



Special
Education
Alliance
200

SEA Scrolls

www.sea200.org

Seeing the ability in every child

November 2009

Please join SEA200 for an informative presentation:

"...And now I have to sit and do HOMEWORK?"

Strategies for Success for Kids with Unique Sensory Needs

Featuring: Allyson Chrystal, MOT, OTR/L

from 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 3

at Monroe Middle School, 1855 Manchester Road, Wheaton

This presentation is free and open to the public.

As parents and professionals, we know the "student" role does not end when the bell rings at the end of the school day. Children often are responsible for homework, projects and assignments that require work and help at home. For the child with sensory processing differences, doing "school" work at home presents a unique challenge.

In this presentation, we will discuss how to support students as they transition home after school and maintain their "student" role to complete school tasks at home. We will identify ways to assess a child's sensory needs during work time and ways to create "sensory smart"

learning environments at home that facilitate success.

Allyson is an occupational therapist who has served children, adolescents and their families in a variety of practice settings. She is an instructor in the occupational therapy program at Midwestern University in Downers Grove. She also provides OT services, program development and consulting services for therapeutic day schools in the Chicago and Phoenix areas.

Allyson has presented on topics such as sensory integration, strength-based approaches with children with autism, and child/adolescent mental health.

Visit www.sea200.org after 5 p.m. on the day of SEA200 presentations to check for any cancellations.

Special Education Alliance in Community Unit School District 200 (SEA200) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that assists families of children with special needs in the communities that make up CUSD200. For details, call SEA200 President Theresa Hinck at 630-653-3224 or e-mail tthinck@aol.com.

Accommodations can help children learn, show what they know

by **Carla Kemp** • SEA200 Newsletter Editor

A teacher would never dream of asking a blind child to open her textbook to page 10 and start reading. Instead, the child would be given a book written in Braille.

Similarly, children with special needs may benefit from accommodations (like a book written in Braille) and other supports to help them access the curriculum and show what they know, explained Maureen Lowry-Fritz, J.D., M.A., who spoke at SEA200's October meeting.

Lowry-Fritz not only practices special education law, but she also has a daughter with special needs.

"With the right supports, she does really really well," Lowry-Fritz said.

Types of accommodations

Accommodations can be divided into four categories:

1. **Presentation of material.**

Accommodations can include changes in the way the material is presented visually, orally or tactilely. Visual accommodations can include using a larger font.

2. **Response.** The child records or organizes his work in an alternate way, e.g., he is not required to draw.

3. **Timing.** The amount of time given for tests can be lengthened. Large assignments can be broken down into manageable chunks. Study guides can be provided in advance to allow more time to study for a test.

4. **Environment.** Accommodations in this area can include where the child sits in the classroom or the environment of the room itself, e.g., how warm the room is.

In addition to accommodations, other supports can help a child access what is being taught and show what she knows. These include:

- **Instructional strategies**, e.g., reminding the child to read the directions before starting an assignment.
- **Instructional materials**, e.g., graphic organizers, highlighters, reading trackers.
- **Adaptations**: changing how the material is delivered without changing the content, e.g., rewording a question so it's easier to understand.
- **Parallel curriculum**: The same core curriculum is taught, but the material does not go into as much depth.

Lowry-Fritz encouraged parents to work with the IEP team members to decide what accommodations and supports are appropriate for their child. She acknowledged that while she knows how her child learns at home, the teachers and specialists are experts on how her child learns in school.

Accommodations vs. modifications

Lowry-Fritz emphasized that it is important to understand the

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difference between accommodations and modifications. While accommodations allow the child to access the curriculum at her grade level, modifications alter the curriculum so that certain concepts are not taught, or subjects and tasks are eliminated altogether.

Lowry-Fritz warned parents against using modifications if their child is capable of doing grade-level work. "Modifications are an easy way out," she said. In the short term, they limit what the child is exposed to, and in the long term, they can affect a child's ability to get into college.

However, she added, "There is no shame in this if it's truly what the child needs."

◆ Workshops & seminars

The following meetings are sponsored by groups not affiliated with SEA200. For more information, call the numbers or visit the Web sites provided.

