



December 2014 Newsletter

Please join us at our next monthly SEPAC meeting

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Lincoln Town Hall, 2nd Floor

featuring special guests,

Anique Lebel, Lincoln School Psychologist

with

Irene Spiro, Lincoln School Social Worker Grades 4-8

Brian Garside, Lincoln School Social Worker Grades K-3

Anique and her team will give us a presentation on anxiety and its impact on the learning process. They will be discussing ways to identify anxiety as well as presenting useful strategies and coping techniques to manage this stressor. Anxiety is an issue that impacts many members of our school community, and learning these strategies is an important life skill. Through interactive means, the presenters will explore the topic and provide information and insights that will be helpful to both you and your child.

Refreshments will be provided.

Featured Topic of the Month

What is Executive Function?

What is Executive Function? Executive functions are the fundamental self-regulating skills that children utilize every day to accomplish just about everything they do. These are the skills that enable children to plan, organize, make decisions, shift between situations, control their emotions and impulsivity, and learn from past mistakes. Kids rely on their executive functions for everything from brushing their teeth to packing a backpack to deciding priorities.

Children who have poor executive functioning, are more disorganized than their peers. They might take an extraordinarily long time to get dressed or become overwhelmed while doing simple chores around the house. In an academic environment children with executive functions have difficulty with daily tasks and sometimes have trouble with handling frustration, starting and finishing a task, recalling and following multi-step directions, planning, organizing and self-monitoring. These children have unique needs in a classroom setting.

Executive Function Fact Sheet

Provided By: National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

How does Executive Function affect learning?

In school, at home or in the workplace, we're called on all day, every day, to self-regulate behavior. Normally, features of executive function are seen in our ability to:

- make plans
- keep track of time
- keep track of more than one thing at once
- meaningfully include past knowledge in discussions
- engage in group dynamics
- evaluate ideas
- reflect on our work
- change our minds and make mid-course and corrections while thinking, reading and writing
- finish work on time

- ask for help
- wait to speak until we're called on
- seek more information when we need it.

These skills allow us to finish our work on time, ask for help when needed, wait to speak until we're called on and seek more information. Problems with executive function may be manifested when a person:

- has difficulty planning a project
- has trouble comprehending how much time a project will take to complete
- struggles to tell a story (verbally or in writing); has trouble communicating details in an organized, sequential manner
- has difficulty with the mental strategies involved in memorization and retrieving information from memory
- has trouble initiating activities or tasks, or generating ideas independently
- has difficulty retaining information while doing something with it; e.g., remembering a phone number while dialing.

What are some strategies to help?

There are many effective strategies one can use in when faced with the challenge of problems with executive function. Here are some methods to try:

General strategies

- Take step-by-step approaches to work; rely on visual organizational aids.
- Use tools like time organizers, computers or watches with alarms.
- Prepare visual schedules and review them several times a day.
- Ask for written directions with oral instructions whenever possible.
- Plan and structure transition times and shifts in activities.

Managing time

- Create checklists and "to do" lists, estimating how long tasks will take.
- Break long assignments into chunks and assign time frames for completing each chunk.

- Use visual calendars to keep track of long term assignments, due dates, chores, and activities.
- Use management software such as the Franklin Day Planner, Palm Pilot, or Lotus Organizer.
- Be sure to write the due date on top of each assignment.

Managing space and materials

- Organize work space.
- Minimize clutter.
- Consider having separate work areas with complete sets of supplies for different activities.
- Schedule a weekly time to clean and organize the work space.

Managing work

- Make a checklist for getting through assignments. For example, a student's checklist could include such items as: get out pencil and paper; put name on paper; put due date on paper; read directions; etc.
- Meet with a teacher or supervisor on a regular basis to review work; troubleshoot problems.

This information was obtained from LD Online. For more information, please visit www.Idonline.org/

Upcoming Events

A Basic Rights Presentation is being planned for the district in January. This forum will be presented by the **Federation for Children with Special Needs**. More information will follow in December.

Future SEPAC Monthly Meeting Dates:

February 3rd

March 3rd

April 7th

May 5th

Open Board Positions

There are many ways to get involved. Join us to work for all of our children to make our schools a better place for special education! Together we can accomplish much. Participation can be big or small, long-term initiatives or one-hit volunteer opportunities that make a big impact!

We would like to add to our Executive Board:

Program Coordinator

Membership Coordinator

Lincoln Pre-school Liaison

Lincoln School Liaison

Hanscom Liaison

Metco Liaison

Anyone interested in a board position should send an email to:

lincolnsepac@gmail.com