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BOOK REVIEW



EDUCATE TOWARD RECOVERY:
 TURNING THE TABLES ON AUTISM
 by Robert Schramm, MA, BCBA

(Reviewed by Denise Buckenheimer)

Every once in awhile a book comes along that is so relevant to effective autism treatment, and so specific in the niche it fills within the scope of autism resources available to parents and teachers, that it makes the CT FEAT "Must Have" list. *Educate Toward Recovery: Turning the Tables on Autism*, by Robert Schramm, is one. In that respect it reminds me of other books that changed the course of autism therapy, such as O. Ivar Lovaas' *The Me Book* and Catherine Maurice's *Behavioral Intervention for Young Children with Autism*.

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) in autism treatment has changed quite a bit since those books were published. Early ABA protocols developed by Lovaas and others provided the framework of education and treatment programs for countless children.

More recently, intervention strategies developed by James Partington and Mark Sundberg (*Teaching Language to Children with Autism or Other Developmental Disabilities, 1998*) and based on the specific principles of verbal behavior, have been acknowledged as highly effective in teaching language to children with autism and related disabilities.

Educate Toward Recovery reflects the evolution of effective, research-based autism intervention. It is a clearly written training manual aimed at helping parents and teachers understand and use ABA/VB in their child's home and school environments. The book is also recommended reading for related service providers, care takers, family members and others who wish to understand the "why" and "how" of productively interacting with a child with autism, and for **anyone** out there who still thinks that ABA is all about discrete trial training.

CT FEAT Announces

The 2009

*Nancy Leahy Shea Memorial Scholarship
for Professional Development*

The CT FEAT 2009 Nancy Leahy Shea Memorial Scholarship for Professional Development will be awarded to a Connecticut educator intent on pursuing certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) or other specialized autism certification that includes a concentration of training in applied behavior analysis (ABA).

The award will cover up to \$5,000 for graduate course work leading to certification. Distance learning programs and on-site programs may qualify. Special education teachers, degreed paraprofessionals, and speech-language professionals currently working with children with autism are encouraged to apply. For information on new graduate level training opportunities at Elms College in Chicopee, Massachusetts, and at St. Joseph College in West Hartford see pages 16 and 17 of this issue of the CT FEAT Newsletter. University distance programs for BACB certification are listed at www.bacb.com.

In addition to the coursework funded by this award, applicants interested in BACB certification must meet other requirements. These include a minimum of a masters degree and a period of mentored training. All requirements are explained on the BACB web site.

Applications will be available beginning in September 2008 for courses to begin the following year (spring or fall semester). Scholarship recipients will be selected by the CT FEAT board of directors.

For an application information packet, please contact the Scholarship Award Committee at ctfeat1@ctfeat.org or call the CT FEAT Information Hotline at (860) 571-3888. We will email the information to you or if you prefer, we can mail a hard copy. Please supply the appropriate contact information in your request.

CT FEAT established the Nancy Leahy S Memorial Scholarship Fund to provide financial awards to Connecticut teachers and paraprofessionals interested in advanced academic training and certification in science based autism intervention. Beginning in 2004, the award has funded coursework required for certification in ABA for 3 masters-level special educators and for 1 degreed paraprofessional working in Connecticut's public schools.

CT FEAT actively supports expanding the number of highly trained autism professionals in CT by funding this scholarship. ▫

The Frank D. Craemer Memorial Parent Training Fund

CT FEAT has established a special fund to help parents of children with autism to pay the costs of attending training workshops, conferences and other educational events. Presentations designed to increase understanding of effective, research-based intervention in autism will be eligible.

The fund was created with memorial contributions recently donated to CT FEAT by the family and friends of Frank Daly Craemer. CT FEAT greatly appreciates their generosity and this special opportunity to support parent training.

Details about the Frank D. Craemer Memorial Parent Training Fund will soon be available at the CT FEAT web site, www.ctfeat.org. ▫

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10 Years of Families Helping Families

Nowadays you can't open a newspaper or turn on the TV without seeing something about autism. From *People* magazine, to *Oprah*, to the *New York Times Bestseller List*, awareness of autism is skyrocketing.

It wasn't that way 10 years ago, when a small group of parents first came together to found Connecticut Families for Effective Autism Treatment (CT FEAT). At that time, autism was a topic shrouded in ignorance and stigma.

No one imagined that this supposedly "rare" disorder affected as many as 1 in 150 kids. Children usually were diagnosed too late to get the maximum benefit from early treatment. Worse still, resources to provide intensive behavioral intervention - now recognized as the most effective treatment - were almost nonexistent here in Connecticut.

