Over the past several decades, educational research has confirmed the connection between family engagement and student success. In *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp found that students with engaged families are more likely to succeed. This is true no matter how you measure success. Students get better grades. They behave better. They have a more positive attitude. They are more likely to graduate. They are more likely to go to college. Schools also do better when they engage families and communities as partners. An influential study of Chicago schools identified strong “parent and community ties” as one of five “essential supports” for successful school reform. Without this critical pillar of support, the most well executed improvement efforts to turnaround schools are likely to fail.

Of course, all schools interact with families. Every school sends report cards home, holds open houses, and solicits volunteers. So what, exactly, do we mean by “family engagement?” A recent paper from the Harvard Family Research Project, *Beyond Random Acts: Family, School, and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform*, offers this description:

**Effective family engagement is a shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities for student learning and achievement; it is continuous from birth to young adulthood; and, it occurs across multiple settings where children learn.**

**Sharing responsibility for learning and achievement**

First and foremost, sharing responsibility means working together and not pointing fingers. With this in mind, there are many ways schools can get started. A good first step is to make information about curriculum, instruction, assessments, and
From the Executive Director:

Where is Emily?

The voice in the school hallway sounded urgent, concerned - just short of panicked. “Has anyone seen Emily?” She left her last class at the usual time but has not yet come into her structured study period classroom. You see, Emily has Down syndrome and is in high school in a full inclusion program. She doesn’t usually present behavior problems and is pretty reliable about showing up where she needs to be.

This fall she has entered her Junior year and has been very interested in many of the activities of her classmates who are beginning to prepare for college. She has attended information sessions with the others. In fact, her mother called the teacher the other day to find out why Emily was receiving large packages of mail from several universities. After some investigation, the teacher discovered that Emily had been going online and signing up for college information packets from her favorite schools. She had figured out how to receive email, visit websites and click on information requests. She received engaging and inviting auto responses – the kind any potential student receives when they start their search. “Prospective students interested in learning more about [our school] can join our mailing list. To do so, click on the appropriate link below:” Emily clicked the link – from at least a dozen schools. And that wasn’t all...

It seems that at one of the sessions she attended she learned about the admission requirement to pass a test called the SAT. In fact, she learned, there would be a practice version of the test offered in their school. They called it the PSAT. “If you want to register for the PSAT, click here...” Emily did.

But she didn’t mention that to her teacher or her mother. She just signed up.

Emily – where’s Emily?

She was located pretty quickly when the Guidance Counselor was called to the room where they were administering the PSAT. Emily had arrived early, obtained the materials and was well into the language arts booklet when she was discovered. Emily wasn’t really missing, she was only trying to realize her college dreams!

Not too many years ago, Emily’s dreams would have been viewed with disbelief. Today the possibility exists for all students to prepare and seek a post-secondary education. Clearly Emily, who seeks to be independent, could have benefitted from some support and coaching. However, her determination, once she was found to be safe, became the talk of the school.

Students with disabilities have dreams – not unlike all students. Emily is determined to make those dreams a reality. Way to go Emily!! Let’s all learn from her determination.

Best wishes,

Rich

Rich Robison
Executive Director,
Federation for Children with Special Needs

Note: Emily is not this student’s real name, but the story is!
policies easily accessible. Schools should also be welcoming. They should encourage families to learn about the school and to participate in learning activities. Once schools share information and establish rapport, family and community leaders should be empowered to participate in meaningful decisions about school policy. Their insight can inform decisions ranging from broad educational goals to specific disciplinary policies or budget priorities. Educators must also reach out to families where they live and work in order to build trust, improve communication, and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges different families face. In everything they do, schools and families must stay focused on improving student outcomes.

Continuous family engagement from birth to young adulthood

We now know that a child’s first few years have a powerful effect on his or her future. Even after those crucial years are past, children must overcome a variety of social, emotional, and academic challenges to reach adulthood prepared for a successful life. When the strands of family, school, and community are woven together with caring and frequent communication, they form a safety net to catch struggling children and offer support before it’s too late. Families, teachers, peers, guidance counselors, and countless other people affect a child’s life. To do their jobs well, these people must learn from a child’s past and be invested in the child’s future. Family, school, and community partnerships that support children from birth to young adulthood can help make that possible.

