Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health problems of childhood and adolescence. Anxiety disorders cause people to feel excessively frightened, distressed, or uneasy during situations in which most people would not feel that way. Left untreated, anxiety disorders can impair students' ability to work or study and may affect their personal relationships. In the most severe cases, anxiety disorders can make going to school incredibly difficult.

The most common anxiety-related disorders affecting kids and teens are:

**Generalized anxiety disorder.** With this common anxiety disorder, children worry excessively about many things, such as school, the health or safety of family members, or the future in general. These students also may have physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomachaches, muscle tension, or tiredness. Their worries might cause them to miss school or avoid social activities.

**Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).** Children with OCD have excessive preoccupying thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive actions done to try to relieve their anxiety (compulsions).

**Specific phobias.** These are unrealistic and excessive fears, such as a fear of dogs or enclosed spaces. Phobias usually cause people to avoid the things they fear.

**Social anxiety disorder (social phobia).** This anxiety is triggered by social situations or speaking in front of others. It is an intense fear of being judged in social situations or performance. A less common form, called selective mutism, causes some students to be too fearful to talk at all in certain situations.

**Panic disorder.** A panic attack can happen for no apparent reason. With a panic attack, a person has sudden and intense physical symptoms that can include a pounding heart, shortness of breath, or dizziness caused by the body's normal fear response.

**Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).** This results

The PTRC is planning a series of short (45 min.) interactive, virtual training workshops on a variety of topics. The schedule is not yet fully developed as to day & time but the platform will be Zoom. We are investigating times that would be convenient to parents. Topics will include, but not limited to:

- Transition from BabyNet to IDEA Part C
- Requesting & Understanding Evaluations
- IEP Basics
- Behavior Interventions & Supports (FBA/BIP)
- Discipline in Public Schools
- Transition
- Dispute Resolutions
- 504 Plans

We are open to other topics based on interest. If we find that more time is needed to address a given topic, a Part 2 will be scheduled to fully cover the material.

Each workshop will allow for questions in real time.

For more information, to suggest workshop topics, or to recommend convenient times, please call us at 843-266-1318. When the schedule is finalized, posting will be made on the Family Resource Center for Disabilities & Special Needs Facebook page and our website:

www.frçdsn.org

In This Issue

- Tips to Help a Sleepless Child  
- Tips for a Virtual IEP Meeting  
- Tips for Building Parent/School Collaboration
Show Me the Money

“Financial resilience is the ability to bounce back through difficult times, emerge stronger on the other side and flourish in the “new normal.” www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/financial-resilience-center/

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Treasury Department began delivering a second round of economic impact payments as part of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 to millions of Americans who received the first round of payments in 2020. Payments began during the last week of December while more payments occurred in early January 2021. Direct deposit payments were made first — so, those individuals who have valid routing and account information on file will receive payments first. Mailed payments are to follow — individuals who will receive a paper check or a debit card will require more processing and mailing time. As more information becomes available, the IRS will provide updates. https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments

The Economic Impact Payment is NOT considered income, so it will NOT impact eligibility for SSI or SSDI. It is NOT considered a resource for 12 months so it will NOT impact the amount of your SSI benefit. The Economic Impact Payment is considered an advance credit against 2020 taxes. Taxpayers will not include the payment in taxable income on their 2020 tax return or pay income tax on the payment. It will NOT reduce a taxpayer’s refund or increase the amount of tax a taxpayer owes when the taxpayer files a 2020 federal income tax return next year.

If you didn’t get the full Economic Impact Payment, you may be eligible to claim the Recovery Rebate Credit. It is a tax credit against your 2020 income tax. Generally, this credit will increase the amount of your tax refund or decrease the amount of the tax you owe. www.irs.gov/newsroom/recovery-rebate-credit

And Here’s More…. 🧡

Eligible parents who welcomed a new baby in 2020 and haven’t received an economic impact payment for their child as a dependent could qualify for up to $1,100 of extra stimulus money, according to an MSN report. Had a Baby in 2020? You’re in Line for an Extra $1,100 Stimulus Check (msn.com)

Children born between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31 of 2020 qualify for both stimulus payments if their parents meet income limits: $500 from the first check and $600 from the second round.