From Defiance to Compliance: Practical Answers to Difficult Behaviors

Date: Saturday, Nov. 7

Time: 8:30 a.m.- 1 p.m.

Location: Belvedere Banquets, 1170 West Devon, Elk Grove Village

Cost: \$25

Hosted by: UPS for DownS, 847-895-2100 or info@upsfordowns.org

Alice Belgrade, M.S.Ed., LCPC, BCBA, will present practical, specific interventions that address the meaning of misbehavior. Transitions, task completion and getting along with others can be challenging for children with Down syndrome, autism and other developmental disabilities. Video and case examples illustrate how to use positive strategies to encourage cooperation and learning.

Tune Up Your IEP

Date: Wednesday, Nov. 11

Time: 6:30-8 p.m.

Location: Naperville Library, 95th Street Location, Meeting Room A, 3015 Cedar Glade Drive, Naperville

RSVP: mdcahill@sbcglobal.net or 630-778-6500

Attorney Mary Denise Cahill will give an overview of what should be included in an IEP. Learn how to draft IEP goals and objectives plus review your child's IEP.

Resource sharing meeting

Date: Saturday, Nov. 14

Time: 10 a.m. to noon

Location: Good Samaritan Hospital, Cancer Care Center, 3815 Highland Ave.,
Downers Grove

RSVP: Christine at info@cshconnections.org.

Childhood Stroke and Hemiplegia Connections of Illinois is holding a meeting for parents/caregivers to get together and share information, resources and support each other. The meeting will be facilitated, and you are encouraged to submit questions/topics ahead of time to Christine at info@cshconnections.org.

Third Thursday at DuPage Children's Museum

Date: Thursday, Nov. 19

Time: 5-7 p.m.

Location: DuPage Children's Museum, 301 N. Washington St., Naperville

Cost: \$7.50

Contact: 630-637-8000

Third Thursday offers families with children who have autism spectrum disorders a chance to play at the museum in ways that work on language development, social skills and purposeful play. Augmentative communication devices are available at exhibits, and a photo book helps visitors structure a visit.

Customer service skills

Date: Friday, Nov. 20

Time: 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Location: Worknet DuPage Career Center, 2525 Cabot Drive, Suite 302, Lisle

Contact: Ami Sedan, 630-955-2077

The Parents Alliance Employment Project hosts job readiness workshops for individuals with disabilities.

Special Kids Day Holiday Party

Date: Wednesday, Dec. 2

Time: 3:30-8 p.m.

Location, Wilder Mansion, 211 Prospect Ave., Elmhurst

Contact: Rich Rosenberg at 630-530-7700

Come celebrate the season at our annual holiday party for children with physical and developmental disabilities. Every child has the opportunity for a personal visit with Santa and will receive a photo, goody bag and a sampling of holiday treats and have the opportunity to make a holiday craft.

New group provides support, resources to parents of high school students with special needs

Active Communication & Collaboration for Educating Secondary Students (ACCESS) is dedicated to providing a forum in which parents of high school students with special needs may share information and resources, support one another, network and partner with CUSD200. The group's goal is to strengthen the relationship between home and school, all in the interest of fostering learning and academic excellence.

ACCESS was formed as a resource for parents and for those involved in the education of our children. Informal meetings will focus on the following:

- supporting one another,
- sharing experiences,
- positive problem-solving,
- understanding and appreciating the respective roles of parents and educators,
- navigating the special education process and services available in CUSD200, and

- hosting guest speakers on topics pertinent to parenting high school students.

ACCESS will hold its first meeting from 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 10, in the Library Learning Center at the new Hubble Middle School, 35600 Herrick Road, Warrenville.

All meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month and are open to parents of all current and incoming high school students with special needs.

For more information, contact any one of the ACCESS facilitators:

Suzanne Bessette-Smith, 312-984-3122, suzanne.bessette-smith@bfkn.com

Mike Yung, 630-653-4192, mikeyung@comcast.net

Deb Durrbeck, 630-649-2308, ddurrbeck@gmail.com

Contact us

If you have questions about SEA200 or would like to get involved, visit our Web site at www.sea200.org or contact President Theresa Hinck at 630-653-3224 or e-mail tthinck@aol.com.