Family engagement across multiple settings

When we think about education, we usually think about classroom instruction. In truth, children only spend a small fraction of their lives sitting at a desk listening to a teacher. Research has shown that children who engage in learning activities outside the classroom often make gains, and children who don’t, usually fall behind. One of the best ways schools can reduce achievement gaps is to fill every child’s life with rich learning opportunities in school and out. There are many ways schools can facilitate learning outside the classroom. They can work with parents to align out-of-school-time learning with class work. They can provide families and students with expanded access to libraries and computers. They can offer supports like after-school homework help.

They can also be a crucial link between families and community resources like public libraries, museums, and community centers. It takes more than high quality classroom instruction for all children to reach their potential; a truly outstanding educational system must take advantage of every opportunity to educate its children. Families, schools, and communities must share responsibility for the education of every child, from birth to young adulthood, in school and out.

FACET offers FREE Professional Development to Facilitate Family Engagement

- Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals
- Working with Families Whose Children have Experienced Childhood Trauma
- Building Effective Communication Between Families and Professionals
- Helping Families Support Their Children’s Learning at Home
- Positive Solutions for Families: Train the Trainer

more information: 
fcsn.org/facet/engaging-families

* Through a contact with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, FACET offers no-cost training for public school educators, administrators, and other personnel based on school needs and availability.
La participación familiar en todas las escuelas y para todos los niños

Ha escrito por FACET

Durante las últimas décadas, la investigación en educación ha confirmado la relación que existe entre la participación familiar y el éxito de los estudiantes. En A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement (Una nueva ola de pruebas: El efecto de las relaciones entre la escuela, las familias y la comunidad en el éxito de cada estudiante), Anne Henderson y Karen Mapp encontraron que los estudiantes de familias que participan en su educación tienen más probabilidad de éxito. Esto es cierto sin importar cómo se mide el éxito. Los estudiantes obtienen mejores calificaciones, tienen una mejor conducta, actitud más positiva y más probabilidad de graduarse e ir a la universidad. A las escuelas también les va mejor cuando incluyen a las familias y la comunidad como socios. Un influyente estudio de las escuelas de Chicago identificó “los vínculos fuertes con los padres y la comunidad” como uno de los cinco “apoyos esenciales” para una reforma escolar exitosa. Sin este pilar de apoyo fundamental, aun los planes de mejora mejor ejecutados tienen pocas probabilidad de éxito.

Por supuesto, todas las escuelas interactúan con las familias: envían boletines de calificaciones al hogar, celebran jornadas de puertas abiertas y buscan la ayuda de voluntarios. Pero entonces, ¿qué significa exactamente la “participación de la familia y la comunidad”? Un documento reciente del Proyecto de Investigación Familiar de Harvard, Beyond Random Acts: Family, School, and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform (Más allá de las medidas al azar: La participación de la familia, la escuela y la comunidad como parte integral de la reforma educativa) lo explica de esta manera:

La participación eficaz de la familia es una responsabilidad que comparten las familias, las escuelas y las comunidades para apoyar el aprendizaje y el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes. Es un proceso continuo, que va desde el nacimiento hasta la adultez temprana, y tiene lugar en todos los ambientes en que los niños aprenden.

