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Foods That Make You Smarter!



All parents know that a nutritious diet is important for a child's overall health, but there are specific foods that can boost brain functioning, and may have untold benefits for your child. This month we will look at some of the foods that are beneficial to thinking clearly and handling stress effectively. This is crucial for helping children excel in today's schools, where increased homework and high-pressure test-taking are the norm.

It's not as common these days, but previous generations of Americans lined their children up for a disgusting spoonful of cod liver oil, believing it necessary for bodily growth. Through a recent study conducted by The New England Journal of Medicine, we now know that cod liver oil contains massive amounts of vitamins A and D, which are necessary for maintaining healthy skin and elevating mood, especially during the dark winter months. What's more, children

don't even have to hold their noses to swallow the stuff: it is regularly sold today in gel capsule form.

But the biggest scientific advancement in understanding the health benefits of fish has come with a deeper understanding of the importance of Omega-3 fatty acids. While cod liver oil contains this necessary nutrient, so do tastier options, like fresh salmon. It's widely acknowledged that Omega-3 fatty acids are good for cardiovascular health, but the latest research has shown that it is also necessary for normal brain development, and that a diet rich in these fatty acids may aid in increased memory function. Further, these foods have been shown to promote mood elevation—both very good things when it comes to test taking. According to US News and World Report, adding broccoli or spinach to a fillet of salmon is even more beneficial, as these vegetables are also good sources of Omega-3.

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Spelling Bees: An American Tradition

By *Contributing Writer John Cline*

In the 7th grade I participated in a Scripps Howard annual spelling bee. I remember spending long hours with the official word list, practicing how to spell hundreds of unfamiliar words. The process didn't just expand my vocabulary—it gave me a strong sense of self-discipline as a student.

Held in most schools throughout the U.S., the spelling bee is a longstanding American tradition. The first national one was organized in 1925, but they began in the 19th century as a way to reward students for learning the proper spelling of words. "Proper spelling" meant using words from Noah Webster's famous "Blue-Backed Speller," a textbook that standardized American English. When Noah Webster wrote his spelling book over 200 years ago, most school children learned to spell by scratching out words on pieces of slate and shouting the answers back to their teachers. Webster thought this was a terrible way for children to learn, and so his textbook and the spelling bees that followed it were a major

advancement in education. Spelling bees allowed exceptional students to stand out from their peers on the wooden benches.

But spelling is only one part of mastering the English language. For better or worse, words can be memorized without a student understanding what they mean. This is one of the reasons the Scripps Howard committee decided to add multiple-choice vocabulary tests to their competition last year. Some returning contestants were distressed by having to change how they prepared for the spelling bee. But others saw the wisdom in returning to Webster's goal: to increase students' understanding of language. Memorization alone is not enough anymore.

The change in rules makes the contest very different from the one I participated in years ago, but I applaud it. A good vocabulary is not just valuable for a scholar or an author. Whether an engineer or the owner of a business, one must effectively communicate with others—even if the words are not as beautifully arranged as a poet's.



Despite many students using computers to write their term papers, electronic "spell check" systems can only identify incorrectly spelled words. They cannot help you choose the best word. A time-honored tradition in American schools, the spelling bee is renowned for helping students build strong vocabulary skills. But the competition also helps students gain confidence, self-discipline, and the motivation to succeed.

The importance of mastering the English language has not diminished with time. About this, Noah Webster would be pleased.

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Briefs

Longer School Days for New Jersey?

In New Jersey, Governor Chris Christie is proposing a longer school day. While he argues the extra class time will make students more competitive, most teachers and parents believe downtime is essential to student success. Research into the matter has only begun, but the conversation is sure to be a long one.

(www.educationnews.org 02/2014)

‘Where’s My School Bus?’ App in Boston

When Boston Public Schools were hit with snowstorms in 2010, school buses everywhere were delayed, leading to panic among parents. This ultimately led to the creation of a mobile app that answers the question “Where’s my child?” The app is said to “rapidly and securely relay student bus locations to parents.” While there have been concerns about student information security, since its recent pilot launch the school bus app has given many parents peace of mind.

(www.educationnews.org 02/2014)

Bilingual Education Popular in San Francisco

In San Francisco, parents of English learners are showing a preference for bilingual immersion programs. Nearly 30% of the city’s 17,000 nonnative speakers are in bilingual classes, as opposed to the 5% statewide. The trend seems to come from these programs having produced students who are just as proficient in English as in their native languages. What’s more, the benefits of a non-segregated education may be impacting their graduation rates: In California as a whole, the rate is 62%, whereas in San Francisco 68% of all English learners in dual education programs graduate. Regardless, many believe that it is important for learners to maintain their native languages in order to become bilingual and succeed in school.