8 Tips for Getting Your Child (and You) to Sleep

From Melba Macias’ Blog on Enabling Devices Website: https://enablingdevices.com

If your child suffers from a sleep disorder, he or she is not alone. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics “sleep problems have a high prevalence throughout childhood and adolescence, with 25% to 50% of preschoolers and up to 40% of adolescents experiencing sleep-related problems.”

Sleep problems including insomnia, sleep apnea, night terrors, bedwetting and sleepwalking are even more prevalent among children and teens with disabilities. One study found that “49 to 89 percent of children on the autism spectrum had trouble sleeping,” says the Therapy & Wellness Connection. “Same goes for 25 to 50 percent of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and 34 to 86 percent of children with intellectual disabilities.”

Sleep deprivation is problematic for all youngsters, but particularly for those with special needs. For instance, “there is mounting evidence that too little sleep can exacerbate autism features, such as poor social skills,” says Spectrum News. “Children who do not get enough sleep often have more severe repetitive behaviors and a tougher time making friends than other people on the spectrum. They also tend to score lower on tests of intelligence.”

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to improve your child’s sleep hygiene. Here are some tips:

1. Determine what’s causing the sleep difficulties
Sleep disorders can be caused by physical or psychological problems. For example, children with Down Syndrome are prone to sleep apnea due to anatomical differences. In children with autism, sleep disorders may be caused by anxiety. Consult with your pediatrician or a sleep specialist and talk with your child to learn more about what may be causing the disturbance.

2. Stick to a schedule
It’s not always easy, but experts agree that the more you’re able to maintain a routine — dinner-time, tooth-brushing, bath-time, story-time, massage — the easier it will be to get your child to sleep. Children should also have a regular wake-up time. Try creating a chart
Sleep Tips - Continued from Page 2

with visual cues that reinforce the bedtime routine. There are many printable charts available online.

3. Create a sleep-friendly environment
Keep the room temperature cool and dark, play soothing music or use a rain or ocean-sound app to help children relax. “With calming music and a guiding voice, apps help kids relax, from a ‘body scan,’ during which you relax your body starting with your toes, to breathing and visualization,” says Beth Arky of the Child Mind Institute. Weighted blankets can also help to decrease sleep anxiety and increase relaxation.

4. Stop food and drinks a few hours before bedtime. “Children with special needs tend to have more sensitive digestive systems,” says Melissa Doman of Melissa Doman Sleep Consulting. “If your stomach is still full when laying horizontal to sleep, acids from the stomach will leak into the esophagus, creating that sensation of reflux.” Additionally, avoid caffeine and sugar which are stimulants and may keep your child from falling and/or staying asleep.

5. Cut off screen-time at least one hour before bedtime. “The blue light emitted from the TV, computer, tablet and smartphone is detrimental to sleep,” says Doman. “Too much stops natural melatonin production in the brain, making it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep.”

6. Provide mental and physical stimulation during the day. Make sure your child has opportunities to exercise her brain and her body during the day. That will tire her out so she can fall asleep when bedtime rolls around.

7. Install a monitor. If you have concerns about your child’s physical well-being overnight, install a monitor in the child’s room that will alert you should a serious problem arise.

8. Make sleep medications a last resort. Give behavioral techniques a serious try before considering pharmaceutical sleep aids. If after trying the techniques listed here, you’re convinced that only medication will do the trick, consult with your pediatrician. Your doctor may suggest starting with herbal treatments such as melatonin or valerian root, which have been shown to be safe and effective.

Tips for Virtual IEP Meetings

Did you know that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allows IEP teams to use “alternative means of meeting participation, such as video conferences and conference calls”? No matter the format of the meeting, ALL required participants, including parents, should be present and/or appropriately excused from the meeting. The US Dept of Ed’s Office of Special Education Programs has provided the following tips for IEP team members. Always remember to comply with student privacy guidelines & ask how privacy is protected.