Compartir la responsabilidad del aprendizaje y el rendimiento académico

En primer lugar, compartir la responsabilidad significa colaborar, sin acusar ni repartir culpas. Con esto en mente, hay muchas maneras en que las escuelas pueden dar los pasos iniciales. Una buena primera cosa es facilitar el acceso a la información sobre el currículo, la instrucción, las evaluaciones y las políticas escolares. Además, las escuelas deben ser acogedoras. Tienen que alentar a las familias a informarse sobre la escuela y a participar en las actividades de aprendizaje. Una vez que las escuelas han compartido información y establecido una buena relación, tienen que darles poder a las familias y la comunidad para que participen en las decisiones importantes sobre la política escolar. Su perspectiva y perspicacia puede informar las decisiones que van desde los objetivos generales de la educación hasta las políticas específicas de disciplina o las prioridades presupuestarias. Los educadores también tienen que acercarse a las familias donde éstas viven y trabajan para generar confianza, mejorar la comunicación y comprender mejor los desafíos específicos que cada una enfrenta. En todas las actividades, las escuelas y familias deben concentrarse en mejorar los resultados de los estudiantes.

La participación familiar continua desde el nacimiento hasta la adultez temprana

Ahora se sabe que los primeros años de un niño tienen un gran efecto sobre su futuro. Aún después de esos años críticos, tienen que superar una variedad de desafíos sociales, emocionales y académicos para llegar a adultez

Continuando en la pagina proxima
La participación familiar (cont’d)

Preparados para una vida exitosa. Cuando los vínculos entre las familias, la escuela y la comunidad se entrelazan mediante una comunicación comprensiva y frecuente, forman una red de seguridad que permite detectar a los niños con dificultades y ofrecerles apoyo antes de que sea demasiado tarde. La vida de cada niño es afectada por las familias, los maestros, compañeros, consejeros y un sinnúmero de otras personas. Para hacer un buen trabajo, estas personas tienen que informarse acerca del pasado del niño y comprometerse con su futuro. Los lazos de colaboración entre las familias, la escuela y la comunidad que apoyan a los niños desde el nacimiento hasta la adultez pueden posibilitarlo.

La participación familiar en ambientes múltiples

Al pensar en educación, lo más común es imaginar el aprendizaje en el aula. Pero la realidad es que los niños pasan sólo una pequeña parte de sus vidas sentados en un pupitre escuchando a un maestro. La investigación ha demostrado que los alumnos que participan en actividades de aprendizaje fuera del aula suelen avanzar, mientras que los que no lo hacen generalmente se quedan a la zaga. Una de las mejores maneras en que las escuelas pueden disminuir estas diferencias de rendimiento es llenar la vida de cada niño con oportunidades educativas estimulantes, tanto dentro como fuera del aula. Hay muchas maneras en que las escuelas pueden promover el aprendizaje fuera de la clase. Pueden trabajar con los padres para alinear el aprendizaje dentro y fuera del aula. Pueden ampliar el acceso de las familias y los estudiantes a sus bibliotecas y computadoras. Pueden ofrecer apoyos como ayuda con la tarea después de clase. También pueden actuar como enlace crucial entre las familias y recursos en la comunidad como bibliotecas públicas, museos y centros comunitarios. Para que todos los niños alcancen su máximo potencial, hace falta más que una instrucción de alta calidad en el aula. Un sistema educativo realmente sobresaliente debe aprovechar todas las oportunidades para educar a los niños. Este número de DATOS para familias apenas empieza a explorar algunas de las maneras en que la participación familiar puede ayudar a que las escuelas preparen a nuestros niños para el éxito en el siglo XXI. Pero sea cual sea la forma en que lo logren, las familias, las escuelas y la comunidad deben compartir la responsabilidad de educar a todos los niños, desde el nacimiento hasta la adultez, tanto dentro como fuera de la escuela.
É fazer com que as informações sobre curriculum, instrução, apreciações e políticas sejam facilmente acessíveis. As escolas deveriam também ser acolhedoras. Deveriam incentivar às famílias a aprenderem sobre a escola e a participarem em atividades de aprendizado. Uma vez que as escolas compartilhem a informação e estabeleçam a conexão, os líderes da família e da comunidade deverão ter poderes para participar das decisões significativas sobre a política da escola. Suas visões podem informar as decisões que vão desde metas educacionais gerais até políticas disciplinares específicas ou orçamentos prioritários. Os educadores devem também tentar aproximar-se das famílias, onde quer que vivam ou trabalhem, a fim de construir a confiança, melhorar a comunicação, e ganhar um compreensão mais profunda dos diferentes desafios que as famílias enfrentam. Em tudo o que fizerem, as escolas e as familias devem estar focadas em melhorar os resultados dos alunos.

