

# Connections



HUNTER  
LEARNING SOLUTIONS

OPENING CHILDREN'S MINDS FOR EASIER LEARNING

## 7 Reasons Intensive Instruction Can Make Significant Gains in Learning

Sarah is a great student. She works on grade level in all of her subjects and produces excellent work without any extra help from mom and dad. But it wasn't always that way for Sarah. You see, Sarah was good in all subjects, except for math. In math, she literally panicked. Her mind would go blank and she would blurt out the first answer that came into her head. She grew to hate math, and even wondered if she was smart at all.

It all changed for Sarah when her mother found a center that would work intensively over the summer for 60 hours of one-to-one instruction. Sarah went back to school at grade level in math, and her anxiety was gone! For Sarah, it was math. Other students have also made this kind of progress in reading, writing, and cognitive processing skills with intensive summer work. Schwab Learning expert, Kevin Feldman, Ed.D., says "It's a combination of excellent instruction and age-appropriate practice – and lots of it."

Here are the reasons intensive instruction works: There is no stress from schoolwork, which allows a child's brain to take in and process information more

easily. Large gains in knowledge bring feelings of success. Intensives allow time for mastery in weaker areas. Students can gain a solid foundation in the content. Work can be completed in 1-3 hours per day, so there is still time for fun activities. The effect can be cumulative, with less information lost between sessions. Students begin the school year with confidence in their abilities.

**Who benefits from intensives?** Intensive instruction benefits students who are below grade level in one or more skills and want to maximize the time they have available before the next school year.

**Is it better than help during the school year?** Intensives do offer more rapid advancement for students, beyond the hour to hour comparison. The reason for this is that the students have more time to absorb and practice the material in each session. They have less time between sessions to "lose" the new information.

**How do intensives help motivation?** Intensives help promote motivation

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### HUNTER LEARNING SOLUTIONS NEWS:

1. Our *Early Learners*™ program is now scheduled for the summer and fall at the Malta Community Center located at One Bayberry Drive in Malta, NY. **Call 518-441-4236** today for information and to reserve a space for your child in this 6-week, 12-class program that prepares children for Kindergarten. The activities are fun and full of educational value.
2. Our *Empathy In Education* workshops have begun and the participants are really experiencing what it feels like to have learning challenges. These eye-opening workshops are perfect for parents, teachers, PTA's and professionals to put themselves in the shoes of children who struggle in school. **Call 518-441-4236** to request a schedule or to schedule one in your area. *Opening Children's Minds For Easier Learning* ©

*It seems to me that at this time we need education in the obvious more than investigation of the obscure.*

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES JR.

**7 Reasons** *continued from front . . .*

increasing the learning rate. Students feel better when learning becomes easier, when they can see results, and when they master material that was once difficult. Success is the key to motivation.

**How much time does a child need?** Most programs require at least 40 hours to make an impact. The more time you spend on a program the further your child will advance. Sally Shaywitz, M.D. writes in her book *Overcoming Dyslexia*, "...the instruction must be relentless and amplified in every way possible so that it penetrates and takes hold."

**How do parents know what is the best plan?** Parents should talk to teachers to find out which skills are weak and which skills are needed for the next year. Intensive summer intervention should include the remediation of weak skills and the development of new skills to make the next grade level successful. A trained professional can help make next year the best year.

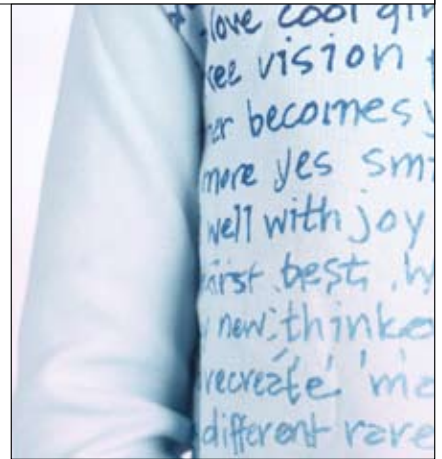


**The Handwriting Connection: Six Ways**  
the Handwriting Process Benefits Student Learning

**D**oes handwriting really matter these days? Should a child's energy and effort be spent on improving the handwriting process instead of acquiring keyboarding skills? The answer to both questions is a resounding YES! Handwriting matters. In his book, *All Kinds of Minds*, Dr. Mel Levine states, "If a child is struggling to learn, the poor handwriting process itself interferes with learning." Not only is instruction of handwriting important, but also practice is essential for the process to become automatic... and it can be fun!

