



# Project B.R.A.I.N. Currents

## Partners - Learning Together Can Be Fun!

**J**ustin is the featured character in The Kids on the Block puppet program on brain injury. Justin is 14 years old and sustained a brain injury a few months ago. He agrees that brain injuries can be confusing and explains,



*"Things sure are different for me now that I have a brain injury, but there are other ways that I am the same as I was before the injury. In MOST important ways, I'm the same as everybody."*

Using the power of puppetry, Kids on the Block's mission is to educate children about social concerns and differences, giving them the skills to stay safe and healthy. Last year, Chattanooga's Kids on the Block performed 379 programs, serving over 50,000 adults and children in the 12 county service area of Southeast Tennessee and Northwest Georgia.

Script material addresses the cognitive and emotional changes associated with brain injury and introduces some common compensatory strategies. The program also examines the impact on relationships with peers, the importance of embracing the present while considering goals for the future, and brain injury prevention. The complete curriculum consists of large-crafted puppets, four scripts, props, follow-up activities, and resources.

Project BRAIN is honored to be co-presenting a session for the annual statewide Special Education conference on February 25th with Kids on the Block. You can visit the Department of Special Education's website at: <http://tennessee.gov/education/speced/> and learn more about Kids on the Block at: <http://www.kotb.com/>

### What Can I Do for Brain Injury Awareness?

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month, but that does not mean that you need to wait until March rolls along each year to make a difference. Every year, approximately **1.4 million** people in the United States sustain a TBI and if you have not already been affected personally, chances are that you will in the future. So what can you do now to learn more and help others?

**Teachers** - If you have not recently received training about TBI, suggest to your school system one of the online educational resources in this newsletter or ask for Project BRAIN to visit your school or to provide resources for an in-service.

**Healthcare Professionals**—Learn more about the information your facility provides to families about TBI. If you are not already using "When Your Child's Head Has Been Hurt" in the discharge process, contact Project BRAIN.

**Family Members & Survivors**—Share your story with TN legislators. Whether you attend Disability Days on the Hill, send a letter, or make a phone call to your legislators, your input is invaluable for all Tennesseans.

### Free Online Training Parents Partnering with Schools

#### Need Help...

#### ...Navigating the School System?

Parents with children who experience a traumatic brain injury are thrust into a new world of relationships within their child's school.

Before the injury, contact with the school probably consisted mainly of parent-teacher meetings, open house nights, and the occasional permission slip. Now, the school takes the lead role as provider of services that once were those of the hospital or rehabilitation center including: speech therapy, physical and occupational therapy, administering medications, behavior plans, etc.

Parents can feel overwhelmed with the injury and the changes in their family alone. Once school dynamics - social interaction and educational performance - add to this equation - things can become complicated and frustrating.

This interactive website, <http://free.braininjurypartners.com/> offers a simple and user-friendly way to help parents learn how to best communicate with the school when their child acquires a brain injury. The self-paced program gives parents a chance to learn how to advocate for their child, using video clips of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and interactions with the school.

**Topics include: self-care, useful resources, and goal-setting.**

Project BRAIN recommends this amazing tool as a great site for parents and professionals alike.

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### Project BRAIN Updates

With eight great years behind our Project, Paula and Jennifer are anxiously awaiting news on the 2009—2012 HRSA Federal Grant Application. New expansions with this grant would allow the opportunity for further partnerships between hospitals, families and schools in Tennessee.

The Coalition's website is under construction as we are about to launch a fresh face. Look for updates, events and resources at: <http://www.tndisability.org/brain>

### Centre for Neuro Skills Online Training

We are always looking for amazing new resources to share with anyone seeking education about brain injury and it is especially nice when it is free! The Centre for Neuro Skills offers an impressive online training that covers different aspects of brain injury and can be completed by professionals seeking a certificate for Continuing Education Credits at a fee of \$60 per course. However, for those interested in the courses who are not seeking professional credits, the training is completely free. A brief description of each of the available courses follows:

**Course 1, Mild Traumatic Brain Injury**—The working definition of “post-concussion syndrome” is provided, along with a literature review of the history involving mild TBI. Ramifications of the injury as well as treatment options are included.

**Course 2, Applied Behavior Analysis**—This course covers how applied behavior analysis can be effectively used in TBI rehabilitation. Medication, behavioral programs, crisis prevention and the basic principals of applied behavior analysis are explained.

**Course 3, Brain Injury and Rehabilitation: An Overview**—The course reviews the different types of TBI and their common physical, cognitive and behavioral consequences. In addition to learning about the causes, costs, and funding sources for TBI, participants follow the continuum of care from the initial emergency services to home and work re-entry. Professional services associated with TBI are reviewed.

**Course 4, Brain Anatomy and Function**—Types of brain injury, disability assessment scales and brain function are the focus of this course. Digital animations provide a visual of the neurophysiological mechanisms of brain injury. Left and right-hemisphere brain function and the role of each major brain lobe in neurobehavioral skills are covered.

<http://www.neuroskills.com/ceumenu.shtml>

### “When Your Child’s Head Has Been Hurt” is now included in the Discharge Process!

Thanks to our growing relationships with Level One Trauma Centers across the state, Project BRAIN’s efforts have led to new developments in the hospitals’ supports for families receiving care for Traumatic Brain Injury. Upon discharge from the Emergency Department, Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital is providing TBI resources for families.



When a child is identified as having sustained a TBI (by the ICD 9 codes which are determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), **When Your Child’s Head Has Been Hurt**, (left) along with **Project BRAIN’s At a Glance** handouts (Spanish available) are given to the

parents. These helpful handouts are a step towards improving the communication between hospitals, families and school systems. With the straightforward information given to families in a time of injury, which includes a toll-free number and the Project BRAIN website, the family is armed with facts and resources that will be instrumental in their child’s transition from hospital to home to school...and into the future.

Available online at <http://www.tndisability.org/brain>. Contact Project BRAIN for hard copies.

### 2009 Training Events Calendar

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|------------------|---|
| <b>Feb 25-27</b> | Statewide Special Education Conference, Nashville   |
| <b>Feb 25</b>    | Disability Days on the Hill, West TN (Nashville)    |
| <b>March 4</b>   | Disability Days on the Hill, Middle TN (Nashville)  |
| <b>March 6</b>   | Intermountain Brain Injury Conference, Johnson City |
| <b>March 11</b>  | Disability Days on the Hill, East TN (Nashville)    |
| <b>March 20</b>  | Brain Injury Assoc. of TN Conference, Nashville     |
| <b>June 18</b>   | Chattanooga Area Brain Injury Assoc. Conference     |

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TENNESSEE DISABILITY COALITION

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