



Psyche Matters

The Newsletter of the Sullivan Center for Children

The Holiday Quandary

by Lisa Ganiron, Psy.D.

The holidays will soon be upon us and during these difficult economic times, many parents will be experiencing additional stress about what to buy little Johnny or Mary this year. That new video-gaming system would be nice for Bob. Betty would love a cell phone. But can you afford these extravagant gifts after paying five dollars a gallon for gas and watching all your bills rise month after month after month? As parents, you'd like to get all the gifts that your children want, but this year, your hard-earned dollars have to stretch even further. In a world where material possessions have become the priority in many lives, it's easy to forget about the true spirit of the season, to appreciate all that you have, and to spend time with the ones you love. Sure, the kids may be a bit disappointed that they didn't get the latest technological gadget this year. And yes, they may have trouble accepting that Buddy down the street got nine presents to open while they only got two. But chances are, they won't remember it many years from now as they struggle with these same decisions for their own families. What they will remember as adults is how their family came together and shared

some quality time. As a kid, I would have loved to have that "super-new-exciting-gadget." Today, I can't for the life of me recall any particular item that would have been the difference between life and death for me on Christmas morning. I can consistently

occasional round of poker, the fun times spent playing with cousins who only visited around the holidays...those memories are vivid and endless. Do yourself a favor this year, don't mortgage your home to buy the kids exactly what they want.

Instead, give them what so many of today's kids need, more quality time with the family, a greater sense of belonging, and true emotional availability. Invest in gifts that promote togetherness, not things that seem to extend the ever-increasing gap

that grows between parents and their kids as a result of natural development. Board games are an excellent way to reconnect. Better yet, make your own gifts. Plan activities that

involve the whole family, such as caroling, making cookies, decorating the house, building a snowman, or sharing your favorite holiday memories. The actual activity isn't important. It's the time spent together, listening and being actively involved in each other's lives. When I'm 80 years old and look back at my life, I will have forgotten all the material gifts that I received



recall Handel's Messiah, immediately followed by Alvin and the Chipmunks, blaring through the household signaling the first day of the holidays, the hundreds of cookies baked (and ate), the carols we sang, the marathon games of Monopoly, Charades and Crazy Eights, even the

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Inside this Issue:

- ☺ The Holidays Issue begins with a challenge to avoid the consumer trap
- ☺ Dr. Sullivan receives Diplomat status
- ☺ Sullivan Center Closed on upcoming holidays
- ☺ IEP's and getting the help you need from the school system
- ☺ Bereavement during the holidays
- ☺ Questions and Answers
- ☺ Kid's Korner
- ☺ Highlighting our Staff: Dr. Napolitano

each holiday. What I'll remember the most is how our family stayed up past midnight on Christmas, playing Sorry, eating cookies and drinking hot chocolate, and having the times of our lives. Yup, those are the memories worth making and they practically cost nothing.

Handling Bereavement During the Holiday Season

by Candice Mickett, M.A.

The concept of bereavement applies to the range of responses that an individual may experience throughout one's life due to the loss of a loved one. Children integrate new understandings of the loss or death at different stages in their lives as they continue to mature cognitively and emotionally. Due to young children's inability to completely understand or verbalize their feelings, a wide range of symptoms may appear as



children cope with re-emerging emotions related to the loss. The time period around holidays may be especially difficult for a grieving individual due to the many reminders of the lost loved one as well as the desire for the loved one to be present for significant moments. If not already done, discuss the loss in developmentally appropriate terms so that the child has an accurate understanding of it as well as its finality. Although often difficult,

communication around the loss is a healthy coping skill because it can clarify children's misperceptions, reduce feelings of guilt, and enhance relationships with available caregivers. At the start of this holiday season, consider engaging in an activity with your child to discuss previously experienced holidays and ways in which the upcoming holidays might be different due to the absence of a loved one. This activity may allow children to share memories, anticipate negative thoughts and feelings that may occur around the upcoming holidays, and problem solve for upcoming holiday circumstances that may elicit these negative thoughts and feelings.