A lot has changed for the better over those years. And CT FEAT has played a vital role in promoting those changes. For more than a decade, we have pursued three primary goals:

1) Supporting Parents – CT FEAT provides unique information and networking opportunities which empower parents to become more effective advocates for their children. These *free* resources include our newsletter, web site, Internet discussion list, speaker events, books, information packages, and parent resource meetings. *Hundreds of parents participate in our listserv and thousands visit our web site.*

2) Raising Awareness - CT FEAT supports outreach efforts to educate the public. For example, *we've donated thousands of dollars' worth of autism-related books to public libraries across the state.* Our newsletter is distributed to *more than sixteen hundred parents, teachers, doctors and other professionals.*

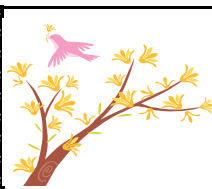
3) Expanding Treatment Resources – CT FEAT sponsors conferences and other opportunities for both parents and professionals to acquire the most current knowledge about effective autism treatment.

CT FEAT also supports the professional development of the individuals who work with our children. Professionals who are interested in implementing effective, evidence-based autism intervention are among our most important and valued allies in helping children to reach their full potential.

CT FEAT established the Nancy Leahy Shea Memorial Scholarship Fund to provide financial awards to Connecticut teachers and paraprofessionals interested in academic training and certification in applied behavior analysis (ABA). Beginning in 2004, the award has funded coursework required for certification in ABA for 3 masters-level special educators and for 1 degreed paraprofessional working in Connecticut's public schools.

Thank you to everyone who has supported CT FEAT over the years! Your contributions allow CT FEAT to continue its important work as an effective and independent grassroots parent network. Together we have made a huge difference in the lives of children and their families.

Want to make a contribution or help out? Tax-deductible contributions from caring supporters are essential to the efforts of CT FEAT to provide information, resources and hope to Connecticut families and professionals. You can donate securely online at the CT FEAT web site, www.ctfeat.org (see "About Us"), or send your charitable contribution to: CT FEAT, Inc., PO Box 370352, West Hartford, CT 06137



CT FEAT gratefully acknowledges

the generous gifts recently received

In Memory of

David Berzins

Frank Craemer

&

Florence Lambert

Mr. Schramm suggests that our overarching goal is to keep our children moving toward improved social interactions — toward recovery from impaired social relatedness — and gives us excellent advice on how to effectively do that. The author, a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and a certified special education teacher, believes that “certain procedures common in traditional ABA programs might be teaching a child discrete skills but not necessarily teaching him in the direction of recovery.”

This book outlines in simple terms why the principles of ABA and Verbal Behavior offer the best ways to address systematically the four deficit learning categories common to children with autism: behavior, general learning skills, communication, and social interaction. With regard to social interaction, the author also recognizes the benefits that Relationship Development Intervention® techniques and goals can play in a child’s ABA/VB program. He makes a clear case for why relationship intervention should be a part of a comprehensive ABA/VB program rather than a solo intervention, and he discusses how to draw from each of the tools with which to address your child’s individual learning needs. “If you are to teach toward recovery, you must teach to all of these deficits in any proportion they present themselves in the case of your specific child.”

The all important chapters on understanding the purpose of behavior and increasing positive behavior choices while decreasing problematic behaviors are wonderful tools for sustaining a proactive approach. The focus is on teaching the child to make good choices, rather than only behaving positively when the reinforcer is good enough and readily available. Reinforcement is mostly to be seen as a free flow of positive items and experiences moving in both directions between you and your child.

My favorite chapter was on “Teaching the Control Child.” Functional Behavior Analysis always deems behavior originates from one of three different areas: attention, escape, or self stimulation. The “control” child is the one whose behavior seems to have no reason except to make you miserable. These are the kids

“Recovery is the term for a child who was once labeled as autistic by the medical community and is now no longer deemed autistic because of a lack of those same diagnosable behaviors. This does not mean that this child is somehow a better or more complete person than he was before the label was removed. It also does not mean that the cause of the autism has been mysteriously eradicated. It merely means that as a team of caring supporters, we have found a way to educate this child to the point that the doctors have stopped calling him names.”

who may have elaborate routines (for sleeping, eating, or whatever) that cannot be interfered with. Does your child say words many times until you give in and repeat them back to him? Does your child need to keep things in a specific order or put things into a line and get upset when you interfere? There are many descriptions here on the subtle and not so subtle ways “control” children work. Many times, parents give in with these kids just to maintain the status quo. Or excuses are made, such as “lining things up makes him feel safe,” or “he’ll only eat one food because of sensory issues.” The chapter ends with the seven rules for interacting with a “control” child.

There are also some very specific chapters on teaching, such as toilet training, errorless learning, and teaching functional speech through verbal behavior. Other chapters include discussions of ABA and VB within public schools, the ethics of ABA, and “How to Become Your Child’s True Expert.”

