

## What Schools Need to Know About Children with Brain Injury?

**Source:** Produced by Victoria Tilney McDonough and Brian King

**Video Link:** <http://www.brainline.org/content/multimedia.php?id=3260>

**Dr. Jane Gillett:** As I've been indicating, schools are a big issue in child with a brain injury, and that's partly because schools are where children spend all their time, 6 hours a day. And many cases probably children are seen by their teacher way more than they actually see their parents because the parents get up and go to school. . . I mean go to work and the child goes to school and the parents come home and then there's dinner and the kid goes to bed and so the teacher actually sees them more than the parent. And then at the school all those behavioral problems that I've talked about and the frustrations can occur. The child has the problems with learning so, what can the teacher do?

Hopefully, in the states there will be what I'd consider I'd call a school liaison person for all the schools so there's someone that they can contact who can help them understand what happened to the child, what the child's needs are and what they can do to help the child to make the modifications. But, some of the sort of more general ideas that are talked about are having the child sitting in a location if there's a preference to one ear or the other for being able to understand, that you seat them so that they use their better ear to listen, that you develop a cuing system with that child so you can make sure you have the child's attention before you give them any kind of information so that you know that they've heard you at least, and get them to somehow say it back to you in a way that makes sense, try and make the learning very sort of contextual and of meaning to that child because all of us are learned better when we're learning something that is relevant to our lives. So that's important.

To chunk the information, so you don't give them the entire you know that you're writing an essay on this topic and you have to go read this and this and this, 'cause they're not gonna remember it. So you lay it out for them in steps, you help them organize it, you may give them more time for an exam, you can give them the same time but lessen the number of questions that they have to do so that they have that extra time to do what they need 'cause it's a slower processing time. You may want to have a homework book where you write in comments to the parents about what the day was like, what happened, what are the requirements that the child's supposed to be doing at home, working with the parent very closely so that the two of you are doing responding to the same behaviors in the same way.

Developing the school environment in a way so that the child is not frustrated and managing so that you prevent the outbursts rather than having to deal with the outbursts. There's a host of other individual ideas that can be put into place from you know color coding their subjects for them, to giving them a school buddy who, which would be like an older student who is usually a girl because girls tend to, want to do more of these things but, you know the older student who wants to be a teacher or a physician or some kind of helper, can agree to meet that child in the morning, go over what were they supposed to have prepared, did they bring it, what's their day gonna be like, sort of prepare the child for it, and then meet them at the end of the day. So what happened, what are we what are you supposed to take home,

what did you learn today, and give them a chance to review it. But it's done in a way that's, again, a bit more natural that the child's meeting another kid and you know and they're going, when they're teenagers they you know they go for a coffee at, well what would be Tim Hortons in Canada, so maybe Starbucks here. But again, it's something that you know teenagers do is they go hang out for a coffee, but they're also getting organized and so you again you use what's a normal developmental activity, and add to it.