Meet the Sullivan Center Staff: Susan Napolitano, Ph.D.

by Kelli Barton, M.A.

Our Assistant Director, Dr. Susan Napolitano, came to the Sullivan Center for Children as a post-doctoral fellow in 1991. She has had the opportunity to gain a broad range of experience within the field of psychology and has worked with Victims of Crime as well as in a variety of clinical settings such as hospital practice, private practice, and forensics. She has a history of working with child abuse victims, but currently specializes in post-divorce mediation in order to help parents meet their children's needs after divorce.

Dr. Susan is described as confident and knowledgeable with an approach that is professional, caring and empathic. Many of

her co-workers look to her as a role model with a wide range of clinical knowledge. One of the staff stated that "Susan brings a unique perspective of the victim's point of view." Another clinician stated that she is decisive and is willing to try different things to best help her clients. Susan has a vast amount of legal and ethical knowledge and is a tremendous asset to the Sullivan Center.

Dr. Napolitano's expertise in multiple areas of psychology and her empathic attitude contribute to the positive atmosphere here at the Sullivan Center. Her 18 years of consistent work demonstrate stability in our community. We're blessed to have her on staff at the Sullivan Center for Children.

Kathy Sullivan, Ph.D., earns her Diplomate

by David Wolter, M.A.

Congratulations Dr. Kathy!

Last month Dr. Kathy Sullivan earned a Diplomate from the American Board of Professional Psychology and is now Board Certified in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology. The American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) services the public need by providing oversight and certifying psychologists competent to deliver high quality services in various specialty areas of psychology. Board Certification

assures the public that specialists designated by the ABPP have successfully completed education, training, and experience requirements of the specialty and have passed an extensive and comprehensive examination designed to assess competencies required to provide quality services in that specialty. The



Special Announcements:

CALENDAR: The Sullivan Center will be closed for Thanksgiving on Thursday and Friday (11/27-28) and for Christmas on Thursday (12/25) and for New Years on Thursday (1/1) unless you make prior arrangements with your therapist. Groups will be cancelled on the Saturday after Christmas (12/27) as well. Please check with your therapist to verify appointments for those days and to let your therapist know of upcoming vacation dates.

GROUPS: We currently offer 8 different groups: *Tuesday nights - high schoolers*
Wednesday nights - 5th gr. boys social skills
Wednesday nights - high school social skills
Thursday nights - parents group
Friday afternoons - young adults
Saturday mornings 9am - 12-14 yr. olds
Saturday mornings 10am - 8-12 yr. olds
Saturday mornings 11am - 4-8 yr. olds

Dr. Thackrey Martial Arts Open House:
The Do-Jang Open House is Saturday November 22nd from 9am to 8pm. Free. 439-8419.
www.martialartfresno.com.

ABPP was incorporated in 1947 with the support of the American Psychological Association (APA).

The Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology Board is one of thirteen specialty boards of the ABPP. By earning Board Certification in this specialty, Dr. Sullivan joins an elite group of professionals. There are approximately only one hundred Board Certified Clinical Child and Adolescent specialists in the country, and Dr. Sullivan is the fourth psychologist in the State of California to earn this certification.

Update on Assessments in Schools: IDEA

by Mark Barnes, Ph.D.

As this edition of Psyche Matters has a holiday theme I thought a gift to the readers would be appropriate. The gift I have in mind you have already received but may not know about yet. It is a gift of education to all our children, disabled or non-disabled. The gift came from the federal government about 18 years ago.

In 1990 the federal government had an IDEA. They revised an earlier law related to public education for individuals with disabilities. Following the 1990 enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) the federal guidelines for the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was updated and the name changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

What does this mean for you, your child and their education? It means that children with disabilities must receive a *free and appropriate public education* (FAPE) that will provide any special education and any related services (adaptive physical education, occupational therapy, sensory motor integration, even adaptive skills development) necessary for their education. The goal of IDEA is to teach and prepare our children

who have disabilities, the academic and extracurricular activities that are specifically designed to meet their unique needs to make them ready to become employed and independent.