(www.educationnews.org, 02/2014)

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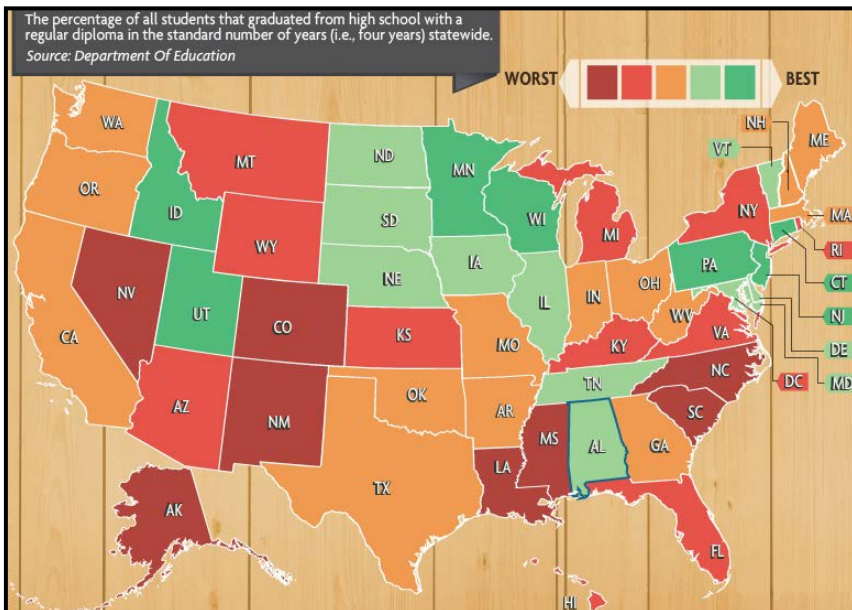
A healthy kid is a happy kid. While some picky eaters won’t like hearing about broccoli, they’ll be more excited about another excellent “brain food”: chocolate. Of course that doesn’t mean candy bars, but a handful of almonds mixed with some dark chocolate will work wonders on stress relief. The website LiveScience reports that a small amount of good, high cacao chocolate is rich in antioxidants, which help reduce the hormones we produce under stress. In fact, dark chocolate does double duty as both a stress-reliever AND a concentration-booster, since it contains chemicals that increase blood flow to the brain, which is essential for problem-solving skills.

We can’t forget that every productive day begins with a nutritious breakfast. Dr. Jeremy Spencer of Reading University in England has demonstrated that one of the best breakfast foods are berries, which are capable of improving concentration for up to five hours. Berries contain chemicals that activate Enos, an enzyme related to the direct flow of blood and oxygen to the brain.

To help keep your children’s minds sharp, start each day with a bowl of delicious berries mixed with granola and yogurt. This will help them concentrate well past lunchtime. Then, a snack of nuts and a little chocolate will perk them up in the afternoon. Combined with that dinner rich in Omega-3, a child will maintain a mental edge—day after day.

Next month, we’ll discuss herbal remedies like Gotu Kola and Eleuthero – and how a single peppermint candy can help kids stay alert during exams!

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE



JEI Math Olympiad 2014 – March 15

JEI will hold the JEI Math Olympiad on Saturday, **March 15, 2014** at 9:30AM. The entry fee for JEI members is \$20, and \$30 for non-JEI members. The competition will provide children in grades 1 through 8 with the opportunity to test their mathematical and problem-solving skills.

The contest will take place at

select major locations throughout the US and Canada. During the competition, parents are welcome to join the JEI Parent Seminar.

The nationwide Grand Prize winner will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes will be given for each grade level in each of the two regions. At the end of the event,

every participant will receive a special JEI gift bag – just for joining in!

To register and for details, please contact your local JEI Learning Center. Space availability is limited, so be sure to sign up as soon as possible!

More information available at www.jeilearning.com

Math Olympiad Locations

US:

- Southern California: JEI Headquarters 4465 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90010
KUMC San Diego 6701 Convoy Ct, San Diego, CA 92111
- Northern California: Alvarado Middle School 31604 Alvarado Blvd, Union City, CA 94587
- New Jersey (North): Janis E. Dismus Middle School 320 Tyron Ave, Englewood, NJ 07631
- New Jersey (Central): Linwood Middle School 25 Linwood Place, North Brunswick, NJ 08902
- New York: Queensborough Community College 222-05 56th Ave, Bayside, NY 11364

Canada:

- Toronto: Korea Times Dosan Gallery 287 Bridgeland Ave, Toronto, ON M6A 1Z6
JEI Richmond Hill 1650 Elgin Mills Unit #108 Richmond Hill, Ontario L4S0B2
- Vancouver: JEI Coquitlam Centre #109-1015 Austin Ave, Coquitlam, B.C., V3K 3N9
JEI North Vancouver Centre 850 W. 15th St, North Vancouver, B.C., V7P 1M6

Prizes:

- Grand Prize: \$1,000 College Scholarship (1)
- 1st Place: Samsung Galaxy Tabs (16)
- 2nd Place: Lenovo IdeaPads (16)
- 3rd Place: iPod shuffles (16)



Gift bags for all participants!

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