



Families Together, Inc.



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Together We Can Learn Conference

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Winter 2015

A quarterly publication from Families Together, Inc., the Parent Training and Information and Health Information Center for the state of Kansas

Test Taking

Second semester demands of test taking should be addressed with sound strategies for reducing student anxiety and improving performance.

- Get a good night's rest. Sleeping only six hours instead of eight increases levels of the stress hormone cortisol by 50%, and sleep-deprived people score 30% lower on memory tests.
- Eat the right breakfast. Students who eat breakfast score higher on tests and report less test-related anxiety. Eat eggs for brain-boosting choline, and oatmeal for a calming increase in serotonin levels.
- After breakfast, try some dark chocolate; it boosts memory, alertness, and concentration, and its special chemicals can decrease anxiety.
- Along with a pencil, have students bring a bottle of water with them to the test. Even the slightest dip in hydration levels can lead to stress, memory loss,

and a drop in mental functioning.

- Immediately before testing, have students write about their worries. Students who are prone to test anxiety have improved their test scores by nearly one grade point after they were given 10 minutes to write about what was causing them fear.
- Try chewing some gum. In one study, the act of chewing was found to activate the hippocampus, the brain area responsible for memory, improving recall by 35%.
- Have students write affirmations, such as:

I will get enough sleep before the test.

I will eat a good breakfast on the day of the test.

I will hydrate my body so I do well on the test.



Communicate the importance of these strategies with students and their families for best results.

For additional ideas, visit **Dr. Laura Riffel** www.behaviordocor.org.



En La Toma De Exámenes

Las exigencias en la toma de exámenes del segundo semestre se deben abordar con estrategias sólidas para reducir la ansiedad estudiantil y mejorar el rendimiento.

- Tener una buena noche de descanso.
- Durmiendo solo seis horas en lugar de ocho aumenta los niveles de la hormona cortisol de estrés en un 50%, y a las personas les priva del sueño en un 30% menos en el momento del examen.
- Comer el desayuno correcto. Los estudiantes que comen desayuno tienen mayor puntuación en los exámenes y reportan menos ansiedad en los exámenes. Los huevos impulsan colina y la avena calma el aumento en los niveles de serotonina cerebral.
- Después del desayuno, probar un poco de chocolate oscuro. Este aumenta la memoria, el estado de alerta, la concentración, y sus productos químicos especiales pueden disminuir la ansiedad.
- Junto con un lápiz, también los estudiantes pueden traer una botella de agua con ellos a los exámenes. Incluso en la menor inmersión en los niveles de hidratación puede conducir a estrés, pérdida de la memoria y una baja en el funcionamiento mental.
- Inmediatamente antes del examen, haga que los estudiantes escriban sobre sus preocupaciones. Los estudiantes que son propensos a la ansiedad han mejorado sus puntajes por casi un grado después que les dieron diez minutos para escribir sobre lo que le causaba miedo.
- Trate una goma de mascar. En un estudio, el acto de mascar fué fundado para activar el hipocampo, que es el responsable del área cerebral para la memoria, éste mejora la memoria en un 35%.
- Hága que los estudiantes escriban afirmaciones, tales como:
 - Conseguiré dormir lo suficiente antes del examen.
 - Voy a comer un buen desayuno el día del examen.
 - Hidrataré mi cuerpo para que me vaya bien en el examen.

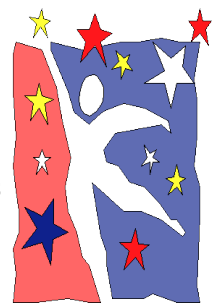
Comunicarles a los alumnos y a los familiares la importancia de éstas estrategias para un mejor resultado.

Para ideas adicionales, visite **Dra. Laura Riffel** www.behaviordocor.org.

The Surveys are Coming!

Darla Nelson-Metzger

Each year, all trained and active education advocates receive an annual survey. However, this year's survey will be electronic and will arrive in your inbox! If we do not have an e-mail address for you, we will send your survey through post. The information you provide us is extremely important to us. The first part of the survey will provide us with your most current contact information and your willingness to continue serving as an education advocate. If you are serving a student (or multiple students), you will also complete a second part of the survey. This section will give us an idea of your involvement, the child's educational program, and the current status of the child. It is important to note that you will complete this section for each student to whom you are assigned. So, if you serve five students, you will complete this section five times. This data will be aggregated and provided to the Kansas State Department of Education in June. The new electronic survey will be user-friendly and should only take a few minutes to complete. It is our hope that this will lead to an improved return rate. As this is a new way of doing things, we still have a few "kinks" to work out, but hope to get the survey out to you sometime in March. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and as always, thank you for your commitment to Kansas kids!