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Mentor helps parents, staff work together to meet students' needs

Do you have questions about the special education services your child is receiving? Or are you preparing for your child's annual review or three-year re-evaluation? If so, parent mentor Deb Durrbeck can lend a hand.

The role of a parent mentor is to empower parents to fully participate as a partner in their child's education. Studies have shown that students have better outcomes when home and school work together. The mentor assists parents and staff in creating a cooperative partnership focused on students' needs.

The parent mentor is available to:

- assist parents with preparing for their child's IEP meeting,

- attend IEP meetings as requested,
- provide resources to parents and school personnel, and
- assist parents in learning about the special education process (forms, IEPs, evaluations, parent's rights, etc.)

For questions and/or assistance, call Deb at 630-649-2308. You also can visit SEA200's Web site at www.sea200.org and click on Parent Mentor Project or visit www.pepartnership.org for more information. The Parent Mentor Project is made possible through a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education.

Scholarships available for workshops, seminars

SEA200 offers scholarships of up to \$100 to help offset the cost of attending a seminar or workshop related to the education of children with special needs. Following are the eligibility criteria for a scholarship:

1. Applicant must reside in Community Unit School District 200.
2. All applications must be approved by the SEA200 Board, and you must submit a copy of the registration form with application. At the time of approval, a check will be written to the organization/sponsor of the event.
3. Scholarships will be a maximum of \$100 per event.
4. Lodging and meals are not included in the scholarship money.
5. If you are unable to attend for any reason, you must pay back the full amount (including deposit if applicable) to SEA200.
6. SEA200 is not responsible for transportation to and from an event.
7. All applications are on a first-come, first-served basis.
8. One subsidized event per calendar year per family member.
9. SEA200 will not be held liable for any accidents or mishaps occurring to persons attending events.

The sponsorship application form is available at www.sea200.org.

Thanks to our donors

SEA200 is grateful to our contributors, whose generosity helps us educate and support children with special needs and their families. Below we have listed all those who have made contributions this past year. If you are interested in learning more about giving opportunities, contact Julie Yurko at 630-784-0206 or julieyurko@comcast.net.

Great Szahorsz Society

(Gifts of \$250 or more)

Suzanne Bessette-Smith & David K. Smith

Ed and Shannon Downey: *In honor of the staff at Jefferson Preschool and Wiesbrook Elementary*

Freeborn & Peters LLC

Deb Hamilton: *In honor of Emerson Elementary Students*

The Hinck Family: *In honor of Whittier Staff*

Stephen and Christine Spanola

Beth Sullivan

Lisa and Michael Szudarski: *In memory of Thomas K. Ladd*

Crowned Szahorsz Society

(Gifts of \$100-\$249)

Anonymous: *In honor of our grandsons*

Angelo and Elisabetta DeBiasio: *In honor of Amanda Lyubelsky*

Matt and Nancy Hayes/Corn Products International

Friends of Thea Hinck

Kirsten Izatt

Patricia and Charles Jensen

The Jensen Family

Andy and Monica Johnson

Carla and Dave Kemp: *In honor of the staff at Pleasant Hill*

Linda Knicker

Amy Knorring

The Kostro Family

Pamela LaPlaca

Rob and Maria Lappano

Erika and Aaron Lytle: *With thanks to Julie Yurko*

Alex and Tonie Lyubelsky

Gennady and Larisa Lyubelsky: *In honor of Amanda Lyubelsky*

Carolyn Schierhorn: *In honor of Amy Norton*

Jeff and Kay Summers

The Wheeler Family

Janis Williams

The Yurko Family

....and one additional contributor not listed herein.

Speckled Szahorsz Society

(Gifts of \$75 to \$99)

Lisa and Barry Cruse

Friends of Thea Hinck

May Kelly

Tallya Knippen, Districtwide nurse

Nancy and Mike Swanson

Lisa Wagner

Contributions made in memory of John Peluchowski, grandfather of Jozg Spanola

Anonymous

Patti Gatsacos

Lynnette and Jon Eastlake

Bill and Georgy Ann Peluchowski

Mr. and Mrs. Larry Spanola

Gus and Georgia Tasoulis

Anna Tymoszenko

Victoria and David Waterman

Carolyn M. Weith

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