

First Nations Special Education CONNECTIONS



Newsletter of the First Nations Special Education Toll-free Resource Line

Vol. 7, No. 7 March 2007

Do you work with First Nations students in British Columbia?

Do you have special education questions?

If so, you are invited to contact the First Nations Special Education Resource Line! The Resource Line is a free service for BC educators and parents.

The Resource Line is a free resource to help you brainstorm approaches, guide you toward helpful resources, help you to understand assessment documents, and share the latest information on special education.

When you call, you will reach the Resource Line Coordinator, Lisa Ellis. Lisa is available to answer your questions, Monday to Thursday, 12:30 to 4:30 during the school year.

Contact the Resource Line:
Toll-free 1-877-547-1919
lisae@fnesc.ca

Connections is the newsletter of the Resource Line. Back issues of *Connections* are available from www.fnsc.ca/resource-line.htm.

The Resource Line is a collaborative project of the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the First Nations Schools Association, made possible by financial assistance from the Department of Indian Affairs.

The countdown is on to Spring Break. The Resource Line will be closed over the break, but I will be back to answer your questions on March 26th. I hope you have a restful and refreshing vacation!

Lisa Ellis

Online Resources & Links

Reach to Teach: Educating Elementary and Middle School Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

By Substances and Mental Health Services Administration

http://fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/documents/18400_FASD_Reach2Teach102306.pdf

Reach to Teach is a valuable reference for parents and teachers to use in educating elementary and middle school children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). It provides a basic introduction to FASD, and gives specific classroom strategies to assist learning. These strategies include structuring a caring and consistent environment, shifting attitudes and improving understanding, learning to translate misbehaviour, changing classroom teaching style, restructuring the physical space in the classroom, and engaging the whole school community.

SNOW - Special Needs Ontario Window: Cultivating the Inclusive Education Community

<http://snow.utoronto.ca/>



Special Needs Ontario Window has been highlighted here before, but it is too good of a resource not to mention again. SNOW is an education service of The Adaptive Technology Resource Centre at the University of Toronto. This site is an excellent source for information on adaptive technology (see the sections on products, resources and discussion forums), but there is so much more to SNOW! There are online workshops, including free, self-paced workshops and moderated, tuition-based workshops. Check out the Mental Health in the Classroom course coming in April, or the Special Education Assistants Series. There are sections on ideas and innovations, teaching strategies, special programs, education resources, support and a great section for Kids, Parents and Community. Don't miss this important resource!

Articles Online

Creating a Safe and Nurturing Classroom Environment: A Guide for Teachers

Oregon Resiliency Project, University of Oregon

Full article available at:

<http://orp.uoregon.edu/downloads/safe%20and%20nurturing%20classroom%20handout.pdf>

Creating a classroom in which students feel comfortable, appreciated, and safe should be a goal of all educators. Strategies to create a safe and nurturing classroom environment can be easily incorporated into classroom routines and will enrich the academic environment.



Explicitly Teach Classroom Expectations

- Provide the skill name (for example, “respect”).
- Provide positive and negative examples of the behavior in various settings by demonstrating what is and is not an example of the skill.
- Allow students to practice the skill until it is mastered. This may provide a fun role-playing opportunity for the class.
- Consistently acknowledge and reward (give a thumbs-up, verbal praise, etc.) appropriate behaviour.

Involve Your Students

Students may be more likely to “buy into” classroom expectations if they have a role in creating them and most importantly, if they understand the rationale behind each rule.

Respond Clearly and Consistently to Misbehaviour

Response to misbehaviour should be unemotional and consistent. It may be helpful to have a “menu” of options to choose from when you encounter a misbehaving student.

Focus on the Positive

There are many ways to increase positive interactions with students and set a positive tone in your classroom and school, such as praise, positive contact home, and quiet chats throughout the day.

The Physical Environment is Important!

