

FDLRS Record

Newsletter for the University of Florida FDLRS program in Jacksonville

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My child is more defiant and irritable than other children his age and it is negatively impacting our daily life. Where can I turn for help?

By Carrie Fagen, M.Ed.

According to the DSM-5, the core feature of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is “a frequent and persistent pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior, or vindictiveness.” Despite whether or not your child meets criteria for ODD, behavioral difficulties can be treated.

A key evidence-based treatment for ODD is parent management training, where the parents and child are both involved in therapy. Parents are taught effective discipline techniques, and how and when to effectively reinforce appropriate behavior. The most effective plan of this type entails an individualized treatment plan, which takes into consideration the child’s age, family resources, and specific behaviors needing to be targeted. Such a treatment may take several months, and may involve strategies to be used at school.

Many child psychologists and behavior therapists are specifically trained to conduct parent management training. The psychologists/therapists sometimes write an individualized behavior plan for the family being treated, model the implementation of the plan for the family, provide feedback to the family on their implementation of the plan, and monitor the plan’s effectiveness by collecting data on the frequency and/or intensity of behavioral problems.

There is no medication to treat ODD, although comorbid conditions may be simultaneously treated through medication (e.g., ADHD, depression, anxiety).

For most children, ODD does improve over time, with three-year follow-up studies reporting a remission of ODD symptoms in 67% of cases. Hence, there is significant hope for improvement in children’s behavior and their families’ daily lives. Check out this new site!

<http://forparents.florida-ese.org/>

Reference:

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (2013, July). *Oppositional defiant disorder resource center: Frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from [http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Oppositional Defiant Disorder Resource Center/FAQ.aspx#ODDFAQ1](http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Oppositional_Defiant_Disorder_Resource_Center/FAQ.aspx#ODDFAQ1)

OUR SERVICES

Who we Serve:

- Individuals between the ages of 3 & 22 who have not graduated high school.
- Who are struggling in school and have complicated medical, behavioral, developmental, &/or social histories
- And who reside in Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, & St. Johns counties

Services for Families:

- Comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment, which may include psychoeducational, emotional-behavioral, &/or developmental pediatric evaluations
- Feedback sessions and a report detailing our findings
- Assistance in planning for your child’s educational and psychological needs
- Trainings for parents covering a variety of topics

Services for the Community:

- Training/consultations for educators, students, & other professionals
- Educational consultation and support services: This can include collaboration with school personnel to facilitate school placement & provision of services

Prevent Summer Learning Loss: Practice Math Every Day!

By Shannon Knagge, Psy.S.

A common pitfall of extended breaks from school is the loss of hard-earned academic skills gained throughout the school year. According to Duke University's Harris Cooper (1996), "Overall, children experience an average summer learning loss across reading and mathematics of about one month." Unfortunately, math computation skills take the biggest hit from summer vacation with an average learning loss of 2.6 months (Cooper, 1996).

Incorporating daily math computation practice into your summer routine can keep your students' skills fresh and maybe even teach them something new!

Make it Physical

Incorporate math into games like basketball, hopscotch, and jump rope! For any game that requires scorekeeping, create a rule like multiplying points earned by 9 or keep it simple by adding 3 (or whatever number you're working on). Children playing hopscotch can be required to create an equation that equals the number that they landed on, while those jump roping can practice counting by 10s, 20s, even 35s!

Make it Practical

Ask your child to calculate the tip at a dine-in restaurant or the change at a drive-thru. When at the grocery store, have your child weigh the produce and multiply the number by the posted price per pound, add up the total amount spent before arrival at the cash register, or a total amount saved with coupons.

Have your children calculate square footage of space that is being vacuumed or mopped to determine fair division of chores.

Make it Fun

Play card games and board games together, allowing your child to keep score.

Cook a recipe that requires doubling or tripling the measurements, then host a neighborhood gathering!

Show your child 'how to' math games on a site like www.coolmath.com

Reference:

Cooper, H. M., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsey, J. & Greathouse, S. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on student achievement test scores: A meta-analytic and narrative review. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 227-268.

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UF FDLRS serves
Baker, Clay, Duval,
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Johns County.

STEM: A Parent's Guide

by Carrie Fagen, M.Ed.

The acronym *STEM* refers to **S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, and **M**ath. STEM education has become a greater emphasis in our schools, and the reasons for this focus are many. Current job growth trends indicate that careers in STEM fields, such as engineering and network systems analysis, are progressing at a much faster rate than those in other fields. Currently, many companies are unable to find qualified employees to fill positions related to science, technology, engineering and math. These companies are increasingly concerned about the workforce of the future as the need for these qualified applicants continues to grow. Another factor to consider is our role as a nation in world affairs. If the United States hopes to maintain its global leadership, we must keep our students up to par with other world powers. Unfortunately, recent reports indicate our world ranking in the areas of science, math and problem solving is rapidly declining. To catch up globally, not only do we need to provide our students with basic curriculum in STEM fields, but we also need to find ways to motivate these students to pursue more rigorous, globally-competitive, STEM-related areas of study.

