

# The Family Helper

Volume 4, Issue 2 March 2010

## Special Points of Interest

- **Focus 2 Learn**
- **More activities planned by T.R.U.S.T. group (Sign up now!)**
- **Stonybrook Haiku**



Special Services:  
973-838-1418, ext 112,  
113

Kiel/Sisco CST:  
973-838-0611

Stonybrook CST:  
973-838-1881

Pearl R. Miller CST:  
973-838-5250

Kinnelon High School  
CST:  
973-838-5500

## Helpful Links for College Bound Students and Their Parents

(Click on link to access site)

[http://www.going-to-college.org/  
index.html](http://www.going-to-college.org/index.html)

[http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/  
transition.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html)

[http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/  
letters/parent-20070316.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/parent-20070316.html)

[http://www.postitt.org/parentcourse/  
index.shtml](http://www.postitt.org/parentcourse/index.shtml)

-These links are provided by Elizabeth Hamblet,  
LDT-C, MS.Ed., MAT, an expert in transition ser-  
vices for learning disabled students.

## FOCUS 2 LEARN

-Authored by: Carrie Bott, Sean Pasieka & Maegann Struble

*Focus 2 Learn* is an evidence-based program designed to help students focus and organize their bodies and minds in preparation for learning. *Focus 2 Learn* in the Classroom is utilized in various elementary and secondary public school systems nationwide. The program used motor tasks, visual memory tasks and auditory tasks to improve each student's ability to better process his or her surroundings. This program can provide teachers and educational staff with tools to better identify, assess and/or treat struggling learners.

It is designed for daily use in the classroom. Each activity is designed to target one or more areas of sensory processing. Within one week on consistent use, the students should know the activities well enough to move through them rapidly, generally within 15 minutes. Ideally, these activities should be performed by the students first thing in the morning prior to instruction. Carrie Bott, Kinnelon District Physical Therapist, Maegann Struble, Kinnelon District Occupational Therapist and Sean Pasieka, Kiel School Physical education teacher have been piloting this program at Kiel School. Teachers of varying grade levels have been able to integrate this program easily into to their daily classroom curriculum. The students have also given positive feedback to staff members and seem to enjoy the variety of movement and learning activities.



Areas *Focus to Learn* targets:

**Bilateral organization:** this is the coordination between the left and right sides of the brain/body. This is particularly important for language and comprehension skills.

**Ocular Motor Skills:** small muscles of the eyes must work together for visual tracking in horizontal and vertical planes, depth perception and when focusing the eyes at different distances such as copying from the board.

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**FOCUS 2 LEARN—Continued**

**Visual Processing Skills:** ability to understand what is seen as well as the ability to visually attend. Important for letter and number recognition. Visual attention is the ability to focus on the important task while visually monitoring the environment with peripheral vision.

**Visual Memory Skills:** ability to remember a full mental image of what is seen long enough to process it. This is important for many activities such as reading, copying from the board and working on math problems.

**Auditory Processing Skills:** ability to understand and organize what is heard as well as auditory monitoring. This includes; discrimination which is the ability to recognize differences between sounds. Auditory monitoring is the ability to focus on a task while monitoring the environment without being distracted.

**Auditory Memory Skills:** includes both basic memory and sequential memory. Auditory memory is the ability to recall a number of units, words, numbers, sentences, and/or phonemes. Auditory sequential memory is a higher order skill that involves the recalling of information in a particular sequence.

**Processing Speed:** is the speed at which a student can process incoming sensory information and respond. There is an overall speed of processing, as well an individual speed, for each sensory system.

**Vestibular Processing:** responsible for monitoring head position and movement, along with balance. The vestibular system is vital for giving a reference point for external sense, balance and gross motor coordination.

**Proprioception:** gives information on the movement and force of muscles. It is important for fine motor activities, posture, balance and gross motor coordination.

**Motor Planning:** ability to conceive, plan and execute a plan of action. Coordination of all the sensory systems is essential for functional motor planning.

**Modulation:** ability of the nervous system to stay at the “just right” level for learning. It includes attention as well as the ability to handle various levels of sensory input without being overwhelmed.

**Sensory Integration:** is the efficient and functional coordination of all the sensory systems. It requires each of the sensory systems to work efficiently, as well as all of the sensory systems to work together in a coordinated manner.

A student’s individual level of sensory integration ability can dramatically impact learning, behavior and socialization.

**Examples of Daily Activities**

These activities can be performed before homework or other instructional training, as well as classroom lessons, wherever concentration and focus are needed.

**1. Diagonal Marching:**

*Purpose: To improve bi-lateral coordination, timing and motor planning.*

**Knee Tap:** This activity is performed by marching while tapping one knee with the opposite hand. When the right knee is lifted, the student touches it with the left hand and then switches to left knee right hand. Perform twenty-five repetitions.

**Knee Tap Transfer:** This activity is performed by holding a ball in one hand, then lifting one knee and tapping it with the opposite hand that is *not* holding the ball, and switching back and forth. Perform twenty-five repetitions.

**Under Leg Transfer:** This activity is performed by passing a ball from hand to hand underneath the legs while marching. Starting with the ball in the right hand, the student will lift his left leg and pass the ball underneath his leg from his right hand to his left hand. He will then switch lifting his right leg and pass the ball from his left hand to his right hand. Perform twenty-five repetitions.