**Why should handwriting be practiced?** In her book, *Train the Brain to Pay Attention the Write Way*, Jeanette Farmer, a handwriting remediation specialist, states, "That handwriting is a physical force with an inherent capacity to self-organize the young brain, helping avoid learning problems, is a well-kept secret." As a third, fourth and fifth grade classroom teacher, my intuition told me that this handwriting skill was important to my students' educational success, though I had received no formal training in teaching the process. Farmer's book and program, *WriteBrain*, helped me articulate and substantiate, with certainty, my reasons for insisting on mastery and automaticity. *WriteBrain* is a program that Jeanette Farmer developed after spending 15 years of applying brain research to the handwriting process.

**How does it impact the brain?** Handwriting has a powerful impact on the brain and prepares the brain for the reading process. Combining it with therapeutic music provides visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile stimulation, a perfect combination of learning



styles. Doing these exercises causes an increase in the activity of neurons, which leads to an increase in metabolism, which leads to an increase in blood flow to the area, which stimulates growthBB and more learning!

**Why is practice so important?** Both external factors (instruction book, the pencil grip, and the proper placement of the paper) and internal factors (impulse control, physical state, emotional stability, and spatial perception) affect a student's ability to acquire the handwriting skill. Starting young and regularly stressing the acquisition of proper handwriting habits over time are crucial to developing the skill. Farmer stresses that by age 11 a child's handwriting should be unconscious and automatic, so that it flows easily without anxiety. This enables a student to handle the more complex cognitive requirements of upper grades. What often occurs in school is that handwriting is assigned to students, but true instruction and practice of strokes get pushed aside and replaced by other subjects to prepare for testing. By investing in handwriting practice for 10-15 minutes daily, students' brains could be even better prepared and activated to

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CALENDAR

BOOKS

MOVIES

MUSIC

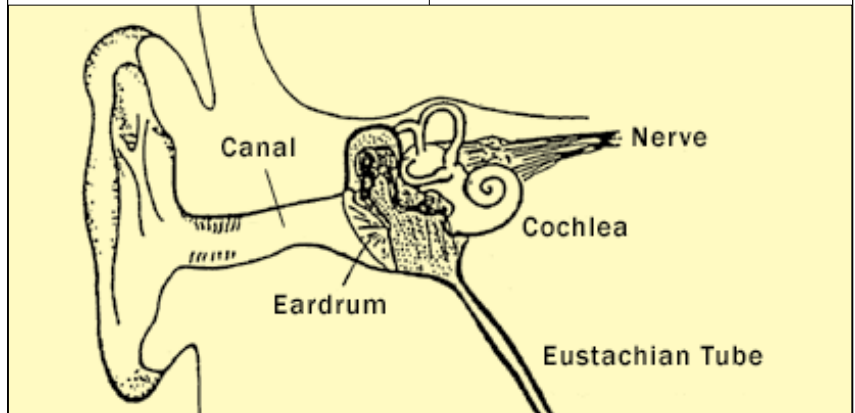
## Facts About Otitis Media

**N**ext to the common cold, *otitis media* (fluid in the middle ear) occurs more often than any other illness among preschool-age children. When fluid is not detected, it can cause hearing loss which may affect the child's speech and language development.

**Causes:** A tiny passageway between the middle ear and the back of the throat called the Eustachian tube lets unwanted fluid drain out of the middle ear. If the Eustachian tube gets inflamed from a cold, allergy, or infection, it will not drain the fluid, and the fluid may become infected.

**Ages:** Otitis media occurs most often

**What to do:** If you suspect a middle-ear infection, refer to a physician. If a child has frequently recurring infections or chronic fluid in the middle ear, refer to an audiologist and a speech-language pathologist. The audiologist can assess the severity of any hearing impairment. The speech-language pathologist can determine if the problems have impacted a child's speech and language development. Connections are made in the brain for language processing and discrimination of speech sounds between the ages 2 and 4. The speed of the connection is wired in as a "set



in children because their Eustachian tubes are small, nearly horizontal, and easily blocked. Two-thirds of all children have at least one ear infection by age 3, and one-third have three or more infections.

**What to look for:** A child may have pain and fever. However, pulling or scratching the ears, irritability, misunderstanding directions, wanting the volume louder than usual, and listlessness may be signs of chronic or recurring fluid in the ear.

point"; however, if processing is sluggish due to thickened fluid in the middle ear, language development could lag. Language is the core foundation for learning, reading, and successful comprehension. If a child has had chronic ear infections and is having difficulty learning, seek help right away. Maturation will not change how the brain has determined to process information. Early detection by a specialist can make a real difference!

— Lynda Detweiler-Newcomb, Speech

**CONNECTIONS** is a publication for professionals produced by a network of learning specialists in private practice from across the US and Canada, with whom **Hunter Learning Solutions LLC** is affiliated.