

Setting a Child Up For Success In School

“You mean I can’t catch it like a cold?” a hesitant third-grader asked Jasmine, her classmate whose involuntary facial tic was often the source of class jokes and sneers.

Jasmine’s tic was more than a physical condition. It impacted nearly every aspect of her young life: her self-esteem, ability to make friends and even her concentration on schoolwork.

Jasmine timidly looked at the Washburn therapist who was facilitating the classroom conversation. After a nod of encouragement, Jasmine took a deep breath and explained, “It’s something I can’t control. It’s just part of me and it makes me sad when you tease me.”

Washburn’s school-based therapist created a safe place for Jasmine and her peers to talk about the tension that had grown in the classroom. The group conversation—along with individual therapy—helped Jasmine address her anxiety and fears so she could become successful socially and academically.

Almost immediately, Jasmine’s teacher saw an improvement. The girl’s confidence increased—and her parents were elated that getting Jasmine to school was no longer a daily struggle.

The trickle-down effect of untreated mental health problems

Like all children, Jasmine’s mental health impacted her success in school. Success in school is critical to a child’s future.

“Without intervention, it’s possible that Jasmine would have remained depressed, withdrawn and unengaged throughout most of her school years,” said Lisa Clement, LICSW and supervisor of Washburn’s School Based Mental Health Program. Statistics show children with mental health problems are at grave risk for lower academic achievement, including increased detentions or being held back grades. Up to 44% of teens with mental health issues drop out of high school, decreasing their options within the workforce when they become adults. The trickle-down effect of children’s mental illness impacts the entire community.

“A child’s mental health is as important as their physical health,” Clement said. **“Washburn’s work is the foundation on which children build a brighter future, full of potential.”**



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Letter From the Director: Children’s Mental Health Is a Foundational Issue



Steve Lepinski

I heard the therapist ask: “Is it a happy heart or sad heart?”

The child’s giggly reply brought joy to my own heart, “It’s a HAPPY heart!”

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the smiling child holding a play stethoscope against his heart.

This recent note from a staff member reminded me how Washburn mends hearts—and creates healthier futures—for more than 2,150 children each year.

Success in school is critical to a healthy future. Identifying and treating mental health problems in children is critical to their ability to learn. A recent study reported that one in five preschool children demonstrates mental health issues when entering kindergarten. We can’t expect children to learn if they are anxious, depressed, inattentive or impulsive.

Too often a child’s problems go unidentified and untreated. This can lead to school failure, dropping out of school and involvement in the juvenile justice system. The emotional pain, lost childhoods, family distress and long-term impact on the community of having inadequately educated citizens are tragic and expensive.

Washburn Center for Children’s mission to help children with social, emotional and behavioral problems lead successful lives means we help assure the educational success of every child we treat.

Our Family Focused Program works with very high risk children who won’t be school ready by age five without intensive intervention. Our School Based Mental Health Program has a broad impact in 17 schools in the Minneapolis, Eden Prairie and Bloomington school districts.

The support we receive from community members like you helps Washburn sustain these vital programs. I’m grateful for your generosity, and invite you to use the attached giving envelope to help create strong children—and a stronger community. It will make all our hearts happy.

Tips to Help Your Child Transition Into a Successful School Year!

The transition from summer into the new school year can be stressful for both children and parents. Help reduce the stress of back-to-school preparations with these tips.

1. Acclimate your children to their new sleep schedule a week or two before school starts. It’s often difficult to adjust after a summer of sleeping in or staying up late.
2. Buy your children’s school supplies early and consider selecting them with the child. Help the child label everything and organize his/her backpack.
3. Visit the school. If your child is especially anxious about the first day, ask if you can visit his or her classroom and spend a few minutes with the teacher beforehand.
4. Once school starts, check in with your children about their day so you can uncover areas in which they may be struggling.

If you have concerns about your child’s social, emotional or behavioral development, talk with your child’s teachers and school counselors. If problems persist, call Washburn Center for Children **612-871-1454** for help.



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WASHBURN GAMES

GIVING KIDS A CHANCE TO GIVE BACK

THE WASHBURN GAMES 15 Sports Activities for Children Ages 5-12

October 3, 2010
1-4:30 p.m.

Bryn Mawr Meadows, Minneapolis
(near intersection of Penn Ave. & 394)

Register today at
www.washburngames.org



Kids can kick, pass and run their way through an afternoon of fun—all for a good cause!

To participate, children are asked to raise donations from family, friends and neighbors. All proceeds will help children served at Washburn Center for Children—giving kids a chance to give back to the community.

The top fundraiser will receive a \$1,000 educational grant. All children raising \$100 or more will be eligible for prize drawings!

Here's a chance for your kids to...

- Earn a \$1,000 educational grant and win great prizes
- Try lots of sports and games in a fun, non-competitive environment
- Learn that giving back to others can be a very good time!

Did You Know?

- ▶ Each year, roughly 4,000 Minnesota children in kindergarten, first and second grades are suspended for behavioral problems, including acts of violence to peers and staff.
- ▶ As many as 9 of 10 youth in the national juvenile justice system have experienced a traumatic event like abuse or neglect, but few have received any treatment.
- ▶ In Minnesota, 9% of school-aged children and 5% of preschool children have serious emotional disturbances which significantly impair how they function at home and in school.

Washburn Center for Children Builds a Brighter Future

- ▶ 100% of school social workers responding to a satisfaction survey said Washburn's school based services somewhat or significantly decreased the number of times a child was referred to the principal's office for discipline.
- ▶ 96% of youth served through the Home Front Program avoided out-of-home placements, such as residential treatment facilities or juvenile delinquency programs.
- ▶ To help meet the growing need within our community, Washburn served 58% more children in 2009 than it did four years ago. Its programs provided hope to more than 2,150 children last year. As one family explained, *"Washburn has literally saved our family at times."*

Helping Hands for Kids Golf Tournament Raises \$80,000



Philanthropic donations are vital to helping Washburn provide intensive mental health intervention and treatment. For the past 24 years, golfers have teed up to help our community's most at-risk children through Washburn's Helping Hands for Kids golf tournament.

The 2010 tournament, held at **Windsong Farm Golf Club** in June, raised \$80,000 for children with social, emotional and behavioral problems. Washburn is grateful for the generosity of our sponsors, volunteers and golfers who made the Helping Hands for Kids tournament a success!

THANK YOU GOLFERS!



DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE WASHBURN GAMES?

Don't miss this fun event for kids ages 5-12. It's a chance for your child to earn a \$1,000 educational grant—and learn that giving back to the community can be a very good time!

[Learn more at www.washburngames.org.](http://www.washburngames.org)

Washburn Center for Children has been helping children be more successful at home, in school and in the community for 125 years. Your thoughtful gift will help Washburn Center for Children continue to provide quality assessment, treatment and support to children and their families in the future. Visit our website at www.washburn.org to make a gift.

