology and Social Behavior from UCI. She also earned a minor in Education, we're happy to say, which prompted her to work in several preschools during her college career. Her passion for working with and teaching children prompted her to go on to earn her Teaching Credential/Masters degree in multiple subjects at UCI. Christina continued to tutor privately specializing in children grades first through fifth.

C4L was her first full time position once she completed her credential program and she's been with us ever since! Four years later, Christina is an integral part of the management of C4L. Her work at St. Mary's of All Angels started C4L's private school protocol which we have now implemented in two other independent schools.

Though Christina is very busy with managing the Educational therapists and quality assurance, she continues to work with students. When asked how she manages to do both she says, **"I love working with the children one-on-one, and frankly they're the reason I continue to do all the rest of my job!"**



Christina Ozaki, M.A.T.
Director of Educational Therapy



SUMMER IS ON IT'S WAY AND YOU CAN USE IT FOR MORE THAN JUST PLAY!!



It is that time of year again, the days have gotten longer and warmer, our thoughts start turning to sand and summer, and students start counting the months left in school...only 2!

As your thoughts start turning towards summer plans and family outings, the Center for Learning starts thinking of summer classes and educational therapy sessions. The school year can sometimes get filled with large workloads, making it tough to fit in the time and energy to focus on areas where remediation is needed. Summer can be the perfect time to focus on the areas your child may not be able to concentrate on during the school year, without all the distractions of daily assignments that are due.

This year, we are pleased to offer the following group classes at our satellite office at St. Mary and All Angels in Aliso Viejo. All groups will be no more than 6 students.

Remember, it is important to take some time and let your child have "fun" this summer, but don't let a great learning opportunity pass you by as well.

Summer Session 1: June 25-July 13
Summer Session 2: July 16-August 3

Kindergarten Readiness

Students will strengthen their preparedness for reading and writing in Kindergarten. They will learn sound/symbol associations through engaging chants and visuals to aid in the retention of information. This class is recommended for students who will be entering Kindergarten in Fall 2007 and who will require extra support and exposure to these important reading acquisition skills.

Reading Comprehension

This class is geared for students whose reading comprehension skills do not reflect their full potential. We implement strategic instruction in research based active reading techniques focused on enhancing comprehension skills. We are offering group classes for: K-2, 3-5, and 6-8.

Writing

This intensive summer writing program is geared for students who struggle in relaying their thoughts and ideas in writing. Our research-based program focuses on enhancing writing skills, including: sentence structure, use of graphic organizers to build a structure of ideas, an understanding of how to progress through the writing process, and the Six-Traits of writing. This class is offered for 3-5 and 6-8.

Power Facts

Many students struggle learning and effectively utilizing their math facts. This summer math program is geared for students who struggle with their addition/subtraction and/or multiplication/division facts. Through interactive activities and games, students will build accuracy, flexibility, and fluency with basic facts. Grades 2-3 will concentrate on addition/subtraction and 3-6 on multiplication and division.

Visualizing Word Problems

Students will develop strategies for tackling the word problems that they encounter in the classroom. Using Singapore Math's approach, students will learn to use bar diagrams to assist them in working through the challenge of word problems. This class is offered for students in grades 3-6.

Fractions, Decimals and Percents

Using hands-on materials and real-life contexts, students will develop their understanding of and ability to work with fractions, decimals, and percents. This class is offered for students in grades 5-8.

Geometry Prep

Students will explore the foundational concepts and skills of geometry that will assist them with the formal deductive reasoning, theorems and proofs of high school geometry.

What does the C4L mean to us: One parent's journey to success

When we first contacted C4L, we were at our wits end. Our son, Nick, was struggling in school and no one could figure out why. We had spent thousands of dollars having him tested by a series of professionals and we had a notebook of test results, yet no answers as to why Nick was having such a stressful time with schoolwork. It wasn't until we met with Dr. Ansari that we started getting answers and feeling assured that help was on its way! Her upbeat energy and encouragement filled us with hope. Through the C4L's multi-disciplinary testing, they were able to determine how Nick processes information, assess his strengths and weaknesses and put a comprehensive plan together.

The C4L customizes tutoring to fit the needs of Nick and our family. Some months we do more than others. For instance, during the summer, we add on programs such as "Fast ForWord" to maximize his learning. C4L implements a comprehensive team approach by not only communicating with our family, but also staying in close contact with Nick's teachers so everyone is always on the same page.

C4L helped us understand that Nick's dyslexia is merely one aspect of who he is and does not solely define him. He is a wonderful son, brother, baseball player, Boy Scout and much more. Through his work at C4L, Nick is building the skills he needs to succeed academically and in life. They have helped him develop critical proficiencies that have made the work understandable and manageable. By being able to better comprehend and complete the work, it has in turn given Nick an enormous surge in self esteem. That is perhaps the greatest gift C4L has given our son—confidence! Without hesitation we emphatically recommend C4L. Our only regret is not having met with Dr. Ansari and her phenomenal staff sooner.

Become the Student

- Children are fascinated by the ordinary.
 - And can spend timeless moments watching sunlight play with dust.
 - Their restlessness they learn from you.
 - It is you who are thinking of there when you are here.
 - It is you who thinks of then instead of now.
 - Stop.
 - Let your children become the teachers,
 - and you become the student
- Parent's Tao Te Ching



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We Ignite Potential!

How to Avoid the Top 10 Parenting Mistakes When Your Child is Struggling in School

Many of us believe that parenthood is the most crucial responsibility in life. And who hasn't taken the time to think and reflect about how we parent our children? Unfortunately, many parents are so busy with everyday responsibilities that they rarely set aside time to **approach parenthood systematically**. This is why we've put together our report, "How to Avoid the Top 10 Parenting Mistakes When Your Child is Struggling in School." It is our hope that by knowing the do's and the don'ts of parenting, **a parent will reflect on their style and subsequently take the necessary steps to adapt their approach.**

Given that as parents we are often protective of our children and many of us perceive our children as our 'mirrors', it is difficult to initially accept the idea that our son or daughter is not meeting academic expectations. Instead we might want to blame the teacher for unrealistic expectations or a lack of understanding. However, **denying or ignoring our children's issues can be a fruitless effort to preserve our own egos rather than an effective way to protect our children.** A child can be of above-average or average intelligence, and yet struggle to keep up with their peers in their ability to

learn. Research now tells us that we should be on the look out for learning difficulties much earlier, whereas educators used to take a 'wait and see' approach, hoping that the child would grow out of academic struggles. The reason is simple: the brain of a young child is much more amenable to educational interventions than that same child several years later.

'It Cannot Happen to My Child' Syndrome, the Discouraging Parent, Ignoring Red Flags, Being Your Child's Friend or Being a Preacher Rather Than a Parent, and Assuming That 'No News is Good News' are just some of the topics covered in this report. The report also discusses strategies to avoid making detrimental mistakes that will undoubtedly influence a child's progress as well as possible solutions to undo the mistakes that have already been made.



Dr. Shirin B. Ansari

To download the free report, "How to Avoid the Top 10 Parenting Mistakes When Your Child is Struggling in School" please visit our website, www.C4L.net.

You can also find more information about the Center for Learning and current BLOGS written by Dr. Ansari that address various issues such as building your child's self esteem and tutoring as a solution.