

# Project BRAIN Currents



## SPRING IS BLOOMING WITH BRAIN EDUCATION !



### STATEWIDE TBI Education Conference

On February 22, 2011, Project BRAIN hosted the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Education Conference "Concussion/Mild TBI within our Schools and Communities" at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, TN. This long awaited conference was attended by all walks of the industry: psychologists, educators, family members and other medical personnel and was enjoyed by all.



The day began with Ann Glang, PhD, from Western Oregon University, who spoke to us about the ever changing face of TBI and gave insightful ways to work with students in the classroom and out in the world around us. She challenged us to individualize each student and know that each interaction is vital to our students and family members who have sustained a brain injury.

Gary Solomon, PhD, from Vanderbilt University Medical Center, was our next speaker. He showed us how injuries occurred in sports at any age from adolescents to professional players. Dr. Solomon discussed the types and symptoms of injuries that occur in sports and what type of screening tools are available.



Distinguished panelists  
(Left to right): Dr. Solomon,  
L. Childress, A. Renshaw,  
U. Thompson, T. Williamson

On the Morning Panel, I spoke from the standpoint of an Athletic Trainer alongside a Football Coach, Special Education Mentor Teacher and Coordinated School Health Coordinator. We shared the signs & symptoms of Concussion/ Mild TBI that we observe in our areas of expertise and discussed preventative points as well as return to play criteria for athletes. Great questions were asked of each speaker from the audience and areas of weakness were noted across the state in this area. Good hands-on examples were also given for classroom techniques for students with mild TBI.

Michael de Riesthal, PhD, CCC-SLP, Director of Pi Beta Phi Rehab Institute, spoke in the afternoon on the basic issues of communication and learning structure for individuals with TBI and how to help take this back into the classroom and for life skills. Great discussions occurred for return to classroom techniques, slowly increasing length of class time and for tips on understanding when the child has had too much to process.

The final panel consisted of professionals with tips and resources for transitioning back to school and into adulthood. Not all people are initially comfortable teaching children coping behaviors and proper life skills after a TBI, but many learned of resources that are available to help from the panelists who have traveled this road ahead of us.

Some of the most prevalent points heard through out the day were that we need to understand the potential deficits related to TBI, know the resources available to our students and families, and then **advocate, advocate, advocate** for the assistance that they need. We cannot minimize any sign or symptom that a person who has had a TBI might have but we also cannot always excuse atypical behavior.

All in all, it was a spectacular day for everyone involved. The food, fellowship, and education were top of the line and I believe everyone left doing the "Happy Dance" about the new knowledge we acquired.

By LeAnn Childress, PT, ATC, ATRIC  
Director, Sports Plus, Work Plus, AquaTherapy Rehab Centers

### Media Buzz...

Tennessee is moving forward to ensure that all athletes are safe on and off the field.



The most recent step towards this goal was taken by Senator L. Finney and Representative Fitzhugh through sponsoring House Bill 0312. The Bill becomes Law on July 1, 2011.

**House Bill 0312:** "Guidelines for coaches concerning handling of concussions. Requires the department of education to develop and distribute to Local Education Agencies guidelines concerning educational policies for coaches, student-athletes and their parents regarding the identification and handling of concussions and head injuries. Requires each coach, school employee and volunteer coach working with an athletic team to sign a statement acknowledging receipt and review of such information."

For more on this new law, go to:  
<http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/107/Bill/HB0312.pdf>

### Why have a Conference on Concussion/ Mild TBI?



Project BRAIN's 2011 Education Conference focused on Concussion/ Mild TBI because a Concussion is a traumatic brain injury that may present new hurdles in life and learning, and not just for the person who sustained the injury.

This Conference brought together nearly 300 members of the community who are surmounting these hurdles so they could share what they're experiencing, what practices are helping everyone move through this tough course, and the host of resources available that can make covering the distance...less of an Olympic feat.