O envolvimento contínuo da família e da comunidade desde o nascimento até a idade adulta jovem

Nós sabemos que os primeiros anos da vida de uma criança têm um efeito poderoso em seu futuro. Mesmo depois daqueles anos cruciais terem passado, as crianças devem superar uma variedade de desafios sociais, emocionais e acadêmicos para alcançarem a idade adulta preparadas para uma vida bem sucedida. Quando as vertentes da família, escola, e comunidade estão entrelaçadas para uma comunicação cuidadosa e frequente, formam uma rede de segurança para amparar as crianças que estão sofrendo e oferecem apoio antes de que seja tarde demais. As famílias, professores, colegas, orientadores, e um número incontável de outras pessoas podem afetar a vida da criança. Para fazermos bem o seu trabalho, essas pessoas devem aprender através do passado da criança e estar investidas no futuro da criança. As parceiras entre família, escola e comunidade que apoiam as crianças desde o nascimento até a idade adulta jovem podem ajudar a tornar isso possível.

O envolvimento da família e da comunidade através de múltiplas configurações

Quando pensamos em educação, normalmente pensamos no ensino nas salas de aula. Na verdade, as crianças passam apenas uma pequena fração de suas vidas sentadas em uma carteira escolar ouvindo um professor. Pesquisas mostraram que as crianças que se dedicam às atividades de aprendizado fora da sala de aula, muitas vezes obtêm ganhos, e as crianças que não se envolvem, geralmente ficam para trás. Uma das melhores maneiras das escolas poderem reduzir disparidades de desempenho é preenchendo a vida de cada criança com ricas oportunidades de aprendizado dentro e fora da escola. Existem várias maneiras para que as escolas facilitem o aprendizado fora da sala de aula. Podem trabalhar em conjunto com os pais para alinhar o aprendizado fora do horário escolar com o trabalho dentro da classe. Podem fornecer às famílias e aos alunos um maior acesso à bibliotecas e computadores. Podem oferecer apoios com ajuda com o dever de casa.

Também podem ser um elo crucial entre as famílias e os recursos comunitários como bibliotecas públicas, museus, e centros comunitários. É preciso mais do que instrução na sala de aula de alta qualidade para todas as crianças alcançarem seu potencial; um sistema educacional verdadeiramente notável deve tirar proveito de todas as oportunidades para educar as suas crianças.

Esta edição de FATOS da Família apenas toca de leve a superfície das maneiras pelas quais o envolvimento da família e da comunidade pode ajudar as escolas a preparar nossos filhos para serem bem sucedidos no século 21. Mas, não importa como fazem isso, famílias, escolas e comunidades devem compartilhar a responsabilidade pela educação de todas as crianças, desde o nascimento até a idade adulta jovem, dentro e fora da escola.
Updates from Family TIES of Massachusetts
By Laura Noble, Project Director, Family TIES of Massachusetts
After a busy summer, the staff at Family TIES of Massachusetts is springing right into Fall. Currently, we are reviewing the Family TIES mission statement, clarifying our goals, and assessing ways in which the services we provide meet the needs of the community. We plan to expand current offerings to include presentations on Medical Home and transition from pediatric to adult health care. We have given our informational brochure a modern new look, and the MOST exciting news is that plans are underway to give massfamilyties.org a much-needed make-over! The redesign will roll out in 2018. It will include several searchable databases; for resources, support groups and the Central Directory for Early Intervention Programs.

Although change can sometimes be scary, these changes are all about improvement: improving the look and feel of our web presence and promotional materials, the diversity of our offerings, and finally, the way we connect with families. We remain committed to strengthening families by providing information about resources, Early Intervention, community programs, and support groups, providing one-to-one emotional support via The Parent-to-Parent Program, and offering skill building workshops and presentations. And of course we will continue to publish our annual Resource Directory (aka “the Pink Book”). We look forward to unveiling these improvements over the coming year, and hope you share our enthusiasm!

