

News & Announcements

Upcoming STR Workshops

The following STR workshop is being hosted by Pearkes Recreation Centre. To register, please call Pearkes at 475-5400, or register online at: www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/resident/recreation/prc.html

▶ Provincial Exam Prep

date: Saturday, June 2, 2007
time: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
cost: \$65

Please contact us directly if you would like to arrange a workshop in your school or home.

Student Seminar

▶ Grow Into Riches

This is a seminar for students struggling with organization and self-confidence – offered by John Crawford, an educator with more than 30 years experience.

dates: Saturday, May 5, 9am to 4pm
and Sunday, May 6, 9am to noon
location: Holiday Inn,
3020 Blanshard St., Victoria
cost: \$50

register at: crawfordint@shaw.ca
Crawford says, “Teaching is my passion! My experience has shown me that no child will learn effectively without one essential ingredient – self-confidence. Unless a child believes in themselves and their capacity to achieve success, learning is limited and more importantly, their own opportunities become restricted.”

This seminar provides students with:
~ an understanding of how the mind works in both positive and self-limiting ways,
~ the strategies necessary to achieve self-empowerment, and
~ the personal and social responsibilities that accompany this knowledge.

This Seminar gives young people the understanding and incentive to take responsibility for their own success.

Paying Attention to Homework:

Suggestions for Parents of Students with Attention Difficulties

by Dahlia Miller

“The wildest colts make the best horses.”
Themistocles 514-449 BC

Doing homework isn’t an easy task for any student. For students with “attention difficulties” it can be much more challenging.

These students may have difficulty sitting down to do homework. They may feel overwhelmed by how much work there is, and so do nothing. They may get frustrated, not understanding what is expected or why an assignment is important. They may be distracted and so spend hours “doing” homework but with little result.

Parents can help their child who has attention difficulties feel more comfortable doing homework, and experience more successes, by working creatively with their child’s strengths. Below are some tips for parents – the list is by no means exhaustive and definitely needs to be tailored to each student’s needs.

Study Space

- ▶ Reduce extraneous or distracting information from study environment.
- ▶ Check in to see if there are any “hidden” attention distracters in study areas – feel/size/look of pencil or paper, uncomfortable chair, etc.
- ▶ Post a calendar to mark in upcoming assignments and projects (as well as completion dates for rough work).
- ▶ Make posters about information being learned and post them around study area (ex. spelling words or information that needs to be remembered) – this can allow the student to learn passively through exposure, if it isn’t too distracting.
- ▶ Provide computerized learning materials when possible and appropriate.

- ▶ Provide school supplies that meet your child’s interests and talents – white boards, tape recorders, poster paper.
- ▶ Consider setting up two study spaces so the student can move between them – this allows movement as well as self-regulation.

Working with Homework

- ▶ Encourage list-making and setting of priorities.
- ▶ Set specific goals for each homework sitting to provide success.
- ▶ Help student get started on projects or assignments.
- ▶ Pre-task preview – outline the purpose of each task clearly with clear sequence of steps, and have the child repeat instructions.
- ▶ Highlight key information in questions.
- ▶ When explaining material, start at the student’s level – break tasks into small, discreet steps with time limits.
- ▶ Use a watch alarm to show a time limit.
- ▶ Cover worksheets up to focus on only a few questions at a time.
- ▶ Check in with mid-task reinforcement – focus on short intervals.
- ▶ Avoid character assassinations when homework is difficult.
- ▶ Offer rewards.
- ▶ Colour code notebooks so they’re simpler to keep organized.
- ▶ Set up a homework notebook to keep work that is “to do” and “to hand in” obvious.
- ▶ Consider/Test how your student thinks – in words, numbers, pictures, music, physical sensations. Use strategies to tap natural cognitive aspects. Some examples:
 - ▶ ▶ *Visualization or guided imagery* – imagine a trip through the circulatory system or visualize the spelling of a word or a scene from history, draw

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents through:

In-home private tutoring matched specifically to each student's needs.

Stimulating workshops building skills in a practical and creative way.

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through one-on-one support that is truly individualized, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. They are carefully screened and chosen specially to match the needs and learning styles of each student.

