

# OnTeam

## November, 2008



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you so much for coming together as 115 families to conclude our third Annual Parent Workshop. This workshop facilitated face-to-face conversations and as a result, these dialogues created trust, collaboration and growth. The feedback forms that you submitted at the end of the day confirmed that you enjoyed the day with our extraordinary speakers and gave us some ideas and directions for next year's workshop which will be developed, with your support and suggestions, jointly by the schools and the AB SpEd PAC. Thank you for confirming our commitment to child-driven, family-centered, community-focused approaches with diversity and continuous learning. Families made it happen!

A summary of our workshops is as follows:



**Navigating the Team Meeting Process**  
*Parents, Students and Schools as Partners*  
**Dr. Sandy Daigneault**  
**Ms. Liza Huber**

In addition to providing hands on information regarding the laws and regulations pertaining to special education, this important workshop addressed the themes of collaboration between home and school. Good listening and communication skills were emphasized including strategies for parents to get the most out of a Team meeting. Suggestions included the use of agendas, writing down concerns prior to the Team meeting, summarizing concerns into questions and more. In addition to the use of data collection for measuring student progress, sharing family stories, providing anecdotes, offering and asking for examples help Teams to understand a student's needs and provide guidance for educational programming.



## **The Parent/Child Communication Connection**

### **Dr. Arnold Kerzner**

Those parents and Acton-Boxborough staff fortunate enough to attend The Parent/Child Communication Connection workshop by Dr. Arnold Kerzner were treated to an encouraging and personalized outlook on raising and working with children with problems in learning.

Dr. Kerzner kindly and personally welcomed all in attendance and began an informative session weaving his personal experiences of having and living with a learning disorder and his extensive experiences as a pediatrician and psychiatrist working with a wide variety of children and parents.

Dr. Kerzner's personal touch helped connect him with the daily concerns and experiences of all those present and his expertise on a variety of situations allowed parents to leave with practical techniques in which to help their children. Dr. Kerzner particularly emphasized the importance of making time in our lives to spend un-conditional and non-structured time to love our children and de-emphasize the intense need to be financially and educationally successful. While these goals are important, when working with students with learning disabilities we often lose sight of true success- success in being aware of one's strengths, comfort with ourselves, and able to communicate effectively in all areas of one's life.

Dr. Kerzner reminds us that ultimately, we are all different, and a learning "difficulty" does not define one's personality. Research has shown that *nurture* is more powerful than nature, and human contact can make all the difference.



## **Helping the Out-of-Sync Child at Home and School**

### **Carol Stock Kranowitz**

As keynote speaker, *Helping the Out-of-Sync Child at Home and School*, was well received by both staff and parents as Ms. Kranowitz shared her experiences and knowledge as both a mom and a teacher of children with sensory processing disorders (SPD).

Children with sensory processing disorders have difficulty interpreting information that they receive from interacting with the world from a sensory perspective. These children are unable to respond “appropriately” to ordinary sensory experiences and may exhibit problems with sensory modulation, sensory discrimination or sensory based motor disorders. Ms. Kranowitz highlighted many of the signs that children experiencing difficulty in the sensory domain might exhibit. She also explained how that difficulty might present in dealing with attention, focus, motivation and social and play interactions. Ms. Kranowitz also provided many practical, “low tech” methods that adults can use to help the child engage or re-engage more adaptively with the world around them. While sharing anecdotes and personal experiences, Ms. Kranowitz also demonstrated the effects of using some of the break activities she suggested by having the audience participate in them. She highlighted the need for early identification and intervention and provided attendees with useful references and handouts for gaining more information and ideas for helping these children deal more appropriately with the sensory information that they receive. While handouts from this informative workshop are available in the Pupil Services Lending Library, we have attached two of the pertinent handouts (Selected Characteristics of SPD and SPD Therapies) for your review in this edition of OnTeam.

In summary, our workshops balanced practical advice and strategies readily applicable to any environment and we thank our presenters for sharing their expertise with us. We are committed to next year's planning - sharing strategies, insights, and ideas; we welcome your continued and valuable feedback. If you have time to get involved with next year's planning, we encourage you to get in touch with us. We'd love your participation.

Sincerely,

Liza Huber



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**AB SpEd PAC Website** <http://www.abspedpac.org>



To reduce paper and be more eco friendly we would like to be able to send you the electronic version of OnTeam.

Send your name, email address and your child's/children's name(s) to [jtowell@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:jtowell@mail.ab.mec.edu)

Thank you.