From a very young age, children are naturally curious about the world around them. Parents who encourage their toddlers to explore, tinker with toys, build, play in the dirt, and read science-related books foster an early interest in science. Taking field trips to state parks, beaches, zoos, and other science-rich sites can help a child not only learn more about natural sciences but also develop an appreciation and a desire to care for the environment. Little ones are also notorious for asking "Why?" questions all day long. Rather than quickly responding to all these many questions, a wise parent will investigate with his or hers child and encourage problem solving strategies.

As a child enters school, his or her interest in particular STEM-related areas is likely to become more distinct. Some children may develop an interest in technology, whereas others may enjoy nature or learning more about animals. Even if a parent isn't interested in or is unfamiliar with a particular area of study, he or she can still provide his or her child with opportunities to develop a greater passion and knowledge in that field. Afterschool clubs and summer camps that focus on particular STEM interests abound, and children should be encouraged to participate in such activities. Just having conversations with a child about what he or she already knows or is currently learning in science and mathematics further solidifies learning. Keep in mind that laying the groundwork early can help pave the way for a child's future endeavors. Recent studies

indicate that a majority of individuals who are currently employed in a STEM-related field developed their interest in science and mathematics in the elementary years.

Traditionally, STEM-related fields are male-dominated. Concerned about this lack of female presence in some of the most competitive and profitable fields, girls-only STEM organizations are popping up all over the country. Clubs such as Girls Who Code and Girls Inc. provide young females with the opportunity to explore math and science fields in a positive, nurturing environment. Young women who participate in these clubs learn that with persistence and positive attitudes they, too, can be successful in areas that are typically thought of as male fields.

In summary, there are many steps you can do to develop your child's interest and knowledge in science, technology, engineering and math. These steps include exposing your child to STEM-related fields of study, allowing them to pursue their science and math passions, conversing with them about their learning, encouraging problem solving and persistence when faced with challenges, and demonstrating a positive attitude about math and sciences.

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Pediatric Depression

By Stephanie Holmes, Ph.D.

Children experiencing depression often attribute their successes to something outside of themselves, while attribute their failures to something within themselves. For example, a child with depression may think, 'We lost the soccer game because I kicked the ball out of bounds' or may think, 'We only won the soccer game because Sally recovered the ball after I kicked it to the other team.' Similarly, children with depression are often quick to interpret the actions of others through a negative lens that ultimately reinforces a negative self-esteem. For example, a child may think *nobody* likes him when somebody fails to say hi to him in the classroom; yet, this child may erroneously overlook or discount the other three people that said hi to him that day. Such thoughts are often irrational and unhelpful, and perpetuate the experience of depression further. Other symptoms also occur within depression, including symptoms that affect sleep, eating, concentration, and behavior. The good news is that pediatric depression is treatable.

Firstline treatments of pediatric depression often include behavioral interventions, whereby children are instructed to engage in an activity that has the opportunity to offer them enjoyment (e.g., basketball, bowling, swinging in the park). Behavioral interventions sometimes include social skills training, whereby children are taught how to appropriately interact with peers, and therefore increase the chances of experiencing successful, enjoyable social interactions. Other treatment interventions may be more

“Firstline treatments of pediatric depression often include behavioral interventions,…”

cognitive in nature, whereby children are instructed in the precise cognitive errors or irrational/

unhelpful thinking patterns that they are naturally making. For example, a common cognitive error made in depression is 'all-or-nothing thinking,' whereby children engage in dichotomous thinking, and fail to recognize there may be a 'middle-ground.' A classic example of this cognitive error is where children think that either 'nobody' likes them, or that 'everybody' likes them, and fail to recognize that it is possible for many, yet not all, people to like them.

Despite the precise intervention utilized, treatments generally entail psychoeducation of the child's depression, helping the child to identify and communicate the type of feeling he/she is experiencing, and helping the child to identify and communicate the intensity of the feeling. It is best practice to involve parents or guardians in treatment so that adults may be given guidance on how to facilitate the use of treatment strategies in the home setting with their children, and to recognize therapeutic progress and

praise their children for utilizing their coping strategies. Of course, all treatments entail an assessment of any suicidal ideation at the start, and such ideation must be dealt with immediately.

If you are concerned that your child may be experiencing depression, it is recommended that you seek a psychologist, therapist, or counselor for your child who is experienced in working with children. For more severe cases of depression, consultation with a child psychiatrist may be warranted in order to determine whether psychotropic medications may be an appropriate piece of your child's treatment plan. Treatments are available to combat pediatric depression; the first step is recognizing the presence of depressive symptoms and taking the initiative to contact a specialist so that your child may be a healthy, happy, hopeful child again.

