

Featuring: Vision and Learning

Registration for School Health Annual Conference - showcasing Canadian School Health Innovations now open see:
http://www.cash-aces.ca/conference_2008/
(only two weeks left to register)

SECTION 1: WHAT'S NEW?

CSH Knowledge Network News

Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada (CDPAC) hosted a two-day conference on March 4-5, 2008. An objective panel of broad-based Canadians listened to arguments by key subject matter experts and then drafted a consensus policy statement outlining recommendations to governments, industry leaders, and other policy makers – and of course affirming that marketing regulations should be only one piece of an ongoing integrated, society-wide battle against obesity and the promotion of healthy living. Read more at:
<http://cdpac.ca/content.php?doc=107>.

EVENTS

YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE AND ADDICTIONS STRATEGY MOVES THROUGH DETAILED PLANNING PROCESS News Release, Government of Prince Edward Island, March 4, 2008
Following the development of a strategy framework and recent public consultations in December, the Youth Substance Use and Addictions project is now working through a detailed planning effort to build on programs and services in the province.
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/news/getrelease.php3?number=5599>

The Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI) is pleased to announce the release of *State of the Evidence Review on Urban Health and Healthy Weights*. This systematic review was commissioned by CPHI to review and synthesize the evidence on: structural and community-level characteristics of urban environments that promote or inhibit the achievement of healthy weights, and effectiveness of interventions to assist urban popu-

SCHOOL HEALTH CONFERENCE & SYMPOSIA

2008

Sheraton Four Points Hotel
& Conference Centre

Ottawa-Gatineau

April 20-23, 2008

for more info visit:
www.safehealthyschools.org/shconferences

RESEARCH, REPORTS & SCHOOL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

Research Roundup

Building Bodies, Boosting Brains: A University of Georgia study shows that exercise improves children's cognition—particularly their planning and problem-solving skills. Read more at:
<http://www.researchmagazine.uga.edu/aa/winter2008/brains.php>

SCHOOL EFFECTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S DRUG USE: A Systematic Review of Intervention and Observational Studies — Mar. 2008
Journal abstract at Journal of Adolescent Health website
([http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(07\)00419-3/abstract](http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(07)00419-3/abstract))

lations in achieving healthy weights. The report synthesizes findings addressing four outcome areas (obesity/healthy weights, food/diet/nutrition, physical activity and sedentary behaviour) in relation to physical, economic, political and socio-cultural environments. Urban design, food affordability, school policies and media/advertising are just a few examples of characteristics of urban environments included in the review. Download the report at www.cihi.ca/cphi.

Resources

Government Of Canada Helps Parents Understand The Dangers Of Drugs By Launching Advertising Campaign News Release, Medical News Daily, March 6, 2008 The Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Health, the Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and the Honourable Michael M. Fortier, Minister of Public Works and Government Services today announced the launch of the first component of the prevention-focused mass media campaign under the National Anti-Drug Strategy.
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/99721.php>

From the UCLA Centre on Mental Health and Schools: Spring issue of their newsletter; featured article – **Rethinking How Schools Address Student Misbehavior & Disengagement**
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm>

WAYS TO PROMOTE THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (Zarrett and Lerner, Feb. 2008): This brief discusses the elements and features that define positive youth development and highlights some ways to support the positive development of children and youth. http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2008_02_27_PositiveYouthDev.pdf

The Association Between Sex Education and Youth's Engagement in Sexual Intercourse, Age at First Intercourse, and Birth Control Use at First Sex (Trisha E. Mueller, M.P.H., Lorrie E. Gavin, Ph.D., Aniket Kulkarni, M.B.B.S., M.P.H. Nov, 2007)
<http://www.jahonline.org/article/PIIS1054139X07003254/abstract>