Before the Meeting:

• Share your technology concerns or barriers to participation & confirm your participation
• Ask about the technology platform and any requirements for successful use.
• Ask for an agenda and any meeting norms.
• Ask about a back-up plan in case the technology fails.
• Create your own back-up plan (print documents, charge your phone/laptop, have access link ready)
• Remove distractions (see above cartoon) and minimize background noise as much as possible
• Request interpreter or other supports as needed.

During the Meeting:

• The meeting should begin with introduction & use video when appropriate and available.
• Listen closely, and wait to share your thoughts when current speaker is finished.
• Allow enough wait time for questions to be answered.
• Discuss & agree on how signatures will be obtained.
• Confirm how & when document copies will be delivered.

After the Meeting:

• Provide signatures as required.
• Offer feedback on the virtual meeting process to the LEA who attended. Share your questions & concerns.
• Follow up if you do not receive a copy of the documents by the expected date.

As you would after a “typical” IEP meeting:

• Monitor that the IEP with accommodations is being implemented as written.
• Monitor your student’s progress & request progress reports if they aren’t being sent to you as required.
• Develop a plan for addressing disagreements or concerns.
• Resolve any conflicts as soon, and as efficiently, as possible.

If you need help with understanding your child’s IEP (or 504 Plan) be sure to contact the FRC’s Parent Training & Resource Center (843-266-1318) to request the free services provided by Parent Mentors.

Here’s a reminder to visit a couple of great website with lots of good resources:

www.understood.org
www.additudemag.com
Bluegill Brim Bash
2021 Universal Fishing Tournament

Open scheduling all spring, summer, and fall!

Adaptive Expeditions invites families to socially distance together in the outdoors!

The Bluegill Brim Bash fishing tournament is free for families that include a family member with any type of disability. All ages are welcome. The first tournament will run from now until April 8, 2021. We will repeat the tournament all summer and fall - 2021. Located on an accessible private lake on John’s Island that has been filled to the brim with thousands of bluegill. Only one family and one Adaptive Expeditions volunteer will be allowed onsite at a time, and tournament fishing times will be set by appointment.

All COVID-19 best practices will be strictly followed. Directions to the lake will be shared only with registrants. Rods, reels, tackle, and bait will be provided if needed, but feel free to bring your own. If requested, necessary adaptive fishing equipment will be designed on site. Throughout the tournament, Adaptive Expeditions volunteers will keep records of all fish caught, and on April 8th, prizes will be announced and awarded for largest bluegill, smallest bluegill, and best-looking bluegill!

Adults with disabilities will compete in a separate "youth at heart" prize category.

Register at: https://adaptiveexpeditions.org/events/bluegill-brim-bash-2021/

For questions and information contact Carly Liber: carly@aeoutdoors.org or by phone at 513.405.6255

Adaptive Expeditions is an interactive educational nonprofit using sport and recreation to offer health & wellness programs to individuals with physical and sensory disabilities. Through education and outdoor recreation adventures, Adaptive Expeditions empowers individuals with both technical skills and personal confidence to maintain active, independent lifestyles.

Do Parent - Teacher Collaborations Have to be Hard??

We know that collaboration means working together toward a common goal. We know that a meaningful collaboration between parents & teachers can:

- Promote a better relationships between parents and schools
- Increase parent participation in the IEP process
- Identify resources and define support networks
- Improve special education services for children
- Strengthen parent/family involvement

With that in mind, it’s clearly worth it to think about building a solid partnership with your child’s educators. Let’s start with this: In order to build a trusting relationship, families need to convey to children that teachers play a “special role” in their lives similar to that of extended family members. In turn, teachers must earn this trust as extended family members in the relationships they build with children and their families.

We’ve all heard that we should walk a mile in another’s shoes before making assumptions about them (the person not the shoes). Of course this is good advice, but sometimes hard to follow. So in the absence of being able to walk in the other’s shoes, here’s food for thought for both parents & educators.