We support families in education.

For more information and resources, visit us on-line at:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

Contact Us

Managing Director Registration

Dahlia Miller
250-544-1588
dahlia@SmartTutorReferrals.com

Mailing Address:

7281 Chatwell Drive
Saanichton, BC
V8M 1M8

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

pictures to illustrate math problems or visualize the steps to a math problem.

- ▶ ▶ *Biofeedback or kinaesthetic approaches* – spell words with the body or jump for consonants and sit for vowels, have a reading rocking chair, act continental drift by walking around room, dance a conga line for multiplication with kicks at correct multiples, pantomime.
- ▶ ▶ *Music* – read aloud with music in background and have student just relax and listen to music, develop rhymes to help memorization, write a song to help memorize information, do work to metronome or steady background beat.
- ▶ ▶ *Self talk or talk aloud* to focus or organize thoughts – teach someone the material, describe the steps before doing the work, conduct interviews on tape.
- ▶ ▶ *Videos*, computer sites, etc.
- ▶ Support regular and frequent breaks – especially physically active breaks.
- ▶ Show the student evidence of improvement.
- ▶ Help child verbalize frustrations – take a break to regain control and brainstorm alternatives.
- ▶ Assess if additional academic support is needed at home or school.
- ▶ Set specific times for specific tasks – when does your child focus best? Perhaps arrange homework to be done then.
- ▶ Teach organization and study skills.
- ▶ Build memorizing skills with memory techniques (see the April 2004 *Smart Connection* for examples of mnemonics) or use study tools like flashcards.
- ▶ Use drama and have fun when explaining information – encourage creativity and improvisation.

Working with Teachers

- ▶ Educate yourself about the school system, philosophies, policies, supports.
- ▶ Work directly and respectfully with teachers and counsellors – express appreciation to them for their dedication to your child's education.
- ▶ Provide teachers with brief materials on ADD, ADHD or other learning difficulties, as appropriate.
- ▶ Set a homework plan with the teacher.
- ▶ Suggest the least distractible seating in the class (at the front or the back usually).
- ▶ Ask that assignments be modified, if needed (submitting a recording or photo journal instead of a report, for example; or

shortening an assignment – teacher, parent and student agreeing on a minimum time effort to be put into the work).

- ▶ Request your child be allowed alternatives to in-class activities (allowing student to do homework during free reading time, for example).
- ▶ Encourage your child to ask for help at school – role-play how to advocate.
- ▶ Involve students in decision-making with school-related issues.

Home: General Suggestions

- ▶ As a family discuss topics being studied.
- ▶ Set clearly structured daily routines – be predictable.
- ▶ Tell what is coming next and what the situation will look like.
- ▶ Offer frequent healthy snacks.
- ▶ Let the student dictate the necessary boundaries and limits – allow him/her to assume accountability for effects of behaviour.
- ▶ Ask child how many reminders s/he wants.
- ▶ Pre-determine consequences – be clear and consistent.
- ▶ Give immediate feedback.
- ▶ Catch your child being good.
- ▶ Brainstorm and post your child's positive traits – hold a positive image of your child as a student.
- ▶ Discuss what your child is feeling inside – about self, school, friends, and parents.
- ▶ Encourage creative expression at home – clay, paints, building materials or in classes for music, dance, painting, pottery, etc.
- ▶ Remember that free unstructured play contributes to a child's intellectual, social and emotional welfare – allow opportunities to make good choices.
- ▶ Offer positive role models.

Selected Bibliography

[ADD/ADHD Alternatives in the Classroom](#). Armstrong, Thomas. 1999: ASCD, Virginia.

[From Chaos to Calm](#). Heininger, Janet E. 2001: Berkeley Publishing, NY.

[Teaching the Restless: One School's Remarkable No-Ritalin Approach to Helping Children Learn and Succeed](#). Mercogliano, Chris. 2004: Beacon Press.

[Teenagers with ADD & ADHD](#). Zeigler Dendy, Chris. 2000: Woodbine House.

[T.O.L.D. Checklist & Strategy Guide](#). Allison, Barbara & Mary-Jane Hardie. 1997.