Family TIES is a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, in collaboration with and funded by the MA Department of Public Health (DPH).

A Project of
the Federation for Children with Special Needs
Call us today!
Family TIES of Massachusetts: 1-800-905-TIES
www.massfamilyties.org

The SMART Brailler®
A brailler that vocalizes and displays what a child types, allowing non-braille readers to get involved.
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Let’s get to work
The Pre-Employment Program prepares youth who are blind or visually impaired ages 16-22 with skills for landing a job.
Learn more at:
Perkins.org/GoToWork
Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll: 2017!

Our 2017 Walk, held on October 1st at Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children, was a wonderful afternoon of fun and fellowship. Our volunteers from Lesley University and Boston University were a great help in ensuring that each of the nearly 100 participants had a good time. Also in attendance were Batman, Elsa, and Gandalf the Wizard (cosplayers from the volunteer group Band of Heroes)!

October 1st was also an Open House at Pappas’s Equestrian Center, so our walkers were able to enjoy time with horses, bunnies, pigs, and even a barn cat! Most of the animals stayed in their pens, but several friendly baby goats wandered freely among the group.

The walk itself took place over 1.5 miles of scenic wooded trails with beautiful views of the nearby lake – participants lined up to take pictures with the vista behind them. The paved trails made the route easily accessible to all!

The afternoon was capped off by a picnic lunch, as well as upbeat music and a game of freeze dance. Thanks to all who made the event a success: volunteers from Lesley University and Boston University, our DJ, K.S. Sounds Unlimited, Silly Sally’s face painting, and Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children. The funds raised will help us reach and support more families of children with special needs.
Sponsors: Franciscan Children’s, Boston Parents Paper
In-Kind Donations: BJs, Boda Borg, Boston Athletic Club, Canton Center Pizza, Costco, Jillian’s, Kimball Farms, Kristin LaRose, Roche Bros, Rock Spot Climbing, Sky Zone Boston, Tree Top Adventures, Wegman’s, Whole Foods
The above infographic was created by Lexi Gulezian, a student at Lesley University who volunteered at this year’s Walk. “I had an extremely fun time volunteering at this event, which included many individuals with and without disabilities and introduced me to a wonderful group of people! It was sincerely enjoyable, and gave me an opportunity to be creative while engaging with children and youth of all ages.”
RTSC: A Focus on Trauma Sensitivity

By Renee Williams, Project Director, RTSC

On November 14th, at our 6th Annual Making a Difference Conference, experts from community partnerships and trauma-informed schools presented workshops addressing systemic issues. The event was tailored to Special Education Surrogate Parents; Foster, Kinship and Adoptive parents; and the wonderful professionals that serve them through the child welfare system and in the community. We chose a theme both topical and long-standing: A Community Approach to Trauma Sensitivity.

While the idea of trauma sensitivity has evolved within the last decade or so, community approaches to education, health, parenting (“it takes a village”), and other social issues have been around for a long time. John Dewey, Jane Addams, and the urban planner Clarence Perry all advocated for schools that served as the center of neighborhood social life, partnering with neighborhood-based social services while also educating children. The Industrial Age of the early 20th century, in many ways, was not dissimilar from our current Age of Information and Technology (sometimes referred to as the Third Industrial Age). In both eras, social reformers turned to community-based education and development to improve the lives of the disadvantaged.

In the 1930’s, Charles Manley and Charles Stewart Mott developed programs to serve residents of Flint, Michigan using vacant school buildings in the evenings. Their model is still used today, with credos such as:

- Use of community resources in the schooling/education curriculum
- Opportunities for parents to become involved in the learning process of their children and the life of the school
- Partnerships with business, industry, and schools; everyone shares responsibility for educating all members of the community

The movement lost steam when federal funding was pulled in 1981.

In the early 2000’s, interest in the community school idea was somewhat revitalized. But after the Great Recession, with a dwindling amount of funding for education at both the local, state and federal levels, the idea is sounding better and better.