THE OVER-SCHEDULING MYTH (Child Trends, 2008): Contrary to popular belief, recent research rejects the notion that most or even many children and youth are over-scheduled and are suffering as a result. In fact, less than one in ten could be described as overscheduled. Research indicates that only six in ten children and youth participate in organized out-of-school activities at any given time, and links involvement in those extracurricular activities with positive social, behavioral, and psychological outcomes. http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2008_02_27_Myth.pdf

Foster Care and School Mental Health (January 2008) a research brief from the Center for School Mental Health, University of Maryland School of Medicine website (<http://csmh.umaryland.edu/resources.html/FosterCareBrief.pdf>) **Early Childhood Health Problems and Prevention Strategies: Costs and Benefits (Jan. 2008):** an issue brief at Partnership for America's Economic Success website (http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/uploads/200801_HopkinsBriefFINAL.pdf)

Bullying in Canada—how intimidation affects learning

Canadian Council on Learning, Lesson in Learning March 20, 2008 Bullying in schools is a prominent issue that receives widespread media attention across Canada because it can lead to serious and lasting harm. Bullying has deleterious effects on schools as safe learning environments and has been linked to a number of undesirable outcomes, including delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, and psychosocial illness (such as low self-esteem, social withdrawal, anxiety, insecurity, patterns of aggressive reaction)—all of which carry steep social and economic costs to society.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Vision and Learning

Children's vision needs are special.

Many adults think they have perfect vision and do not know otherwise until they have their eyes examined, then they discover how much they have been missing. Children have an even more difficult time assessing their own vision. They lack the benefits of adults' experience and just assume that the way they see things is the same as everybody else does. If the blackboard or a page in a book seems a blur, they think everyone sees it that way. Vision is especially important to a child. More than 80 per cent of the information children receive about the world comes through their eyes. Poor vision can affect the child's development in many ways. It can make learning more difficult, it can make the child clumsy and uncoordinated, and it can even affect the child's personality development.

<http://www.optomsqld.com/parentsguide.htm>

Have you ever used the phrase, "Do you see what I mean?" If you have, you are on your way to understanding how vision disorders can affect learning. When we use this phrase we are acknowledging that, in our minds, seeing is the same as understanding.

Seeing is our dominant sense and our primary source for gathering information in learning. Vision problems can have a profound effect on how we learn.

<http://www.visionforlearning.org/>

Eighty percent of everything a child learns is acquired through his or her visual system. According to the American Optometric Association, about sixteen percent of all children suffer from inadequate visual skills and up to ninety-four percent of children with reading problems have reduced visual skills.

If your child exhibits any of the following behaviors, he or she may be suffering from a problem with convergence and/or adequate visual function and/or visual perception. These visual problems can contribute to learning disabilities or, in some cases, can be mistaken or misdiagnosed as learning disabilities.

Danger Signs to Look for:

- Seems bright, but struggles with reading.
- Fatigues quickly when reading, with frequent signs of frustration.
- Is unable to sit still; cannot stay on task for any length of time.
- Reverses words, numbers or letters.
- Has difficulty remembering spelling words.
- Is disorganized and frustrated when studying visual information.
- Frequently loses his place, skips words or whole lines of text.
- Has poor reading comprehension.
- Has difficulty copying from the board or a book, has sloppy handwriting.
- Medication or tutoring has not been successful in improving school performance.
- Has been labeled LD (learning disabilities), ADD, ADHD, or dyslexic.

http://www.2020eyecarega.net/articles/childvision_a7.htm

Learning is accomplished through complex and interrelated processes, one of which is vision. Determining the relationships between vision and learning involves more than evaluating eye health and visual acuity (clarity of sight). Problems in identifying and treating people with learning-related vision problems arise when such a limited definition of vision is employed.

Vision is a fundamental factor in the learning process. The three interrelated areas of visual function are:
Visual pathway integrity including eye health, visual acuity and refractive status;
Visual efficiency including accommodation (focusing), binocular vision (eye teaming) and eye movements;
Visual information processing including identification and discrimination, spatial awareness, and integration with other senses.