According to this federal law, children who are being considered for special education and related services must have an appropriate comprehensive evaluation to determine the child's needs that may require specialized educational interventions.

This appropriate and comprehensive evaluation is usually done by the school your child attends. All you have to do is ask for a special education assessment if you suspect your child has learning differences that may be disabling to him or her. The process by which a parent can get his or her child assessed is lengthy and can be, at times, frustrating. I encourage you to keep working; active, involved parents are what a learning-disabled child needs. There are many roads to getting special education services for your child. Your therapist here at The Sullivan Center for Children can help you navigate the trail to getting help for your child. Or, if you wish, you can email me at MarkBarnes@SC4C.com with your questions. I will try and answer you or refer you to

someone who may help you better than I.

Following the evaluation of your child if he or she is identified as needing special education an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must be developed. This is a plan that is designed to address your child's specific educational needs with goals and objectives you and the teacher(s) agree on. No special education plan can go forward without a parent's agreement and consent so your participation and understanding of the testing information, instructional strategies and overall Individualized Education Plan is critical to your child's best interest. It is my understanding that Exceptional Parents Unlimited is having a workshop on IEP training Saturday 11/22/2008 (see note below). If you have concerns about your child's special education needs you may wish to attend.

These are some of the main points of IDEA and how they may apply to you and your child. The law is very comprehensive and gives parents of children with identified disabilities many rights and privileges to ensure their child is appropriately educated and trained to facilitate optimal development and autonomy. We've included a table below of the students served through IDEA. This may help you identify the services possible. I want to wish you good luck in trying to get your child's educational needs met.

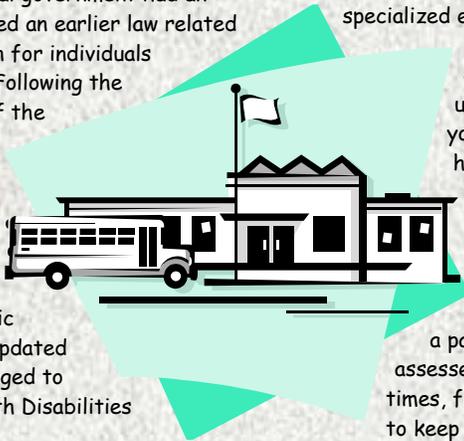


Table 2-2
Number of Students Ages 6 to 21 Years Served Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1993 and 2001, by Disability

Disability	1993		2001		% change in number of students	2001
	N	% IDEA total	N	% IDEA total		% of US student population ages 6 to 21
Specific learning disabilities	2,438,147	51.1	2,886,679	49.2	18.4	6.0
Speech or language impairments	1,007,575	21.1	1,091,306	18.6	8.3	2.3
Mental retardation	552,703	11.6	604,325	10.3	9.3	1.2
Emotional disturbance	413,691	8.7	475,246	8.1	14.9	1.0
Multiple disabilities	109,203	2.3	129,079	2.2	18.2	0.3
Hearing impairments	64,110	1.3	70,407	1.2	9.8	0.1
Orthopedic impairments	56,555	1.2	76,274	1.3	34.9	0.2
Other health impairments	83,178	1.7	340,299	5.8	309.1	0.7
Visual impairments	24,873	0.5	23,469	0.4	-5.6	0.0
Autism	18,893	0.4	99,743	1.7	427.9	0.2
Deaf-blindness	1,315	0.0	—	0.0	—	0.0
Traumatic brain injury	5,291	0.1	23,469	0.4	343.6	0.0
Developmental delay	—	—	46,938	0.8	—	0.1
All disabilities	4,775,534	100.0	5,867,234	100.0	22.9	12.1

Note: U.S. Census data suggest a 15% increase from 1993 to 2001. In 2001, the total number of students in the United States ages 6 to 21 years was 48,489,537. In 2001, IDEA included developmental delay as a disability but not deafness. (In 2004, IDEA included deafness as a disability but not developmental delay.)
Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Education (2005).

