

A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP CONTRIBUTES MORE THAN YOU MAY THINK

"Love and money, work and play, mood and math scores. They're just a few things related to a night's rest." And so begins Shari Roan's article featured June 15th in the LA Times outlining the increasing benefits of sleep. She continues: "Increasingly, scientific evidence shows life and sleep are woven together like 800-thread-count sheets. How people fare during their waking hours has a lot to do with how they sleep -- and vice versa."

Quality of sleep influencers include: income, employment status, relationship satisfaction and hobbies, according to research presented in June at the annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies held in Seattle. And sleep affects health, relationships and decision-making. "Sleep is related to everything," said Michael Grandner, a fellow at the Center for Sleep and Respiratory Neurobiology at the University of Pennsylvania.

Who is having the most trouble sleeping today?

* 159,856 people questioned

- One in five people reported problems with sleep on seven of the 14 nights before the survey.
- Except for people of Asian ethnicity who had far fewer problems, little difference was noted between ethnic groups.
- People in lower socioeconomic levels -- especially women -- reported more problems.
- Divorced and separated people, especially men, reported more problems.
- Men who described themselves as homemakers or unemployed reported a high rate of sleep problems.
- ***The worst sleep issues seem to be found in ages 18 to 24, men and women alike.***

Bedtime and Depression

A study of 15,000 teenagers included 1,143 who had depression and 2,038 who had experienced suicidal thoughts. Those with parental-mandated bedtimes of midnight or later were 25% more likely to suffer from depression and 20% more likely to have suicidal thoughts. The study supports the idea that inadequate sleep could lead to depression, said the lead author, James Gangwisch.

Sleep and School

The importance of sleep to academic performance is one of the most robust findings in sleep research in recent years. One study, from the University of Pittsburgh, found that math, history and English scores all correlated with sleep quality. Overall, teens in the study who had regular and predictable sleep schedules coped better with short-term sleep deficits than those with a more varying and chaotic sleep schedule. Another study, from Hendrix College in Conway, Ark., found that poor sleep patterns were linked to poorer academic performance and a decline in grade-point average during the transition from high school to college. Students who were "evening types" had an average GPA of 2.84 in the first year of college, whereas "morning or intermediate types" had an average GPA of 3.18.

For the entire article, visit: www.latimes.com/features/health/la-he-sleep15-2009jun15,0,6989411.story

THE STATE OF LEARNING DISABILITIES 2009

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) has created a groundbreaking report on the 'state' of learning disabilities in the United States. ***The State of Learning Disabilities 2009*** is a comprehensive report on the status of individuals with learning disabilities (LD) in the United States and provides a data-based perspective of LD in the context of education reform. NCLD offers this publication to policy makers, education professionals, media, parents and others to ensure that there is access to key LD data to and expand awareness about what LD is and whom the condition impacts.

Donald D. Deshler, Chairperson for the NCLD Professional Advisory Board, introduces the report proudly: *"Never before has a learning disabilities (LD) organization provided a comprehensive report on the status of individuals with LD and provided a data-based perspective of LD in the context of education reform. We offer it to policy makers, education professionals, media, parents and others to ensure that there is access to key LD data and expand awareness about what LD is and who the condition impacts. We hope the report will serve as the foundation for any education and disability policy decisions impacting over 15 million lives."*

KEY FACTS BULLETED IN THE REPORT:

- 2.7 million public school students—or about 5.5 % of all students in public schools—were identified as having learning disabilities in 2007 and were eligible to receive educational assistance under the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- The number of school-age children with learning disabilities who receive these Federally-authorized special education services escalated rapidly during the late 1980s and 1990s. However, during the last decade (1998-2007) the number of children identified as LD in public schools has declined by 7%.
- Males comprise almost two-thirds of school-age students with LD who receive special education services.
- The cost of educating a student with LD is 1.6 times the expenditure for a general education student. This is dramatically less than the average cost for all students with disabilities, which runs 1.9 times the cost for a general education student.
- In 2007, 59% of students with LD spent 80% or more of their in-school time in general education classrooms. In 2000, that figure was just 40%.
- Students with LD are retained in grade much more often than those without disabilities. In addition, they are involved in school disciplinary actions at a much higher rate than their nondisabled peers.
- Only a small percentage—estimated at between 25% and 35%—of students with LD are being provided with assistive technology to support their instruction and learning.
- The high school dropout rate among students with LD was 25% in 2007, down from 41% in 1997.
- More students with LD are graduating with a regular high school diploma—61% in 2007—up from 51% a decade earlier.
- Students with LD go on to postsecondary education at a much lower rate than their nondisabled peers, and of those who do, few seek supports in college and few earn undergraduate or advanced degrees.
- In 2005, 55% of adults with LD (ages 18-64) were employed compared to 76% of those without LD, 6% were unemployed vs. 3%, and 39% were not in the labor force vs. 21%.