Parents hope educators understand that there may be real barriers that impact their confidence or ability to be a frequently engaged team member. For example, there may be:

- Child care constraints
- Past negative experiences with schools
- Cultural differences
- Meeting basic needs of the family takes precedence
- Size of school is intimidating
- Feelings of inadequacy based on income or education
- Feelings that schools have ultimate authority
- Unaware of parental rights
- Uncertainty in how to be involved
- Uncertainty as to how the system works

We are all guilty of making hasty assumptions at one time or another. When thinking about parent - school collaborations we want to concentrate on the “good” assumptions:

- Assume that everyone agrees that students with disabilities can learn and are entitled to supports from the whole school community.
- Assume that everyone wants the best outcomes and
Parent - Teacher

will promote student success.
- Assume that people will do the right thing given the opportunity.

So, let's lose those “bad” assumptions -
Parents, don’t assume:
- Teachers don’t like me so will mistreat my child
- Teachers don’t return my calls or texts right away so they must not care about my child
- My child doesn’t get the attention he/she deserves or that others do
- Teachers never tell me anything good about my child
- Teachers want to tell me how to raise my child

And change your way of thinking if you see yourself as:
- Viewing the special education process as the moral equivalent of war
- Taking an "all or nothing" approach to IEPs
- Not willing to try a program or an added service
- Attempting to "micro-manage" the details of a child's life in school
- Focusing on minor, nonprejudicial procedural missteps by the school instead of focusing on the substantial issues in the case

Teachers, don’t assume:
- Parents who don’t attend school events don’t care about their children’s success.
- Parents who are unable to read, are non English speaking, or unemployed can’t help their children with school.
- Parents from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds don’t know how to help their children with school.
- Parent involvement is not worth the educators’ effort.

And avoid these mistakes:
- Failure to include the parent in educational planning
- Failure to provide adequate notice
- Failure to be flexible with meeting times
- Suggestions of Predetermination
- Not applying positive behavior support
- Insufficient Progress Monitoring
- Failure to report progress
- Excusing members from meetings without consent
- Coming to meetings unfocused or unprepared
- Writing goals without baselines

Remember there is greater strength through collaboration. Educating children to live in our rapidly changing & increasingly complex society requires contributions and commitments from everyone in the community. It truly can take a village.

Here’s Something We Like

Exceptional Parent is a free on-line publication for families like ours. Check out the latest edition at their new website address: www.epmagazine.com
Don’t miss this one - its their 2021 Resource Edition.

Anxiety

from a past traumatic event/experience. Separation anxiety disorder: High level of distress when separated from a caregiver.

Students with an anxiety disorder may:
- have trouble concentrating in class or completing classwork
- feel self-conscious and avoid certain situations
- have physical symptoms, such as a racing heart, fast breathing, tense muscles, sweaty palms, a queasy stomach, and trembling hands or legs
- take medication to help reduce anxiety
- miss class time due to problems coping at school, or needing to talk with a school counselor or therapist

What Teachers Can Do

Students with anxiety disorders may have difficulty completing their work. Teachers can help ease anxiety levels by:
- talking with parents or guardians to learn about strategies that work at home
- allowing students extra time to do work
- checking that their assignments are written down correctly
- giving them daily schedules
- modifying assignments and reducing workloads when necessary
- promoting relaxation techniques and allowing for breaks throughout day
- encouraging school attendance, which may require shortened school days and modified class schedules
- allowing them a safe space and ability to go speak with a counselor, if needed
- easing anxiety in the classroom by pairing with a peer

Reviewed by: Shirin Hasan, MD
Date reviewed: May 2019

Check out the website: www.kidshealth.org

Note: Students with a diagnosed anxiety disorder may be eligible for accommodations under Section 504 or for an IEP under the category of Other Health Impairment (OHI) if the condition is severe enough for the student to require specialized instruction, including in the area of social-emotional learning.
Do You Know About….

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth until they begin school, no matter their family’s income. Each month, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library mails an age-appropriate book to all registered children, addressed to them, at no cost to the child’s family. Countless parents have shared how excited their child is when their new book arrives each month. Many groups and individuals work hard behind the scenes to make that special moment possible for each child.