Reference:

Friedberg, R. D. & McClure, J. M. (2002). *Clinical Practice of Cognitive Therapy with Children and Adolescents*. New York: The Guilford Press.

We Have An App For That: Pre-Readiness Skills for Kindergarten

By Michele Bell-Badger, MA, CCC-SLP

As we enjoy the summer break, we begin to turn the page towards planning for the fall of 2015-2016. If you have a 5-year old like I do, my focus is on the question, "Is he prepared for Kindergarten?" Let's face it, my expectation of a Kindergarten curriculum looks nothing like my son's projected Kindergarten curriculum. The expectation for this next generation seems to be far advanced than the expectation in earlier generations. As a parent, the realization of these high standards can be overwhelming. For all of the parents facing the same fears or anxiety that I am feeling, and asking yourself, "Is he or she ready for Kindergarten?" these apps are provided just for you.

Happy Surfing!



Name of App	Name of Developer	Details of App	Cost of App
Children's Countdown-Visual Timer	Fehners Software, LLP	Visual timer for children	Free Offers in-app purchases
Funbrain Jr.	Pearson Education, Inc.	Letter recognition, letter sounds, early literacy, fine motor skills sequence, order, patterns, quantity and number sets	Free
Alphabet Aquarium School Adventure	CFC.s.o.r. Parent's Choice Award Winner	Four puzzle games that feature the letters of the alphabet.	Lite version available for Free and in-app purchases Full Version is \$1.99
Kindergarten Readiness	Pearson Education, Inc. Gold Award of Excellence in the educational category at the 2014 Communicator Awards.	Early math, literacy, cognitive development, self-care, motor skills, communication and social skills	\$1.99
Phonics Island Early Reading Spelling & Tracing Montessori Preschool	CFC.s.o.r. Parent's Choice Award Winner	Recognize letter sounds, trace uppercase and lowercase letters, match letters, recognize a variety of animals, identify beginning sounds	Lite version available for Free Full version is \$2.99

Understanding ADHD

By Carrie Fagen, M.Ed.

One of the key challenges of ADHD is deficits in executive functioning. Poor executive functioning can negatively impact a child's ability to function successfully in daily life, as the following traits are either weak or non-existent:

1. Inhibition: the ability to stop one's behaviors at the appropriate time
2. Shift: the ability to think flexibly in order to respond appropriately to changing situations
3. Emotional Regulation: the ability to modulate emotions by being rational
4. Initiation: the ability to begin an activity independently and apply problem-solving strategies
5. Working Memory: the ability to keep necessary information in mind when completing a task
6. Planning/Organization: the ability to manage current and future tasks
7. Organization of Materials: the ability to create order in work and play spaces
8. Self-Monitoring: the ability to analyze one's performance and measure it against what is expected

While many of us may struggle with a few of the above areas from time to time, individuals with ADHD typically have greater difficulties with more of these functions at a greater intensity than those without ADHD. These deficits often lead to poor school performance and peer relations. Even bright and competent students begin to see themselves as incapable or ineffective when they can't keep up with the expectations of the classroom or the home. A child who experiences negative outcomes academically and/or interpersonally on a regular basis may become overly self-critical or apathetic. This, in turn, can lead to other serious secondary problems, such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

Children with deficits in executive functioning need external supports from adults to successfully navigate through their home and school life. Modifying tasks and supplementing the executive system gives the opportunity for children with ADHD to be more successful in all areas of life. Keep in mind, the overall goal is to have children learn how to manage tasks and demands independently. However, building executive skills takes time and consistency, as well as an understanding of what "buffers" should be in place until such skills are more developed.

One of the most effective ways of building executive skills is by helping children develop habits and routines that become automatic. Creating lists and visuals can be helpful both at home and school but only if these lists are



reviewed together on a daily basis. Providing simple incentives for following the expectations of these lists can further motivate an individual and is more effective than employing only negative consequences when tasks are not completed correctly.

For novel tasks, parents and teachers can teach children strategies to remember important information by keeping directions short, having the child repeat directions, and encouraging the child to visualize the process of completing the task. Another strategy for remembering new information is using a multisensory approach, such as singing a song, clapping out assignments, or encouraging the child to create his or her own list or notes.

Individuals with ADHD are at greater risk for risky behaviors and substance abuse. Parents of adolescents who exhibit poor impulse control should keep this in mind and provide closer supervision and tighter limits than the typically developing teenager. Although this might seem "unfair" to the adolescent with ADHD, firm boundaries can protect the teenager from the devastating life-altering impact of poor decision making. Parents can encourage teenagers that limits will gradually be lifted as behaviors demonstrate such limits are no longer necessary.

Although individuals with ADHD have difficulties with executive functioning, these challenges can be overcome with proper support and instruction. Developing these skills requires explicit instruction, consistency of routines, and time. As strategies become habits and a child experiences success, the child becomes more aware of his or her ability to succeed. In the optimal environment, weaknesses in executive functioning can be overcome.

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