In *Educating Toward Recovery*, the difficult and tedious language and acronyms of the ABA and VB world are dispensed with. The latest research and most effective teaching methods possible are here for all to see, for the price of a very worthwhile book. It is available online at www.lulu.com/knospe-ABA. The soft cover book is available in English, Spanish and German, and costs around \$44 plus shipping.

Editor’s Note: Readers can find a copy of the article ABA, VB, and RDI®: What’s a Parent to Do?, written by Robert Schramm and originally published in the Spring 2007 issue of the CT FEAT Newsletter, at the CT FEAT web site, www.ctfeat.org. (Click on “About Us,” then “Newsletters.”) Mr. Schramm offers several helpful articles for free downloading at his web site, www.knospe-aba.com.

*An extensive review of **Teaching Language to Children with Autism or Other Developmental Disabilities**, by James Partington and Mark Sundberg, written by speech and language pathologist Mariele Keonig, was published in a previous issue of the CT FEAT Newsletter (Fall 1999), and is also available in the newsletter archives at www.ctfeat.org.*



Right From The Start:
Behavioral Intervention for
Young Children With Autism

2nd edition

By Sandra Harris, Ph.D., &
Mary Jane Weiss, Ph.D., BCBA

(Reviewed by the CT FEAT Board of Directors)

It is widely recognized that children on the autism spectrum make the greatest gains when they receive the earliest possible intensive behavioral intervention. But, even within the world of behavioral treatment, there exist varying approaches and a wide range of quality.

Written specifically for parents of newly diagnosed young children, *Right From The Start* provides all the essential information parents need to answer two of the most urgent questions facing them: 1) whether to seek applied behavior analysis (ABA) based treatment, and 2) how to recognize a good ABA program that fits their child's particular needs.

The authors, professors at Rutgers University with decades of clinical experience treating children with autism, get parents quickly up to speed on all the information they need to make these critical treatment decisions. *It is, by far, the single most important first book that parents of young children should read.*

Decades of research have clearly established that early and intensive ABA treatment provides children with the greatest gains, up to and including recovery for some. So why do so few children receive this treatment?

Too often, parents learn about behavioral treatment after it's too late to obtain maximum benefit from it. Also, many parents mistakenly believe that their early intervention provider or school system is providing their child with an "ABA program" which meets the quality criteria established by the research. Unfortunately, most do not.

Unlike most autism treatment books, this one is short (164 half-sized, large print pages, including dozens of helpful tables and pictures), and written in a clear, accessible style. Despite its brevity, it covers all the most important topics a parent needs to understand in assessing treatment options, including:

- 1) ABA treatment and the research supporting it;
- 2) What to teach and how to teach it, including descriptions of the most widely-used ABA teaching methods;
- 3) The similarities and differences among the various ABA models (i.e. home-based, center-based, or school-based);
- 4) A description of the essential minimal components of any bona fide ABA treatment program.

The authors also delineate the key "common features of excellence" shared by all good quality ABA programs, including:

- * adequately trained and supervised staff;
- * a rich ratio of adults to children ("it is not uncommon for programs to offer a one-to-one ratio of adults to children during the first year or two of instruction");
- * opportunities for integration with normally developing peers;
- * provisions for parental training and involvement;
- * intensity of hours (at least 25-40 hours per week);
- * a well developed and individualized curriculum.

If any of these components is missing, the program is seriously lacking.

Every parent reading this book will come away with a good handle on the sometimes arcane vocabulary of behavioral treatment methods: e.g. discrete trial instruction (DTI), Natural Environment Training (NET), Verbal Behavior, Incidental Teaching, Fluency, Errorless Learning, Pivotal Response, etc. Parents also will learn how a mix of these approaches (with different mixes for different kinds of kids) can be optimal for a given child.

The authors effectively address the most persistent myths about ABA treatment (e.g. that it's not effective for teaching social skills), and are refreshingly candid in their discussion of possible outcomes. While recognizing that some children lose their autistic symptoms as

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a result of early and intensive ABA treatment, the authors also acknowledge that some small number of children may not make all that much progress at all, however intense the intervention.

Ultimate outcomes are as varied as the children receiving the treatment. But all children on the autism spectrum benefit from some form of early and intensive behavioral intervention.

This is an extensively revised version of a book first published almost 10 years ago. The new edition, which takes account of all the new developments in ABA treatment during the intervening years, is much more up to date than its predecessor.

The huge outpouring of information on autism in recent years – books, web sites, listservs, etc. - has been a somewhat mixed blessing for parents of newly diagnosed children. The danger is that parents won't read the most important stuff soon enough to provide their children with the maximum benefits of early and intensive treatment.