In addition, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) has partnered with American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. (APH) to make many of the wonderful books in her program, available in braille and audio format so that young blind and visually impaired children can also benefit from these wonderful children’s books.

For more information on DPIL visit the website: https://imaginationlibrary.com/

Locally, DPIL is managed by the Palmetto Project - Begin with Books which is the affiliate managing the DPIL program in the tri-county area. Visit their website to register

https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/affiliate/SCCHARLESTONAREA/

Children’s Museum of the Lowcountry (CML) Camps!!!

Children ages 3 - 10 are invited to explore the arts and sciences at these CML camps!

School's Out Day Camps: 2/22; 3/15/4/30; 5/17 CML is offering 1-Day camps to make CCSD eLearning Days fun. Choose full- or half-day, and sign-up for one or all four days of museum play & activities.

Spring Break Camp: April 5-9 - Campers will also enjoy making special crafts,& activities in CML exhibits.


For Info: https://exploreCML.org/camps/
Or: 843.853.8962

We can’t say enough good things about National Center on Improving Literacy

Although we mentioned this great resource in our last newsletter, we wanted to highlight a few of its features, for example:

There’s Kid’s Zone!! The Literacy Playground for Kids & Families. The Kid Zone! is a place where you can participate as your child builds literacy skills in a fun and interactive way. You and your child can access ebooks, audiobooks, and stream videos of stories read aloud. Follow the adventures of Kayla, a girl with dyslexia, in the original comic series, Uncanny Chronicles (recommended for ages 7-10+). Or find cool games that focus on different literacy skills. There’s also ReadingShire Campout (ages 4-6) that includes 4 mini-games that have children identifying letter sounds to improve their phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge.

Be sure to make the most out of this great website which also includes valuable resources on making the most out of remote literacy learning.

https://improvingliteracy.org/

What Does It All Mean??

Who hasn’t read a psychological evaluation or attended an IEP meeting and not been confused, even if just a little, by some of the terms we hear? We thought it might be helpful to explain these terms in ways that are easier to understand. Maybe this small list of some of those terms you hear may come in useful.

Auditory Processing: The ability to quickly and correctly hear a sound, like in words, and make sense of it.

Cognitive Processing: Brain-based activities that influence learning, including attention, memory and reasoning.

Decoding: Using your knowledge of letter sound relationships to sound out words.

Diagnosis: Identification of a disorder determined by a medical or educational professional.

Dyscalculia: A neurologically based specific learning disability in math, such as difficulty making sense of and working with numbers.

Dysgraphia: A neurologically based specific learning disability in writing, such as difficulty with spelling, handwriting, or recording your ideas.

Dyslexia: A brain-based learning disability that specifically impairs a person's ability to read.

Evidence-based: An intervention, tool, or practice that meets one of the four evidence levels in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) which are: strong, moderate, promising, or demonstrates a rationale.
Looking for Remote Support?

If you are a parent that uses Facebook to stay connected and you are in need of an online support group, Just type Our Special Little Ones in the search bar. Click on the link & ask to join. Once you agree to the rules, you will be notified of your new group membership. This is a private group to share resources, ideas and advice with parents of children with special needs. Only members of the group can see who is in the group and what other members share or post.

Additionally, on Facebook is a local group called Charleston SC Special Needs Community. This is also a private group and you must agree to the group rules before joining. The purpose of this group is to share resources, information and support in a non judgmental forum for any parent with a child or adult with special needs. Many parents and providers are members of both groups, lending our community to a wealth of information and support in these challenging times. Join this group by the same procedure as Our Special Little Ones.

The National Alliance on Mental Mental Illness (NAMI), out of an abundance of caution due to COVID-19, has cancelled all in-person supports groups at this time. Instead, they are hosting a Family Support Group every Tuesday at 6:00 pm and a Connection Support Group every Thursday at 6:00 pm. You can log in through your computer or call in on your phone. To obtain a link to the group visit: https://mailchi.mp/2a16095bd674/monthly-e-newsletter-3857581?e=d7d3535506

VirtualSC, South Carolina's free, state-sponsored online program is offering free educational resources to students, parents, and teachers while schools are closed. Please visit virtualsc.org/resources to find a variety of resources, including: test prep for national exams like SAT, ACT, PSAT, Advanced Placement exams, personalized math programs for 6-12th grade students, free educational videos, and more.