**Heel Tap:** This activity is performed by placing one foot behind the opposite leg and touching with the opposite hand. When the right foot is placed behind the left leg, the student touches her right foot with her left hand and switches placing her left foot behind her right leg and touches her left foot with her right hand. Perform twenty-five repetitions.

**Heel Tap Transfer:** This is the same as the heel tap activity but it includes a ball passed from one hand to the other while performing. When one hand is touching the opposite heel, the other hand is holding the ball. As the student switches sides, the ball is passed from one hand to the other hand prior to touching the heel. Perform twenty-five repetitions.

**Academic Tie In:** Try counting by two’s, reciting time tables, reciting the alphabet forward/backward or complete spelling activities during diagonal marching.

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## 2. Spin and Toss:

*Purpose: To improve vestibular processing, visual tracking and eye hand coordination.*

The student stands and spins in place for five rotations. He/she then tosses and catches a ball (small) five times in a row while tracking the ball with his/her eyes. Rotations are then performed in the other direction followed by tossing the ball in the air five times. This is repeated for a total of four rotations, two in each direction. If the student complains of dizziness, decrease the number of rotations to a comfortable level (slight dizziness is normal). It is important to receive permission from guardians if student has a seizure disorder.



*Academic Tie In:* Give your students questions (test review, math facts..) while they are spinning and have them give the answers when they stop spinning.

## 3. Ball Toss Transfer:

*Purpose: To improve bi-lateral coordination, processing speed and eye-hand coordination.*

This activity is performed with a partner. The students face each other sitting or standing approximately four feet apart. The students each hold a ball in their right hand. They simultaneously toss the balls catching with their left hand and then passing the balls to their right hands. Perform 25 repetitions.

*Academic Tie-in:* Try having your students say the alphabet back and forth with a partner. One partner says A, the other B, etc. You can also have them count by twos, fives, tens, etc. back and forth with a partner.

With consistent implementation of these exercises and activities, students will not only see improvement in their class work and homework, but also in their self-confidence.

Look for **Part two** of this wonderful activity based intervention in the next issue of the Family Helper. Dr. Carrie Bott is the district's physical therapist. Mrs. Maegann Struble is the district's physical therapist. Mr. Sean Pasiaka is the physical education instructor for the Kiel/Sisco School. They are to be commended for collaborating on such an innovative program for students. —ed.

## T.R.U.S.T. Group Plans

### Two New Events

After a number of successful social activities held for Stonybrook and PRM students, the **TRUST** group is back in action. Two new events have been planned for Kiel/Sisco and Stonybrook Students. Look for invitations coming home in backpacks and set aside the following dates:

#### **Leprechaun Celebration (Stonybrook Students):**

**When:** Friday, March 19th

**Where:** KHS Cafeteria (second floor)

**Time:** 4:00 PM

#### **Spring Egg Hunt (Kiel/Sisco students):**

**When:** Thursday, April 1st

**Where:** KHS Cafeteria (second floor)

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**RSVP To Donna Trisuzzi at 973-838-5500 ext. 1195 Or**

**Julianna Porz at 973-886-2286**

**As soon as possible to ensure participation**



High School helpers rocking out at the TRUST faux New Year's eve bash!



## POETS AND STONYBROOK

-Heidi Pearce, Teacher at the Stonybrook School

### PART TWO

Haiku is a poem, usually about nature or seasons, with three unrhymed lines containing five, seven, and five syllables. My students enjoyed writing Haiku poems very much. First, we brainstormed all of the nature topics they would like to write about. Then a graphic organizer was used to write each line with the appropriate syllables. Finally, a checklist with questions about the poem was completed individually and with a buddy. Poems were published and placed in writing portfolios.

#### Haiku

By Emily

Spring is coming fast .  
Flowers are blooming in spring.  
Grass gets greener now.

Leaves are big and small.  
The leaves are changing coloring.  
Leaves are dancing in the sky.

Rainforests are so wet.  
Animals like the rainforest.  
We love the rainforest.

Seeds are big and small .  
The seeds grow trees and plants.  
Sun makes seeds grow big.

Sand is very small.  
At the beach, the sand is nice.  
The sand is so soft.

Berries are so good.  
The berries are big and small .  
Berries are so blue.

By Mark

Summer is the best.  
Summer is hot and fun times.  
Summer means no school.

Rain falls from the sky.  
Rain falls fast and hard drip drop.  
Rain falls on my home.

Dogs are lots of fun.  
There are many kinds of dogs.  
Dogs are the best pets.

#### Eagles

The eagles fly high.  
The eagles fly in the sky.  
Eagles eat a lot.

#### Ocean

Oceans are blue green.  
Whales live in the blue ocean.  
Oceans are salty

#### Sky

Skies are blue and gray.  
The sky had clouds and planets..  
The blue sky is nice.

#### Trees

Trees have pretty leaves.  
Some trees give fruits and berries.  
Leaves on a tree change colors.

By Taylor

#### Spring

Spring is still not here.  
Birds flying back home for spring.  
Ducks splashing around.

#### Winter

Winter's coming soon.  
Water's freezing into ice.  
Bears looking for food.

#### Flowers

Flowers blooming now.  
Red and yellow all around.  
The air smells so good.

We are proud of our Stonybrook writers and will be featuring creative work from other schools and grade levels in future Family Helpers.

