

News and Notes

From Teacher Brianne

This month, I want to spotlight the sensory systems and their important role in everything in your child's life. It is important to know how your child receive information through his or her 8 sensory systems: sight (visual), taste (gustatory), touch (tactile), hearing (auditory), and smell (olfactory), vestibular (balance), proprioceptive (movement) and interoceptive (internal). Your child may be over-responsive and sensitive to certain stimuli or under-responsive and seek out more of that input. That can look like a variety of things including what some people think of as misbehavior. Sometimes the sensory experience is so aversive and unpredictable, that they are in a heightened state of threat that produces a fight, flight, or freeze survival response. There are many ways to provide or buffer sensory input to help your child in a state of regulation.

Coming Up...

- **January 16:** Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no school/sessions
- **February 6:** Teacher work day, no school
- **February 7:** Progress Reports sent to parents
- **February 20–21:** Mid-winter break, no school or sessions
- **March 25:** Everett Special Ed PTSA Run, Walk & Roll 5K
- **March 27–31:** Parent-Teacher Conferences—no school/sessions

Special Education

Prior Written Notice: There are three instances in which you will be provided this document. 1. When the school district (usually the IEP team) **makes changes** to your child's educational programming (for example changes the minutes or goals in the IEP). 2. When the district **initiates** a new service (such as beginning an evaluation or providing special education services) 3. When district **refuses** to initiate a service or change educational programming.

Basically, any time there is an action or a decision not to take an action, you will be provided a prior written notice which details that decision.

Neurodiversity

One hallmark of autism is a differently wired sensory system. This atypical processing of the sensory system often affects the life of an autistic individual to a marked degree not experienced nor understood by allistic (neurotypical) individuals. Many adult advocates describe childhood experiences when they had been misunderstood and sometimes punished for atypical behaviors that were in actuality a way for them to cope with the stressful and often very painful sensations that most others experience as normal sensory input. Thankfully, now there is more understanding and knowledge around this need and many companies produce items that support different sensory needs such as soft, tagless/seamless clothing items, weighted blankets and body socks, headphones, etc.

In The Community

The Arc of Snohomish, a community service organization is affiliated with the Arc of United States, works to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families have the support they need to be members of the community. They offer many programs such as parent education classes/workshops, parent support groups, sibling support groups, advocacy and leadership in local and state or federal levels, parent advocacy for IEP meetings, etc.





Social Emotional Learning:

Conscious Discipline Brain Model: Survival State - Brain Stem

The Survival state represents the primal brain and asks the question, "Am I safe?" The only way to soothe the Survival State is through the creation of Safety. -Conscious Discipline. This is the state described in Dan Siegel's video about "flipping your lid", when you enter the fight-flight-freeze response which is automatic and not controlled by the individual consciously. As mentioned in Conscious Discipline, it is an evolutionary, adaptive response to help us survive. Sometimes, you may not be able to understand how your child enters the survival state as objectively from your perspective, they are safe. But, you must remember that safety is *perceived* according to the lived experiences of each individual. For example, you may not be bothered by wearing a normal pair of socks, but for a person with tactile defensiveness, the seam of a cotton sock may physically feel like a sharp, cutting or burning pain. Or, having an unknown substitute teacher that does things differently may send a child reeling into overwhelming anxiety.

What we worked on



Coaching Notes

You can help to lower a child's anxiety by:

1. Increasing predictability: predictable routines, visual schedules and advanced warning of changes are very helpful
2. Increasing relational safety with others: focus on connecting with and understanding the child's perspective and dropping strategies to control or change behavior such as using punishments and rewards
3. Modulating sensory experiences: Do detective work to uncover and understand your child's specific sensory profile and how to support it

Teacher Brianne's Recommendations

Book

Balanced and Barefoot



Podcast or Blog

All Things Sensory



Social Media

Sensory Therapist, Sensory.slp



Instagram



Instagram