A thoughtfully arranged classroom will enable the teacher to respond to minor misbehaviour consistently and before it escalates and engage more frequently in positive interactions with all students.

Managing Physically Dangerous Behaviour

Before creating a plan to manage physically dangerous behaviour, consult with your principal about school policies and procedures.

- Immediately implement safety procedures to ensure everyone’s safety.
- Consider where the class will go and who will supervise the misbehaving student.
- Involve and notify the student’s parents or guardian.
- Develop record-keeping and reporting procedures.
- Determine whether other agencies should be involved.
- Remember, all interventions implemented should support the long-term goal of teaching the student to manage their own behaviour.

If a Teacher Stays Positive, the Class Will Follow

In most cases, the teacher’s positive attitude will have an immeasurable impact on the behaviour of the students and the classroom climate. Remember to acknowledge small victories! These may include changes in student behaviour, changes in academic performance, or your own commitment to creating a safe and nurturing environment for your students.

No Internet Access?

In Connections, many of the resources we publicize require Internet access. If you need a print copy of an article or other website item, contact the Resource Line.

Supporting the Struggling Older Reader

By Jane Baskill

Full article available at:

www.scholastic.ca/education/at-risk-readers/supportingstrugglingolder.pdf

By the time struggling older readers reach the upper elementary grades, they have likely been struggling to learn to read for a number of years. Some are so dependent upon help that they have lost sight of what they can do on their own. They have become passive with respect to learning and expect that what they learn depends on how well others help them.

One strategy is for the classroom teacher to become a “coach” for the student:

- Choose only a few students to focus on.
- Determine times each day when you can work one-on-one with students for 15-20 minutes (during literacy centres, group work, individual project time, personal reading or writing, etc.).
- Commit to 2-3 sessions each week for each child you select.
- Have everything ready to avoid wasting time. Place a book, observation notebook, and sight words, etc., in a special bag/box.
- Begin with a 2-5 minute warm up – no longer. Review strategies or earlier read chapters. Pre-teach concept, strategy or vocabulary.
- The remainder of the lesson is spent reading. Give feedback on what is working and what needs fine-tuning.
- Make anecdotal observations of strategies the student is using effectively and ineffectively.
- Note a focus for next session.

“Check Out” the Lending Library...

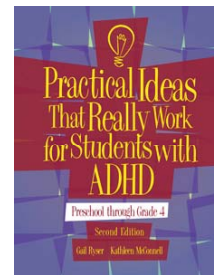
The FNEESC/FNSA Special Education Lending Library has many valuable resources for your work with First Nations students with special needs. Please note that the lending library is available to FNSA member schools only. Browse through the library's special education materials online by visiting the website <http://www.fnesc.org:88>. To request materials contact Patti Yamamoto at the FNEESC office at P: 1-877-422-3672, F: 604-925-6097 or email: pattiy@fnesc.ca.

Practical Ideas that Really Work for Students with ADHD

by McConnell, Ryser and Higgins

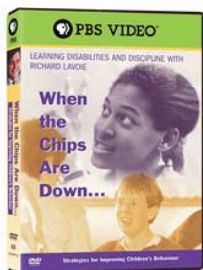
This book was created for educators who work with students who have attention, impulsivity, or hyperactivity problems that interfere with their work. The materials are intended for use with students in kindergarten through grade 12 and include two main components:

1. An easy to use evaluation form to rate a student's behaviours that interfere with student learning and a matrix to select appropriate interventions; and
2. A book of practical ideas, containing suggestions for interventions to improve students attending and organizational skills and in decreasing their behaviour problems related to impulsivity and hyperactivity. The book contains a one-page explanation of each idea, along with reproducible worksheets, examples, illustrations, and tips designed for easy implementation.



Learning Disabilities and Discipline: When the Chips Are Down

Video hosted by Richard Lavoie



Do you ever have days when the kids seem totally out of control? Do you find yourself falling into the same pointless arguments with your students or your children?