With a growing rate of children attending public schools with elevated Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and burgeoning mental health crises for students and faculty throughout the country, community schools don’t just make sense – but may just be the answer to many issues challenging schools today. Here is the modern definition of a well-developed full-service community school:

"A community school, operating in a public school building, is open to students, families, and the community before, during, and after school, seven days a week, all year long. It is operated jointly through a partnership between the school system and one or more community agencies…. To achieve their desired results, most community schools over time consciously link activities in the following areas: quality education; positive youth development; family support; family and community engagement in decision making; and community development."

Our May webinar, presented by Salem State’s Dr. Claire Crane, is an excellent resource for those interested in practical applications and outcomes of the community school model.

https://youtu.be/o1-Ycoi-kV8

On July 11-13, 2017, I had the honor and pleasure of attending the Massachusetts Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) as a Staff Captain for the third summer in a row. The YLF is an annual conference for youth with disabilities who are transitioning to adulthood, and it is held at Bridgewater State University. Students who have just completed their junior or senior year in high school attend as delegates, and older youth who have completed at least one year of college or employment attend as peer leaders. The youth and most of the staff stay overnight in the dorms, and for many of the youth, this is their first time staying away from home. It gives them a chance to experience living in a dorm before they actually attend college.

The forum includes several workshops and sessions on disability rights history, self-advocacy, self-determination, disability pride, adaptive sports and theater games, choosing a career, assistive technology, voting, and other topics that are helpful to the youth.

There is also plenty of time for fun, including video games, a drum circle/jam session, and a dance party. The youth also have a chance to participate in a talent show, where they show off their abilities at singing, dancing, telling jokes, rapping, playing a musical instrument, or impersonating cartoon characters. This activity is a major confidence booster; many of the youth are performing in front of a live audience for the first time, and feel encouraged by the applause and positive feedback from their peers.

Every time I attend YLF, I go with the expectation that I will share many of the lessons that I have learned over the years about living with a disability. However, each time, I wind up learning even more from the youth than they learn from me. I am always moved and inspired to see them make new friendships and grow in confidence and pride over the three days together. They stop being ashamed of their disability, and become empowered by learning that they aren’t alone and that they are now part of a community that celebrates their differences.

While the youth are often sad to leave, they return home with a new sense of pride and a greater ambition to work hard at overcoming obstacles and to make the world a better place for all, especially those with disabilities. Many can’t wait to return the following year!

**Representing the LINK Center at the Youth Leadership Forum**

By Becky Rizoli, Information / Outreach Specialist, FCSN
Support Our Annual Appeal!

Since 1975, the Federation for Children with Special Needs has been helping parents and professionals find information, support, and assistance to care for children with special needs. Here is one family’s story:

Mr. and Mrs. Thanh’s young daughter was developing typically until age three, at which time, in her father’s words, “everything stopped”. She had begun to show signs of Autism.

Caring for a child with special needs can be challenging for any parent, but Mr. Thanh, whose native language is Vietnamese, struggled with special education terminology, and the complex landscape of insurance requirements proved a significant barrier to entry. A search for specialized therapy resulted in endless waitlists or denials - if a response was received at all. His daughter, who is non-verbal, exhibited challenging behavior at home, and Mr. Thanh and his wife were at a loss for options to facilitate communication.

A turning point came in July 2016, when a doctor referred the family to the Federation’s Vietnamese Outreach Coordinator. She connected them with options for social, educational, and emotional support, and even helped them secure coverage through MassHealth. The family attended the 2017 Visions of Community conference, and Mr. Thanh, speaking directly with service providers, was finally able to secure ABA services.

With the Federation’s assistance, the Thans were able to understand their daughter’s diagnosis, support her, and advocate effectively for her needs.

This year, we need your help more than ever.

For the first time in many years, the Federation is facing a significant cut in our government grant revenue. This cut will directly impact our ability to provide services to the most vulnerable families; families like the Thans.

