

Developing Minds

Fall/Winter 2005

Open House: October 6

- ▄ learn about services ▄
- ▄ meet the staff ▄
- ▄ tour the new facility ▄

Please join us for our introductory Open House at the Center for Developing Minds. The "grand opening" event will be on Thursday, October 6, from 5:00-7:00pm. All physicians, educators and other related therapists and professionals are welcome to attend.

Brochures Now Available

Enclosed with this newsletter is a copy of our new brochure for the Center for Developing Minds. Please contact us if you'd like additional copies to have available at your office.

Dr. Korb Speaks

Upcoming presentations include:

? "Clinical Management of the Attention System" at Regional Medical Center on Sept. 21, and again on Sept. 22 at Good Samaritan Hospital

? Oct. 11, "Stopping Meltdowns and Tantrums: Helping Children Learn to Transition, Adapt & Become More Flexible" at Parents Helping Parents, Santa Clara
Please see our website for more details on each of these speaking engagements.

Programs for Parents, Physicians and Students

The Center for Developing Minds is pleased to announce the start of their series of programs for parents, physicians and students. Classes available during this first session include:

Strategies for School Success

This eight week series of classes is designed for students in 5th through 8th grade that want to learn techniques to improve their learning, organization – and ultimately – their grades.

Helping Parents Enter "The Therapy Zone"

This three week program will help the parents of children with special needs better understand their child's condition, and provide them with the knowledge and resources to act on their child's behalf.

Homework Club at the CDM

Students in elementary and middle school can schedule homework time on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons at the Center for Developing Minds. Each session is facilitated by a certified teacher and school psychologist who will work with students to learn strategies for managing and accomplishing homework.

Brown Bag Lunch & Discussion

The last Tuesday of every month parents may join Damon Korb, M.D., Director of the Center for Developing Minds, in an informal and interactive session where topics in child behavior and development will be discussed.



CME Class for Physicians Begins in January, 2006



Pediatric Case-based Continuing Education on Behavioral Health

A unique year-long CME opportunity for primary care physicians interested in behavioral health will be held at the Center for Developing Minds. The bimonthly sessions will provide continuing education in the psychosocial-developmental aspects of child health, utilizing a study group approach that emphasizes the practical challenges confronted by community-based practitioners. The evening sessions will be held the second Wednesday of every other month, beginning January 11, at 6:00pm, dinner included. More details are available on the registration form, which you can request by contacting our office at the number listed below. Space is limited, so if interested, please plan to enroll soon.

All programs are held at the Center for Developing Minds. For more information, please visit our website, www.devminds.com. To register for any of these programs, please contact Christina at 408.358.1853 or info@devminds.com.



Pediatric expertise in child behavior, development & learning
www.devminds.com 408.358.1853

A Mention About School Retention...

Despite the preponderance of evidence negating a benefit to grade retention, it continues to be a common practice in schools today. The National Association of School Psychologists estimates that at least 30% of students in the United States are retained once before ninth grade. A review of the scientific research indicates the following about grade retention:

- Initial achievement gains may occur during the year the student is retained. However, the consistent trend across many research studies is that achievement gains decline within 2-3 years of retention, such that retained children either do no better or perform more poorly than similar groups of promoted children.
- Retention does not appear to have a positive impact on self-esteem or overall school adjustment; however retention is associated with significant increases in behavior problems as measured by behavior rating scales completed by teachers and parents, with problems becoming more pronounced as the child reaches adolescence.
- Retained students have increased risks of health-compromising behaviors such as emotional distress, cigarette use, alcohol use, drug abuse, drinking while driving, early onset of sexual activity, suicidal intentions, and violent behaviors.
- Students fear retention. A study from the 1980's, repeated again in 2001, indicated that by the time they entered the 6th grade, students feared retention most after the loss of a parent and going blind.
- Retained students are more likely to drop out of school.

There are a few cases when grade retention appears less harmful. For instance, if a kindergarten or first grade child is having mild academic struggles, but has a positive self-concept, good peer relationships and a range of social, emotional and behavioral strengths, then retention may be a consideration. There are even rare situations when retention is valuable, such as when a student has missed months of school due to extreme and unusual one-time circumstances (e.g. major illness or family becomes homeless and is living out of a car).

However, given the research, why does the practice of grade retention still exist? The answer is that many schools and parents fear social promotion – the process where underqualified students are advanced to the next grade. Now, while social promotion does not support academic gains, at least it is not associated with the many dangerous outcomes of grade retention. **The best solution is “social promotion plus” — advancing the student, while addressing the underlying problem.** Schools should offer specialized learning programs for students with learning differences. In concert with this, physicians can provide medication support for children with common conditions like attention deficits, depression and anxiety. Finally, therapists may provide needed counseling or adaptive support.

Evidence-based wisdom shows that students will thrive if schools, parents, physicians, and the students themselves, are able to understand and address their individual needs. Whenever grade retention is a consideration, physicians should inform the school about the negatives associated with retention. When necessary, they can consult with experts. Neurodevelopmental testing and psychoeducational assessment is the best way to determine and understand a child's needs.

Young boys with attention problems or aggressive behavior are the most commonly retained in school. Holding these students back a year typically does little to solve the child's problem — these children frequently require medical treatment and their families are in need of parenting support.

Children with learning differences are also often retained, when instead they should receive the educational support they need to be successful.

Developing Minds is a semi-annual newsletter published by the Center for Developing Minds, Medical Corporation. If you would like to receive more frequent updates about the Center for Developing Minds and its programs, please contact us via email or phone, and we will add you to our email distribution list. Please notify us if you would like to be taken off our mailing distribution list.



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