Health News Roundup

Screening Helps Catch Vision Issues Early

ONE IN 10 preschoolers has a vision problem, according to the September issue of News in Health from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Some children with vision issues might appear to have attention difficulties, since eyestrain and headaches can make it hard to focus. Early detection of vision problems through screenings administered by school nurses or eye-care professionals is best, though the NIH points out that screenings only identify some conditions. Families should be encouraged to schedule regular eye exams for children. Boost awareness about eye health at your school with resources from The National Eye Institute at www.nei.nih.gov/healthyeyes

More Kindergarteners Skip Immunizations

MORE STUDENTS are entering kindergarten without the vaccinations normally required to start school, according to the Journal of Infectious Diseases. In a report pub-

Snapshots

Fast Fact: People best remember the information they hear first.

Our school motto is tied into our Olweus bullying prevention program and our Positive Behavior Support Program. It’s “Step up so that others don’t get stepped on.” Each month, we focus on a positive attribute with our students, always encouraging them to stand up for what is right. Our students have really made an effort to be respectful and responsible throughout the school and their community.

Jacie Maslyk, principal, Crafton Elementary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

MY TWO CENTS

Does your school have a motto, creed, or pledge? How do you reinforce it in your building?
lished August 30, Emory University researchers discovered that from 2004 to 2011, a growing number of students were given “medical exemptions” to vaccination against diseases such as whooping cough, measles, mumps, and diphtheria. These exemptions are typically reserved for students with compromised immune systems. “Medical providers, parents, school officials, and state health officials are responsible for ensuring that medical exemptions are actually medically indicated,” write the study’s authors. Find out more at http://bit.ly/OSFvD0

Kids Eat As Much Salt as Adults
IF YOU’VE BEEN keeping an eye on your students’ lunch trays, these findings from a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study might not surprise you: Kids are eating a lot of salt. The research, published this fall in Pediatrics, found that children ages 8 to 18 are taking in about as much salt as adults—and that’s already 1,000 milligrams too much. Plus, among overweight and obese participants, for every 1,000 milligrams of sodium consumed, blood pressure was seven times greater, compared to children with healthy weights. The culprit? Diets packed with processed foods. Read the CDC’s guide for cutting sodium at school here: http://1.usa.gov/P2g64e

Revised Veggies Please Kids’ Palates
WHAT’S IN A NAME? When it comes to putting veggies on the menu, a lot! A forthcoming study in Preventative Medicine reveals that kids are more likely to munch on vegetables labeled with hip names. Cornell University researchers offered 8- to 11-year-olds a tasting session with veggies called either “X-Ray Vision Carrots” or just “Food of the Day.” Sixty-five percent of the X-Ray Vision Carrots were eaten; only 35 percent of the “Food of the Day” carrots were. In a second study, all the vegetables in a New York school were renamed, and vegetable sales went up 99 percent. See the Cornell University Food and Brand Lab for a video on the research: http://bit.ly/Qijj66

“Londonderry Elementary: Educating, supporting and celebrating students” is our mission statement. We also have the ABCs of Londonderry: Attitude, Best Effort, and Choices Matter. The primary and intermediate grades took it a step further by working with the kids to make the school guideline: “All Behaviors Count.” It has mobilized the school community behind common guidelines and beliefs.

J. Michael Lausch, principal

Read more responses—and submit your own—by visiting the Principals’ Office at www.naesp.org/blog. Click on My Two Cents.

“Principal’s Shadowing Program gives parents an opportunity to spend two hours of a typical day with the principal learning about their child’s grade level expectations and walking through classrooms to see the teachers and students in action. Invitations to participate are sent to parents of specific grade levels. Parents meet with the principal for an introduction, and then the group shadows the principal through all of the classes at their child’s grade level. During the walk-through, the components of the academic day are explained and classroom strategies are pointed out by the principal. Ninety-nine percent of parents who took part strongly agree that this program has given them a better understanding of their child’s academic and social expectations.”

—Bonnie J. Cangelosi, principal of Shore Acres Elementary, St. Petersburg, Florida

“When a student reaches a goal, performs an act of kindness, or performs well in the classroom, he or she receives a “Star Performance.” Every morning during announcements, the day’s Star Performers are announced to the entire school. Then, the names of all Star Performances are placed in an empty popcorn bucket from the local, non-profit, volunteer-run movie theater. Once a month, we gather in the hallway to draw two names from the popcorn bucket. The winners of the drawing are declared the month’s Star Performers and their photographs are posted on the school website. This recognition reinforces our efforts at school for high student achievement and good behavior.”

—Sarah Williams, principal of McAndrew Elementary School, Ainsworth, Nebraska

SOURCE: THE BASICS OF CREATING BRAIN-COMPATIBLE CLASSROOMS BY DAVID A. SOUSA