

## Program Updates:

After a lengthy period of valiantly “holding down the fort” as the solo Coordinator in the Brain Injury Program, Josh Myers will soon have some company. In early July, a new Coordinator, Barb Borsutzky, will be joining us. While new to the Program, Barb is not new to the BC Centre for Ability. She has worked in the Centre’s Early Intervention Program for over 15 years, and brings a vast amount of experience and insight to her new role in CBIPCY.

The Brain Injury Office is about to get even more crowded as Carly Schneider has been hired to be a Youth Transition Worker, which is a new position. Carly is also not completely “new” as she has been involved with various other Centre programs for almost 5 years. Like Barb, Carly also brings valuable experience and expertise to the Brain Injury Program. Her role is to provide support to youth between the ages of 15 – 19, preparing them and their families for transition into adulthood. She will work very closely with the youth and the family to determine readiness for this transition, and identify any areas of concern. In addition to assisting youth and families to access appropriate resources, Carly will also provide individual counselling and group interventions to help youth and their families gain skills and confidence for a successful transition to adulthood.

We welcome both Barb and Carly to the Program, and look forward to their involvement with our team!

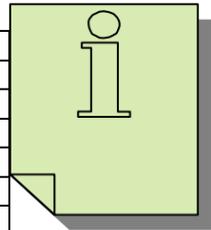
It’s great that our team is able to grow and provide even more services in order to meet a variety of needs. However, the most valuable members of the team continue to be you: children, youth and families – thank you for your great spirit of collaboration and wonderful support of the Program!

*“Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you.”  
– H. Jackson Brown, Jr.*

## Technology Corner...

We previously provided information about “apps” that might be useful for children/youth with a brain injury. People found it helpful so we thought that we would include it again in this issue, with some additions. Check these out for use with your iPad or iPhone). Hopefully, some of them will be of benefit to you!

App Name	App Name
Dragon Dictation	Corkulus
iBooks with VoiceOver	Voice Cards are not Flash Cards
Today Screen	D2u Dictation and Transcription
Wallet Advanced	Flashcard Deluxe
Lumosity Brain Trainer	Index Card
Pill Time	Penultimate
My Emergency Info	Pic-Z Tag
Breathe2relax	Proloquo2Go
Clear Record Premium	T2 Mood Tracker



*“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.”  
– Chinese Proverb*

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# brainbridge



## Community Brain Injury Program for Children and Youth in BC

July 2012

### Time for Summer Fun...

Summer brings with it an opportunity for your child/youth to participate in a variety of enjoyable outdoor activities, which also have significant therapeutic benefits.

#### Going to the beach:

Swimming is beneficial for muscle strength, body/spatial awareness, coordination and gross motor development. Playing in the sand at the beach is great for sensory stimulation, creativity, two-handed play, balance, and manual dexterity. Make sure you bring lots of toys and shovels for sand play. Walking barefoot on the sand helps with balance and coordination. Don’t forget the sunscreen!



**Camping:** This activity also provides many therapeutic opportunities, from planning and organizing, to following directions and sequencing (required for putting up the tent, making meals, etc.). Going on day hikes and boating can work on gross motor skills, endurance and coordination. Bring arts and crafts supplies and digital cameras to foster creativity, self expression, and fine motor skills. Use the arts and crafts projects and photos to create memory books of the time spent away. This can provide your child/youth with the tools to tell others about their vacation.

**BC Easter Seals Camps** offer free overnight summer camping experiences in three locations for children/youth with physical and/or mental disabilities: Camp Shawnigan (Vancouver Island; Camp Squamish (north of Vancouver); and Camp Winfield (Okanagan Valley). Applications are available online at [www.eastersealscamps.ca](http://www.eastersealscamps.ca). Visit the website or call 1.800.818.4483 for more information.

### Other Activities worth checking out...

**Power To Be** offers year-round inclusive adventure-based recreational activities for individuals living with a barrier or a disability. Activities include kayaking, rock climbing, skiing, hiking, canoeing, and overnight camping. For more information, visit the website:

[www.powertobe.ca](http://www.powertobe.ca) or call: Victoria: 250.385.2363 / Vancouver: 778.558.7703



### Disabled Sailing Association

Adaptive sailing promotes freedom and independence. DSA-BC offers sailing experiences to individuals aged eight and up in four locations throughout BC. For more information, visit: [www.disabledsailingbc.org](http://www.disabledsailingbc.org) or call:

Vancouver : 604.222.3003  
Victoria : 250.477.6314  
Ladysmith : 250.246.9971  
Kelowna : 250.300.5833

*“I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.”  
– John Burroughs*

## School planning for the fall . . .

Have you been in touch with your principal, resource teacher, and/or Student Support Services about your child/youth's classroom support and plan in September? Here are some tips for going back to school that may help to make life a little bit easier for everyone. Also, if this is your "first time" these are pointers that other parents have found useful.



