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During this past weekend, I had the privilege to attend the NYS PTA Annual Convention in Saratoga N.Y. While there, I was able to meet some amazing individuals that all are working with the same cause: THE CHILDREN.

One of the classes that I attended was Concussion is Not Just a Problem for Student Athletes: Supporting Students with Brain Injuries. The classes were attended by some but I was surprised that there were not more members taking this class. As a therapist who works with children with special needs, I realize a lot that is involved with TBI. These students have huge hurdles to overcome. This is even more daunting to families and children when their injuries are new. These injuries can occur from car accidents, bike accidents, illness, a simple fall etc. The injuries from these accidents also can span a wide range of issues from just simple headaches to requiring special education services/therapies. A few statistics that I learned were there are approximately 1.7 million TBI's a year (this is only based on ER/hospitalization visits) and that there are approximately 2100 deaths each year. It was also expressed that if you have 1 concussion you are 3x likely to have a second concussion and the 8x likely to have a 3rd concussion and the likelihood increases with each injury. Finally, children take longer to recover from concussions than adults. This is because their brains are still developing. If you would like more information you can go to www.bianys.org this is the website for the Brain Injury Association of New York State. This agency can provide information, assistance, counseling and training about Brain Injuries. They have offices in all the different areas of NYS.

Another bit of news that I want to share is a program that some of the Simmon Malls in our area are participating in this holiday season. The program is called Sensory-Friendly Santa. The malls will be opening a few hours early on specific days to allow families to come with their children with special needs to have their pictures taken with Santa in a less stimulating environment. For more information on this program you can go to www.autismspeaks.org/santa-2016