To identify learning-related vision problems, each of these interrelated areas must be fully evaluated.

http://www.children-special-needs.org/parenting/dyslexia_dyslexic.html

"National PTA recognizes:

Early diagnosis and treatment of children's vision problems is a necessary component to school readiness and academic learning; and that vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor. Comprehensive eye and vision examinations by an optometrist or ophthalmologist are important for all children first entering school and regularly throughout their school-aged years to ensure healthy eyes and adequate vision skills essential for successful academic achievement;"

http://www.optometrists.org/therapists_teachers/PTA_reading_vision_learn.html

Scientific Studies on Connection Between Vision Disorder (Convergence Insufficiency) and ADHD

A potential relationship between convergence insufficiency (CI) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has been uncovered by researchers at the Department of Ophthalmology, Ratner Children's Eye Center, University of California, San Diego.

http://www.optometrists.org/therapists_teachers/convergence_insufficiency.html

"Visual learning allows us to think our way out of the here and now," he says. "Visually incompetent children exist in the here and now and lack the ability to see future consequences of current actions."

<http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/new-focus-for-eye-care>

Glasses or contact lenses will help children see the board better, and they may help children succeed in school if they have difficulty seeing. Ruling out simple refractive errors is the first step, but they're not the cause of all learning problems. There are other vision-related problems — having to do with the way the eye functions and how the brain processes visual information — that can make learning difficult.

<http://www.allaboutvision.com/parents/learning.htm>

Though they are extremely important functional vision disorders to diagnose and treat early, other binocular vision disorders such as constant strabismus and amblyopia have not been found to be associated with learning problems.

Some patients with visual information processing deficiencies, particularly deficiencies of discrimination and memory, may have difficulty making reliable responses during subjective testing. The clinician may have to make necessary compensations or use alternative testing procedures to obtain relevant information. Reliance on objective findings for clinical decision making may be necessary.

<http://www.aoa.org/documents/CPG-20.pdf>

If your child is struggling to read or finding it difficult to remain on task, the cause may be an undetected vision problem, even if your child's eyesight is 20/20 and he's passed the school's vision screening or a routine eye exam. The goal of this website is to educate parents and teachers about frequently overlooked vision problems in the hopes of helping those children who struggle unnecessarily because of undiagnosed vision disorders. In fact, many of these children are often suspected of having learning disabilities, dyslexia, or attention deficits when the real culprit is their vision. We invite you to explore the information presented in this site under "Vision and Learning" to learn more.

<http://www.childrensvision.com/>

Healthy eyes and vision are a critical part of kids' development. Their eyes should be examined regularly, as many vision problems and eye diseases can be detected and treated early.

<http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/general/eyes/vision.html>

Detecting vision problems early could save your child's sight. Do you know what to look for?

http://www.eyesod.com/articles/vision_children_reeves.htm

The Eye and How We See

http://www.eyesod.com/articles/vision_children_reeves.htm

Prevent Blindness America Fact Sheets

http://www.preventblindness.org/resources/fact_sheets.html

ADD/ADHD, ATTENTION DISORDERS EYESIGHT, VISION, DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENTS

<http://www.add-adhd.org/>

The National Eye Institute recently developed a Healthy Vision Community Programs Database. This new database is a searchable collection of community-based programs that contains information about eye health education programs from U.S. states and territories. People interested in eye health have often been able to find information about eye diseases and organizations and/or foundations that are dedicated to eye health, however, little information was known about community-level approaches at addressing eye health issues. The Healthy Vision Community Programs Database was designed and developed to meet the following objectives:

- Serve as a central location of community-based eye health education programs.
- Stimulate ideas for creative eye health education projects.
- Promote networking of groups and individuals concerned about eye health.

http://www.apha.org/membersgroups/newsletters/sectionnewsletters/public_edu/fall06/3021.htm