To view the entire report, visit:

www.nclid.org/images/stories/OnCapitolHill/PolicyRelatedPublications/stateofd/stateofd2009.pdf

UPCOMING EVENTS

MD Coalition Webinar: Advocacy Strategies for Parents Webinar

Thursday, July 9th, 12 - 1pm

Online workshop presented by Cindy Hottinger, family navigator with the Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health. Learn what advocacy is, why it's important and how a parent can become the best advocate for their child at home and in school. Limited to 20 participants; pre-registration is required. Telephone conference call is available.

For more information or to register, e-mail callenza@mdcoalition.org.

The SharpBrains Guide to Brain Fitness

Tuesday, July 21st, 1 - 2pm

Alvaro Fernandez and Dr. Elkhonon Goldberg, co-authors of **The SharpBrains Guide to Brain Fitness** will cover the main highlights from this new book and address the questions submitted by readers. This book helps readers navigate through growing brain research and identify the lifestyle factors and products that contribute to brain fitness. By gathering insights from eighteen of the world's top scientists and offering tools and detailed descriptions of over twenty products, this book is an essential guide to the field of brain fitness, neuroplasticity and cognitive health.

For more information or to register, visit: www.sharpbrains.com/book/book-club-discussion-guide/

Gluten and Casein Diet Workshop

Wednesday, July 22nd, 10am - 12pm

Pathfinders For Autism Resource Center, 303 International Drive, Suite 110, Hunt Valley

Presenter: Lauren I. Mirkin, B.S., C.N., Nutritional Counseling

Registration deadline: July 20th.

Are you considering a Gluten and/or Casein Free diet? Not sure if it is a good fit for you and your family? This workshop will help you make the decision, covering topics such as the potential benefits, shopping strategies for the budget conscious, ready-made and easy meal planning, resources and more. Subsequent field trips to local grocery stores will be scheduled during the workshop so that participants can put into action what they learned. This workshop is FREE but registration is required.

For more information or to register, visit: www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevalID=185630

Harford County Asperger Support Group

Wednesday, July 29th, 7 - 8:30pm

Churchville Presbyterian, 2844 Churchville Road, Churchville

This parent support group meets the last Wednesday of the month.

For more information, email: Cindy.cochran@comcast.net

Summer Training Workshop--Sensory Sensitivity

Wednesday, July 29th, 6:30 - 8:30pm

Abilities Network, 8503 LaSalle Rd., Towson

\$30.00 per person non-refundable fee.

For more information or to register: 410-828-7700 x1203; 1-800-492-2523, www.abilitiesnetwork.org

A BIOLOGY OF MENTAL DISORDER ERIC KANDEL | NEWSWEEK

Dana Alliance Vice Chairman Eric Kandel writes in the upcoming *Newsweek*, issue dated Jul 13, 2009, of his optimism that the next 10 to 20 years will be more fruitful for neuroscience than the past two decades have been.

If you don't subscribe to the magazine, you can view the article by visiting:
www.newsweek.com/id/204320 or www.dana.org/

INSPIRATION CORNER

**“We don't receive wisdom;
we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us.”**
-MARCEL PROUST-

VITAMIN D AND THE BRAIN: MORE GOOD NEWS

Research indicates that vitamin D has health benefits for the brain as well as the rest of the body. **The best source of vitamin D: a few minutes in the sun, *without sunscreen*.** Although too much sun increases the risk of skin cancer, just a few minutes allows the body to produce far more vitamin D than is available in foods or supplements.

In the April issue of Dana Alliances Cerebrum, the article entitled **Vitamin D and the Brain: More Good News** authored by R. Douglas Shytle, Ph.D., and Paula C. Bickford, Ph.D. address the recent resurgence of interest in Vitamin D. Long ago, Vitamin D was discovered to be important for healthy bones. Now researchers find it also is significant in the brain during development, and as we age. Vitamin D has many roles in regulating brain health, from aiding the development of the brain and nervous system to postponing decline toward the end of life, according to a growing body of research. Shytle and Bickford argue that while it is clear that many people worldwide experience vitamin D deficiency, much more research must be conducted to fully understand the consequences of this deficiency for brain health. Currently, between 20 and 80 percent of the population worldwide have insufficient vitamin D levels, and what this means for their brains and bodies is not yet clear.