Family Story

By Katie & John Hunter

It all began 13 years ago when my whopping 9 lb. boy was born. I knew right away something was not right. He was frustrated when you would hold him but he would cry when you did not. He could not sleep unless he was moving. He never looked at us cooed or babbled. At 7 months he started walking which showed his gross motor skills were advanced, however, this shadowed his struggles. At 18 month I expressed my concerns over his lack of speech abilities and was accepted at our local Early Childhood Center for speech and OT services. After 6 months his speech therapist expressed concern so we then took him to a psychiatrist. After some evaluations she simply said "Kermit has Autism. He will NEVER talk, NEVER play and NEVER make friends." She gave us no hope. I cried. We left her office in a daze. My husband never expressed much emotion or concerns. I, however, buried myself in research. I contacted Families Together and attended conferences they offered. I met Temple Grandin and decided if she can do it, so can Kermit.

The doctor in Denver told us, "It is not IF he will, it is WHEN he will. Never say never." Finally some hope! Our first IEP meeting we were uneducated, intimidated and scared. I was determined Kermit was going to succeed and pursued every option I could think of. The struggles began to affect my health as well. After some success with our school and moving to a smaller district Kermit began to talk at 6 years old and reading at a 2nd grade level. We were able to get Kermit a service dog and she attended school with him. He has begun to excel academically and although he struggles with his social skills he has been able to make friends, most of them in the regular education classroom. He is now in 4-H and Youth Group. He is also on the B Honor roll. He has recently joined the track team and aspires to be a meteorologist. I will not stand in the way of his dreams.

Because Kermit has taught me so much about compassion, patience and to see all the little successes, I have become a supporting parent and a strong advocate for other families who have traveled the same journey we have. Kermit is proof that only God knows! The sky is the limit!! Never give up!!



From the Director's Desk

Families and Appointed Advocates:

We are excited to share the brochure for our annual Statewide Conference: Together We Can Learn. This year we are collaborating with the Capper Foundation and the Topeka Autism Society to bring a wonderful and inspiring day of speakers for families and the professionals who serve them. Please see the enclosed flyer for details about a conference YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS!

Most of you have read the papers and heard the news about the state of the Kansas economy. One of the results of the lower than expected revenues is cuts to government agencies and the grantees who work with them. Families Together has been the recipient of some significant cuts in funding that have resulted in staff reductions. We will continue to do everything we can to meet the needs of the families who call us, but there might be times when a message will need to be left for a Parent Information Specialist to call back. Please be patient with us as we try to serve every family with fewer staff members.

These reductions in state funds make it even more important for you to support the services that have been important to you. Please consider a donation to Families Together, through the mail or our website. Perhaps there is a family member (grandparent, godparent, or sibling) or a friend who would like to support the organization that has helped your family. Would you offer them the opportunity to make a donation to Families Together?

Spring is near! Make the most of the last months of the school year with your child! Call if we can help with your IEP planning.

Connie

Families Make the Difference

Families Together, Inc. founded in 1982, serves as the Parent Training and Information Center and Family to Family Health Information Center for Kansas and provides opportunities for families to come together and meet other families who are navigating the special education and disability services maze. Each year, Families Together, Inc. provides, without fees, direct support to thousands of Kansas families. In addition, through workshops, conferences and partnerships with state, local and national organizations, Families Together provides training to nearly 4,000 families and professionals working with children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs.

Garden City Center 1-888-820-6364

gardencity@famielstogetherinc.org

Topeka Center 1-800-264-6343

topeka@famielstogetherinc.org

Wichita Center 1-888-815-6364

wichita@famielstogetherinc.org

www.famielstogetherinc.org

Calendar of Events

Check our website for added events or visit our Facebook page!

April 11, 2015	<i>Together We Can Learn Conference</i>	<i>800-264-6343</i>
May 2, 2015	<i>Family Employment Awareness Training Part 1, Manhattan</i>	<i>800-264-6343</i>
May 5, 2015	<i>Education Advocate Training, Wichita</i>	<i>800-264-6343</i>
May 8, 2015	<i>Family Employment Awareness Training Part 2, Manhattan</i>	<i>800-264-6343</i>
June 20, 2015	<i>Family Employment Awareness Training Part 1, Wichita</i>	<i>888-815-6364</i>
June 26, 2015	<i>Family Employment Awareness Training Part 2, Wichita</i>	<i>888-815-6364</i>

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Topeka, KS 66614

Suite 120

5612 SW Barrington Court South

Families Together, Inc.

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