Materials and Resources presented at the TBI Education Conference are available online at: [www.tndisability.org/brain](http://www.tndisability.org/brain)

### For more information:

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### An Alaskan's Perspective on the TBI Education Conference

Each year the Alaska Brain Injury Network (ABIN) funds two board members to attend a brain injury conference in the Lower 48 (states). We feel it is important to actively visit other states and learn from their successful initiatives. As an advocate for education and related services for children and youth with brain injuries, I was excited to hear that the state of Tennessee and Project B.R.A.I.N. are delivering some of the best services in the United States, and was anxious to learn from their leadership. On February 22, 2011, I attended the TBI Education Conference and was truly impressed!

The Alaska Brain Injury Network is a non-profit organization with 18 board members and three staff members. It is our mission to educate, plan, coordinate, and advocate for a comprehensive service delivery system for TBI survivors and their families. In addition to our role as the state TBI Advisory Board, we actively talk to legislators, organize media campaigns, provide trainings, and present at various events, we also have a resource navigation program. Our resource navigator helps hundreds of people every year to learn about brain injury and to connect them with providers who can help them or their family member who has had a brain injury.

We have very low numbers of children with brain injury in our special education rolls. This is a concern, because we know the incidence is much higher than what is being reported. Helping teachers understand brain injury and support students and families is one of our goals. Even though systemically there are no best practices implemented here related to youth and education, there are still activities that can be done.

It would be absolutely wonderful if Alaska had a program similar to Project B.R.A.I.N. We are not there yet, although we are working toward such a program. Alaska is a big state, and we would love to have brain injury specialists in different regions to help local survivors and communities. One of our needs, of course, is stable funding. It takes a team, and each person has an opportunity to do their part. Change is possible, and we are on our way.

By Mary Paige Lucas, ABIN Board Member



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TENNESSEE DISABILITY COALITION



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### 20 Web Resources with Strategies for Working with Students with TBI

Project BRAIN has learned of **20 great websites** with classroom strategies and TBI resources for you to add to your tool kits! Links and a description of all websites are posted online at Project BRAIN's page: [www.tndisability.org/brain](http://www.tndisability.org/brain)

We have sorted them by their general content, and listed one from each category below. Discover how much these have to offer for you, your students and families!

#### Education:

[www.tbikansas.org](http://www.tbikansas.org) – Resource Network

Under "TBI Library," the link for positive behavioral supports for students is only one great example of how detailed this site is for those seeking training and quick resources. Look at the KIPBS (Kansas Institute Positive Behavioral Support) toolbox for strategies offered in modules and subject areas. This site also includes an introduction to TBI, Prevention, Educating Students with TBI...you could spend hours on this awesome website.

#### Local and National:

[www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org) – National Brain Injury Association

Probably the first site to visit when you want to learn about brain injury, this is the go-to resource for anyone. Read THE CHALLENGE newsletters, join the BIA, or browse the countless subjects ranging from diagnosis to treatment to community.

#### Subject Specific:

[www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com) – All School Subjects

This interactive site has so many colorful and fun ways to help students learn math, reading, colors, and so much more. Visit the talking library to have a book read to you while seeing the pages turn at your own pace. With membership you can access tons of additional options, or just view the free resources to enjoy countless choices for teachers to use in the classroom with young learners.



Ann Glang, PhD  
Presenter at the TN  
SPED Conference

#### Teacher Tools:

[www.superteachertools.com](http://www.superteachertools.com) – Tech Tools

Whether you would like to make a lesson plan using a game like Jeopardy or Hangman, or are looking for classroom management software, this site has free resources for you and your colleagues. Look under Webmaster Tools for the online teacher website creation tool. Share the resources with your friends with a simple click on the "recommend" tab.

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### 2011 Training & Events Calendar

<b>April 17</b>	Safe Kids Youth Sports Safety Week Kickoff, Sports Clinic, Chattanooga
<b>May 5</b>	Annual Brain Injury Education Conference, Memphis
<b>May 7</b>	Joni and Friends Conference, Knoxville
<b>May 12-13</b>	ETSU Medical Symposium, Johnson City
<b>June 10</b>	ETCH School Nurse Conference, Knoxville
<b>June 26</b>	Safe Kids Youth Sports Safety Clinic, Chattanooga