To read the complete article, visit: www.dana.org/news/cerebrum/detail.aspx?id=20980

2009 NATIONAL AUTISM CONFERENCE AUGUST 3RD – 7TH

This year's National Autism Conference will be held at The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, 215 Innovation Blvd, State College, PA. It will provide comprehensive, evidence-based information to assist educators, providers, and families in developing effective educational and therapeutic programming for all students with autism spectrum disorders, including Aspergers.

Who Should Attend? Family members, physicians, speech-language pathologists, administrators, higher education faculty, general and special education professionals, early intervention staff, related service personnel, behavioral health professionals, and anyone interested in autism spectrum disorders. Scholarships for students are available to support their participation in this conference. Students who intend to work as professionals in the field of autism in Pennsylvania schools should apply.

FEES:

Pennsylvania education professionals: \$150 for entire conference

Other Pennsylvania professionals: \$200 for entire conference

Out-of-state professionals: \$225 for entire conference

One-day fee: \$75

Pennsylvania family members or adults living with ASD: \$25 for entire conference

Non-Pennsylvania family members or adults living with ASD: \$50 for entire conference

*An additional charge of \$30 will be added to each walk-in registration.

Various sessions will be viewable live from your computer. The conference website highlights sessions that will be webcasted. During the conference, simply follow the instructions on the days that you wish to participate.

For more information: www.outreach.psu.edu/programs/autism

BRAIN BYTE



TRUE or FALSE

Smell is our strongest memory-inducing sense. TRUE!

Research has indicated **smell** to be the strongest memory-provoker.

(McAleer, 1985.) This might be because the receptors for these sensors go directly into the brain through the olfactory bulbs to the hippocampus, and require less processing than do the other senses. Therefore, an approach using multiple senses in presenting or exploring new material increases the likelihood that students will be able to recall the material in the future. Individuals have different strengths in receiving information through various senses, and so incorporating a multi-sensory approach will always provide stronger support.

SURVIVING 4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS

They're the symbol of our independence and bring joy to the faces of many. But, for people that experience intense sensory input, they can be thunderous and blinding. And each year so many of us stop and ask ourselves, "Do we go?" "What about our other children who really enjoy fireworks?" "Do we think our child can tolerate getting through this?"

There are some things to do to help make this traditional festivity an enjoyable experience for the whole family:

INVEST IN A SET OF HEADPHONES OR EARPLUGS

Earplugs to block noise - not the ones we use for swimming. Think construction worker grade or Etymotic earplugs. Or use a set of headphones. You can even play soothing or patriotic music through them.

Turn up the TV

Sometimes we live near a venue that hosts a fireworks display or our neighbors decide to create their own spectacular show. So what do we do when our homes are invaded by the noise? Try playing predictable music or a favorite TV show that will cover sound. It might even be a good time to whip out that Playstation.

Preview the show

By their nature, fireworks are unpredictable. But we can try to prepare our kids to better help them know what they can expect. Sparklers may not have much sound, but they look like mini fireworks. You can also watch videos of fireworks displays. YouTube (www.youtube.com) features a variety of fireworks shows.

WATCH FROM FAR AWAY

A grocery store or other nearby parking lot, or the side of the road with the windows rolled up may provide a comfortable distance.

TAKE COMFORT ITEMS

Pack items that help soothe your child, such as a weighted vest, favorite toy, snacks, or handheld game.

BE MINDFUL OF THE ENTIRE DAY'S SCHEDULE

Before the fireworks show, is there a party or a picnic? Are there breaks for downtime in the day? If it's an overloaded day, fireworks may just put your child over the edge. If fireworks are your priority activity for the day, consider limiting some of your other planned activities.

GIVE THAT SAFETY SPEECH

Don't miss this perfect opportunity to talk with your kids about fire safety and the dangers associated with explosive devices. Be cognizant too that some of our dislike of fireworks may come from anxiety or fear of being hurt. Reassure them that you are obeying the rules of safety.

And of course, be prepared that what worked last year, may or may not work this year. But isn't that what makes our lives such an adventurous journey?

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CREATING LIFELONG LEARNERS

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