In order to meet the funding challenge we face, our Board of Directors is stepping up and pledging to double their Annual Appeal gift. Would you consider joining our Board in their efforts, and making a donation to support our work? Please visit fcsn.org to make a contribution in any amount. We gratefully accept monthly donations as well! Thank you in advance for your assistance in this important work.

fcsn.org/donate
Exhibitor Registration is Now Open!
Are you seeking an effective way to introduce your service, business, or organization to a new audience? Visions of Community attracts hundreds of parents and professionals who support children with special needs. Previous years’ exhibitors have included summer programs, parent support services, advocacy organizations, technical and medical equipment suppliers, assistive technology firms, educational institutions, book distributors, consultants, and more. Attendees consistently place a high value on the importance of exhibitors, and cite the exhibition hall as a major “draw” to the event.

learn more: fcsn.org/voc/exhibitor

Calling All Advocates: Community Partnership Awards!
Do you know someone who has worked tirelessly to support the inclusion of individuals with disabilities, those at-risk, or those who face cultural or linguistic barriers? Nominate them for a Community Partnership Award! The Federation’s Community Partnership Awards recognize individuals across Massachusetts who have successfully promoted inclusive environments in their community. The deadline to make your nomination is January 12, 2018. We know there is great work being done in all corners of the state! Please consider making a nomination and encouraging others to do so.

learn more: fcsn.org/voc/2018-CPA

Participant Registration Opens in January 2018!
Book Review:

Teenagers with ADD, ADHD & Executive Function Deficits

By Becky Rizoli, Information / Outreach Specialist, FCSN

The book Teenagers with ADD, ADHD & Executive Function Deficits, was written by Chris A. Zeigler Dendy, M.S. The author is the parent of three (grown) children with ADHD, and is also a professional. She has written several books about ADHD, including two previous versions of Teenagers with ADD and ADHD.

This book is easy to read and is divided into seventeen chapters. Each of the chapters includes relevant quotes from parents of youth with ADHD, as well as helpful charts and tables.

One of the more informative and interesting illustrations shown in the book is the ADHD iceberg, which appears on page 14. It is a full-page graphic of an iceberg, with the caption, “Only 1/8 of an iceberg is visible!! Most of it is hidden beneath the surface!!” It depicts the “tip of the iceberg” as the most easily noticeable ADHD behaviors: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness. The graphic illustrates that “below the surface,” one can find weak executive functioning, impaired sense of time, developmental delay in maturity, sleep disturbances, low frustration tolerance, and coexisting conditions. This graphic clearly shows that there is often more to ADHD than meets the eye.

The book is very detailed, informative, and educational. I already have a great deal of knowledge about ADHD from my personal and professional life, yet I learned new information from reading this book. For instance, I learned that youth with ADHD have the maturity level of someone three years younger than their chronological age; despite having an intelligence level that is the same or even higher than their peers. In other words, a 13-year-old with ADHD, who is capable of performing at or above grade level, may behave in ways that would be more appropriate for a 10-year-old. Understanding this point is important to know when reacting to developmentally inappropriate behavior from one’s son or daughter with ADHD, as we are reminded several times throughout the book.

The book clearly explains that the reason why young people with ADHD are less mature than their peers is because ADHD is caused by a dysfunction in the “white matter” of the brain, which is responsible for communication between brain cells. The “gray matter” of the brain, which controls intelligence, is unaffected by ADHD. This is why people with ADHD do not necessarily have a lower IQ than their peers, and in some cases, their IQ may even be superior to their peers. The book goes into great detail about how neurons and brain activity are different for people with ADHD and without these conditions, and uses language that is easy for the average person to understand, even if they don’t know much about neurology. The book also offers helpful communication tips for parents of teens with ADHD.

Also, the book describes treatment for ADHD and informs us that medication is effective for 90-95% of teenagers with the condition, and adds that if your child is still struggling on medication, they most likely have a co-existing condition. It also says that exercise and counseling can be helpful at treating the symptoms of ADHD. According the book, the most important factor for a youth with ADHD to become successful is to have someone who believes in him or her.
Visions of Community 2018
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