- ✎ Keep a sheet of the names, roles & responsibilities, and contact information of the people who are involved in your child/youth's school life. There can be many "players" on the team – write it all down!
- ✎ It is indeed a "team" of people available to help your child/youth – don't rely on one person for everything. Your classroom teacher has other resources that you may not know about (e.g. resource teacher, OT, educational psychologist, Ministry of Education consultant, and more).
- ✎ Learn the normal hierarchy of a school. Don't bypass people and go "right to the top" – save that action for when you have tried to have your concern listened to at the school level. The school counsellor or resource teacher/case manager could help you understand the school structure.
- ✎ Start a journal to keep track of all things school related. Write down who said what, who is responsible for what and when things need to be done by. This will make it easier for you to follow-up.
- ✎ Remember that the classroom teacher is the person who is going to implement your child/youth's educational plan, day by day. Take the time to build a working relationship (partnership), with the teacher.
- ✎ Use a separate logbook or communication book that goes back and forth from school to home. The aide and/or teacher can write in any upcoming assignments or activities, and what happened that day. This lets you review the day with your child/youth, and also help keep track of what's coming up.
- ✎ Prepare for meetings. Know what the purpose of the meeting is (e.g. sharing information, setting the educational plan, meeting a new school resource professional, problem-solving a concern, etc.). Ask questions so that you are clear on the purpose of a proposed school meeting.

Educate yourself regarding the school system and children/youth with disabilities. This information can be

- ✎ found at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed>
- ✎ Request a copy of the "Returning to School after a Brain Injury" resource from the Community Brain Injury Program (contains useful information about funding designations, IEP's, accommodations, provincial exams, and tips for success in the classroom).
- ✎ Remember: for school (as well as for other arenas), always build on your child/youth's strengths and interests. It is important for school personnel and other workers to recognize these. You have a lot of information that is important for others to know, including how your child/youth responds to challenges. **You** are the expert on your son/daughter!
- ✎ Finally, don't forget to acknowledge people in the school system who have been helpful. Most school staff do their best, and try to help students as much as they can. However, they may not truly understand brain injury and the various ways it can affect a child/youth's behaviour. You may find yourself educating people over and over – some parents write out a paragraph or sheet and hand it out to staff each year. Search out those professionals who seem to understand what you are talking about, and what your child/youth needs. Make sure they know you appreciate their help.

### More tips for helping your child/youth have a more positive school experience...

The real-life environment that your child/youth is working and learning in will affect how well they can truly perform or learn. Here are a few ideas to talk about with teachers as your son/daughter returns to school.

**Environment:** Examples: noise levels, busy rooms with lots of photos/images/brightly-coloured items, amount and kind of activities outside or nearby (e.g., construction), consistent staff at school, amount of physical activity required (e.g., stairs, hallways, carrying books). See how this may impact on their endurance and ability to concentrate or remember?

**Schedules:** Does their schedule change all the time, every day, every week, or even every hour? Do they have some free blocked time during the day to rest or catch up on homework in a quiet place? How long do their classes last? How long does it take to get to the next class? Obviously, having a consistent schedule that is easy to follow, with breaks built-in, will make it easier for them to manage without getting exhausted.

**Help systems:** Do they have an assignment book or notepad system that they are actually using? Are teachers passing on homework or assignments in writing for the student, so they don't have to write it down themselves? What about instructions – are they written down in point form as well as being told to students? Does your child/youth have a "buddy" to help with all of the challenges of getting around school and getting all the homework details? You can see how it can be helpful to use some creativity here, and have several "help" systems.

**Modifications or Accommodations:** Some students need to have worksheets simplified, or reduced in number of items to do; tests can be taken home and done later; students could be given extra time to complete assignments or tests. These are only a few changes which could help your child/youth at school. Sitting near the teacher or by the door, could help a great deal if they have difficulty concentrating, or dislike being jostled by others after class. What about giving the student copies of the teachers' notes for classes – then s/he doesn't have to waste time and energy just copying – they can concentrate on learning instead!

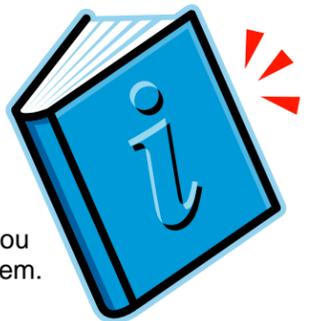
Give some of these ideas a try, or be creative and come up with some of your own. They can help your son/daughter show what they are able to do, even in the very busy, noisy, and active school setting. Make an appointment to talk about these ideas with the teacher(s), principal, or other school personnel. Remember that that there is a "team" working with your child/youth and they are there to collaborate with you.

*"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."  
– Henry Ford*

## Our Library Resources

Remember that our Program has quite a vast Library with information on a variety of topics related to brain injury. Families may borrow items for 3-week period, and it costs you only the return postage back to us.

There are several excellent school- and education-related resources and books that you may find helpful as your son/daughter makes their way through the educational system. Please contact the Program for more information on specific resources that may suit your current needs.



*"If a man empties his purse into his head no one can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest."  
– Benjamin Franklin*