Host Richard Lavoie, nationally known expert on learning disabilities, offers practical advice on dealing with behavioural problems quickly and effectively. He shows how preventative discipline can anticipate many problems before they start. He also explains how teachers and parents can create a stable, predictable environment in which children with learning disabilities can flourish.

Dates for your Calendar

Don't miss local special education related workshops and conferences! The 2006-2007 Special Professional Development issue of Connections is available online at: www.fnsa.ca/resource-line.htm.

March 8-10 – Victoria. 2nd International Conference for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Research, Policy, and Practice Around the World. At the Fairmont Empress Hotel. The conference goal is to provide participants with the means to use research and practice to inform and shape policy regarding fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Information at www.interprofessional.ubc.ca. Contact Joanne Nam at ipad@interchange.ubc.ca.

March 12-13 - Queen Charlotte/Haida Gwaii. Dr. Gordon Neufeld presents a 2 day course on Making Sense of Adolescence. For information contact Lisa Shoop at lshoop@sd50.bc.ca or (250) 559-8471 ext. 8.

March 13 – Teleconference. Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and the Developing Fetus: Links to Developmental Disabilities with Ann P. Streissguth, PhD. Free. For more information, go to the Initiative website at www.ehinitiative.org and click on the button that says next teleconference. There you will find the announcement with logistical information and the presentation under “materials” to download or follow along on your computer.

March 15-16 – Vancouver. 32nd annual Crosscurrents Conference presented by the Special Education Association of BC. At the Westin Bayshore, featuring a line-up of top quality presenters and a wide range of sessions relevant to teachers working with students who have special learning needs. For more information, see www.bctf.ca/sea or contact Priscilla Fortier, priscillaf@shaw.ca.

March 29 – Victoria. Presentations from FASD Key Worker, Family Group Conferencing Facilitator, Mediation Coordinator and Elder. Parent/caregiver workshop presented by FASD Community Circle. 1-4, 208-Tillicum Rd. Register with Janet Christie at (250) 381-2535.

March 31 – Nanaimo. The Nanaimo FASD Society presents a workshop on FASD for parents, caregivers, teachers, Educational Assistants, and others. Dr. Diana Russell, Neuropsychologist, will explain the brain and the impact of alcohol & Francine Gohier, Occupational Therapist, will share practical strategies on how to support the learning for school-aged children. \$10 registration, seats are limited. Call (250) 758-6317 to register.

March 31 - Prince George. Supported Child Development Conference at the College of New Caledonia. Keynote speaker is Bev Zorn. Early registration is \$50 and late registration after March 15 is \$60; fee includes morning coffee, muffins and lunch. Please register at the Child Development Centre, 1687 Strathcona Ave. or by telephone (250) 563-7168 or by email: scc@cdcp.org.

April 19-20 - Saskatoon, SK. Where It's AT - Assistive Technology for Children & Youth Conference. Speakers: Susie Blackstien-Adler, M.Ed., B.Sc. O.T. (Bloorview Kids Rehab, Toronto), on supporting participation of students with high needs in the activities of the classroom; and Stacey Harpell, B.S., M.S., CCC-SLP (Saskatoon Health Region), on social communication. Contact Events of Distinction, t: 651-3118; f: 651-3119; eofd@sasktel.net.

April 19-21 - Coquitlam. Encompass 2007 Conference (K-12), Celebrating Social Emotional Learning and Academic Success, with keynote speaker Alfie Kohn, featured speakers Dr. Mary Utne O'Brien, Dr. Gabor Matté, Dr. Ishu Ishiyama, Roy Henry Vickers, Terry Waterhouse, Dr. Kim Schonert-Reichl, Dr. Shelley Hymel, Dr. Martin Brokenleg and Renee Hodgkinson, and 80 to 90 related workshops. Registration available online February 2007. Information: <http://www.cta43.org/pd-encompass-07.htm> or contact Gerry Lush, 604-936-9971, pd43@bctf.ca.