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IEP Training at EPU:

<http://www.exceptionalparents.org/calendar.html#nov>

Saturday
November 22, 2008
9am-3pm
at EPU
4440 N. First Street
Fresno
(559) 229-2000 ext. 242

The Sullivan Center for Children

3443 West Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93711

Phone: 559-271-1186

Fax: 559-271-8041



"Understanding
the World
Through a
Child's Eyes."

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Questions and Answers

by Lisa DeBenedetto, M.A., LMFT

Q: My husband and I have been divorced less than a year. How do I help my child cope with celebrating the holidays between two homes?

A: Supporting and encouraging your child to enjoy his time in both homes is a very important aspect of the holiday season. Your child's ability to transition will be more peaceful if he feels like he can speak about (and to) the parent he is away from without reservation or guilt. Allowing your child to purchase or make a gift for the other parent, talk about his time with the other parent, and feel safe to discuss sadness or anger with both parents could relieve much anxiety. Ideally, if mom and dad could discuss gift giving prior to the holidays the child could receive gifts purchased by both parents. Avoiding overindulging the child or creating an atmosphere of giving out of guilt or buying love may also decrease feelings of sadness or resentment in the child.

answers to Frame Games

*reading between the lines: I understand; sand
box: ambiguous; I before E except after C*

From the Director: The Magic of Mindfulness

by Kathy Sullivan, Ph.D., ABPP

It is an incredibly hectic world we live in. Most everyone I talk to feels constantly pressured by the demands of external reality. We are a people on the go - and under pressure. Between home, work, children, education, and making ends meet, most of us are frenetically engaged in activity from morning till night - and feel like we are just holding on. We rush from demand to demand with barely time to breathe or eat - and our children live with it too.

Up early, get dressed, eat breakfast, catch the bus - the school bell rings. In class all day - deal with tests, other kids - bullies. Then to day care or to lessons or sports, grab some fast food, then onto homework - often 1-2 hours of it even for grade-schoolers. Then shower, brush teeth, get ready for bed, go to sleep - then do it all over again. Now add in the stress of holidays. Buy gifts, fight the mad crowds, find the extra money, get the tree, fix the food, attend to the extended family. I'm exhausted just describing all this, and as you are all realizing by now - this isn't the half of it. Is it any wonder we end up exhausted, feeling like automatons - either devoid of feeling or overflowing with irritability.

We forget - most the time - to pay any attention to ourselves - our inner experience - a costly mistake. And even though most of us can do little about our hectic lives - learning the magic art of mindfulness can make a world of difference in

how we experience life.

Mindfulness takes little time or effort - just a shift in focus. It is turning your attention inward - to watch and with full awareness feel the experience of whatever you are doing. It is the act of looking out the window and ACTUALLY seeing, thinking about and appreciating the color of nature, the wind in the trees, the cotton clouds moving across the blue sky. Mindfulness is being aware of the feeling you get when your child hugs you, or when they cry. It is a deep breath - I-n-h-a-l-e slowly and deeply -- then e-x-h-a-l-e slowly - that centers you in your own body, and it is the experience of actually tasting your own food. It is closing your eyes to hear your heartbeat and feeling your breath going throughout your body - if only for a moment. It is being mindful - in your mind - when you are angry or happy or sad.

People practice mindfulness through yoga, or the martial arts, or meditation, or just in everyday situations, and by activating it throughout your day you can bring a sense of calmness, knowing and physical reality to your experience of life. Being mindful of when you love or when you're frustrated has the power to transform and enrich your experience. I encourage you to teach it to your children - just like you teach them reading or math. Moments of inner truth can transform our hectic life from mechanically monotonous to bursting with energy and meaning.

Kid's Korner



by David Wolter, M.A.

Here are some ways to expand your brain power using these "Frame Games" (also known as Rebus Puzzles). See if you can figure these out.

(answers above)

SAND

READING

STAND
I

am U ous

eye e
see except

There are dozens more of these at:
<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/braintpics.htm>.

Can you make up any new Frame Games? Come up with some original ideas and you could win the prize for this quarter. Just draw up your totally brand new ideas and bring them in at your next appointment or email them to the editor so he can check out your ideas and put your name in the drawing for the prize. Good luck and have fun!