What Does It All Mean?? Continued From Page 6

Executive Functioning: Learning processes like the ability to plan, organize, problem-solve, sustain attention, and manage tasks and schedules.

Explicit Instruction: Teaching that is direct and step-by-step, including explaining and showing how to do something.

Expressive Language: Language that you use to communicate.

Fluency: The ability to read words, phrases, sentences, and stories correctly, with enough speed, and expression.

Intervention: Additional small group or individualized instruction that is tailored to children's needs so they can make progress and be on track to meet grade level learning goals.

Language Processing: The ability to quickly and correctly match meaning to sound groups that form words, sentences and stories.

Listening Comprehension: The ability to understand what others read and say to you.

Multi-Tiered System Of Support (MTSS): A schoolwide framework that supports students who are struggling with reading, math, or social and emotional issues through different levels of intensity.

Oral Language: The way you communicate with others through speaking and listening.

Phoneme: The smallest sound part in spoken language, like /c/ in "cat".

Phoneme: The smallest sound part in spoken language, like /c/ in "cat".

Phonemic Awareness: The ability to identify and play with individual sounds in spoken words.

Phonics: Reading instruction on understanding how letters and groups of letters link to sounds to form letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns.

Phonological Awareness: The ability to recognize that spoken words are made up of individual sound parts.

Pragmatics: How we use language to communicate.

Self-Monitoring: The ability to think about what you are learning and understanding while reading, including using a strategy when you are confused by a word or idea.

Semantics: The part of language that has to do with the meaning of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD): A disorder that makes it hard to understand or use language, such as difficulty with listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling or calculating math.

Speech And Language Impairment: A condition that causes difficulty with communication, such as speech and understanding language.

Validity: How well something measures what it's supposed to measure. The reliability and validity of scores from assessments are two concepts that are closely knit together and feed into each other.

Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit: A disorder that makes it hard to draw or copy or understand information that you see.
Programa Educativo Individualizado

Su niño, el cual recibe educación especial, tiene un Programa Educativo Individualizado (en inglés, Individualized Education Program, o IEP). Este es un plan escrito que describe el tipo de ayuda que su niño necesita en la escuela. Por ejemplo, si su niño tiene un problema del aprendizaje, su IEP podría describir la ayuda adicional que recibirá su niño en lectura. Si su niño tiene un impedimento visual, el IEP podría tratar los servicios necesarios para que su niño pueda aprender a moverse de una manera segura en la escuela y otros lugares.

El IEP también podría incluir planes para ayudar a mejorar problemas de conducta. Esto es verdad sin importar qué discapacidad tiene su niño.

Definiciones Claves de IDEA 2004

IDEA es la ley federal que guía cómo los Estados, las agencias educacionales y las escuelas públicas ofrecen educación especial y servicios relacionados a nuestros niños con discapacidades que son elegibles para recibir esta ayuda especial. Es una ley muy poderosa e influencial, afectando positivamente la vida de millones de estudiantes y sus familias.

IDEA define muchos términos en sus regulaciones finales y es importante saber cómo, porque estas definiciones juegan una parte importante en determinar:

• quién es elegible para recibir educación especial y servicios relacionados;
• qué servicios están disponibles para satisfacer las necesidades únicas de los niños elegibles;
• quiénes deben ser involucrados en planear la educación especial de cada niño elegible; y
• mucho, mucho más.

Lista de Términos: Definiciones Claves de IDEA 2004 | www.parentcenterhub/definiciones

Derechos de los Padres bajo IDEA : Derechos de los Padres bajo IDEA | www.parentcenterhub/derechos

Si vive en Berkeley, Charleston o el condado de Dorchester y necesita ayuda con el IEP de su hijo, llame al 803-814-8666.