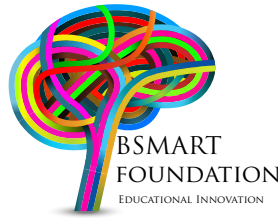




BSMART FOUNDATION'S

"Information you need to know series".



Traditional Vs. Developmental (S.M.A.R.T.) Approaches to Education

Are you a "Keep Up Parent" or a "Catch Up Parent"?

Clarity for Parents:

1. The typical approach in regular classrooms is to "Keep Up" with the class. This approach ignores problems and focusses on completing assigned work that keeps the teacher happy. Parents and special teachers are expected to assist in "Keeping Up."
2. Another approach that parents instinctively sense is to "Catch Up." Catching up is usually a long process, sometimes called "remedial," but in our context of immature academic readiness we work on neurodevelopment. We are working with the "whole child," not just the academics. We include the sense of self as striving and successful, making progress and demonstrating competency that in turn fosters self-confidence.
3. Students with special needs require both approaches, so students have two different curricula to complete on a daily basis. Today, discussions of the human brain are common in the media, unlike the last 50 years when mention of the word "brain" brought suspicion if not overt hostility. Today we recognize so many factors to be considered, including diet, sleep, allergies/toxins, ergonomics/stress, interests, personality, talents, motivation style, goals, social skills, and more.

In the early stage of neurological re-organization we focus more on CatchUp and as maturation develops we focus more on KeepUp. The teachers in a developmental school understand this double curriculum situation and the encouragement and celebration of small incremental indicators of progress. At first the teachers are full of encouragement and document baseline abilities and skills so that progress can be noticed and documented, praised, and celebrated.
4. The progress of students will depend on the baseline measures. We typically do not "Screen" students; a comprehensive evaluation is what we do, not misleading screening done in public schools (Snellen vision test, hearing screen, etc). We are aware of deeper data sources and want to know much more than screening. The terms, "Comprehensive," "In-depth," "Individualized," "Inter-disciplinary," "Multi-disciplinary," "Trans-disciplinary," etc., convey a much more thorough, broader and deeper understanding of conditions and needs that make possible an expanded array of therapeutic interventions.

Through observation and experience there is a profound difference between the shallow and misleading misunderstandings of the needs of children experiencing difficulties given "help" that is too often just tutoring.

The staff in regular schools give great effort through dedication, but the curriculum tools are often limited and their training has been narrow.

In my experience, the common advice from regular teachers and administrators is, "Maybe s/he will do better next year." During the spring semester the parents recognize that last year this year was next year and progress is not happening.

BSMARTs Innovations Institute is a demonstration that knowing the needs of the whole child can result in better progress when we begin with neuro-developmental foundations.

Many parents will understand in a heartbeat the concepts of KeepUp and CatchUp since they have been doing KeepUp for a while and knowing that just keeping up will not correct the underlying problems.

A "CatchUp" program is a breath of fresh air.

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Recent publications: Bright Brain: Learning Readiness Stimulators(Corwin Press Video);
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