Their first forays into the complex world of autism treatment often leave parents feeling confused, overwhelmed and even intimidated. But with *Right From the Start* as their friendly, supportive, indispensable guide, parents will navigate this journey with more success and less anxiety.

(The list price of this book is \$19.00 but Amazon recently has been selling it for about \$14.00.)[⌘]

Lack of Graduate Programs in
ABA in Connecticut Universities
Forces Aspiring Behavior Analysts
to Look Elsewhere

(Margie Stahl)

Editor's Note: Connecticut's colleges and universities offer students and professionals many outstanding choices in professional training and career paths, but advanced training and degree opportunities in applied behavior science (ABA) are not among the options. This has

frustrated parents and educators who strive to obtain and provide effective programs for children with autism, as the unmet need for qualified behavior analysts is one barrier to developing such programs throughout our state.

Professionals involved with providing educational and social services to children and adults with autism and other behavior challenges seem to agree that there is a daunting shortage of qualified behavior analysts to provide services to Connecticut's schools and agencies. This has been true for years, as administrators struggle to cope with the increasing need for qualified professionals. This view was supported by the State's Office of Legislative Research in its 2006 report "Professional Development for People Working with Children with Autism." The full report is available online at www.cga.ct.gov/2006/rpt/2006-R-0073.htm.

Yet because there are no graduate degree or certificate programs in behavioral science in Connecticut's colleges, if you want to become a certified behavior analyst here, you still need to rely on distance courses available through a number of out-of-state colleges and universities to fully meet the academic requirements of the national Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (Beginning this fall, Elms College in neighboring Massachusetts will offer an on-campus BACB approved graduate course sequence. You can read more about it on page 16 of this issue of the CT FEAT Newsletter.)

CT FEAT supports expanding the number of certified behavior analysts who specialize in autism treatment available to Connecticut families, schools and adult programs. We fund scholarships of up to \$5,000 per recipient to Connecticut educators (including special education teachers, speech therapists and paraprofessionals) interested in becoming board certified behavior analysts. The 4th Nancy Leahy Shea Memorial Scholarship for Professional Development in Applied Behavior Analysis was awarded to Margie Stahl, who below shares some of her thoughts about the importance of higher education opportunities surrounding the education of children with autism.



I am the grateful recipient of the 2007 Nancy Leahy-Shea Memorial Scholarship in applied behavior analysis, awarded through CT FEAT. The scholarship is funding in part my completion of an advanced graduate certificate program in ABA at Penn State University, which satisfies the coursework requirement towards my eventual goal, to become a board certified behavior analyst (BCBA).

As a practicing school psychologist, I see firsthand the need for advanced professional training in autism and

Dealing With Problem Behaviors

(Beth Lambert)



Foot Stomping. Head Banging. Hitting others. “Stimming” to beat the band. Sound familiar?

These are not easy issues for families to handle. You can’t snap your fingers and make them go away, but with a positive, well-planned approach you CAN successfully improve your child’s undesirable behaviors. And the sooner you address these issues, the better. As the saying goes, “Practice makes permanent.” A good behavior plan can make all the difference in a child’s (and family’s) life and educational experience.

Things to Consider

Inappropriate behaviors usually function to serve a purpose for our children. They can be attempts to express the child’s needs and wants or to relieve stress. Physical pain, from a toothache or headache or other illness, can also be a reason for unwanted behaviors and should not be overlooked. The ability to express pain and discomfort (physical and emotional) either verbally or through text or picture supports is a crucial functional skill and should be included in your child’s educational goals if he lacks this skill.

Difficulty in communicating needs and wants can also be a reason for acting out or withdrawing or other problem behaviors. Providing a child with a functional communication system is very important as a way to reduce and avoid the development of problem behaviors. Sign language, visual supports such as PECs (Picture Exchange Communication Systems) or other augmentative communication tools can be very helpful. If verbal, teach your child the specific phrases he needs to use to communicate his needs.

What is the atmosphere at school and in his or her other environments? Does your child have the support he needs to remain organized, successful and comfortable in the learning environment and at home? Or is he

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applied behavior analysis in our state. Over the past five years, I have worked in a town-wide special needs program that provides ABA instruction to children with autism and other developmental disabilities. I strive to provide the very highest level of service to the children and families that I serve, so it made sense to me to pursue advanced academic training and professional certification in applied behavior analysis.

When I began to research programs that could provide me graduate level training in ABA, I was disappointed to find that no such program exists in the State of Connecticut.

That’s how I ended up enrolling in the Penn State graduate ABA program online. And while I’m pleased with the program, I miss the opportunity to personally interact and engage with colleagues; a small disappointment for me, since I am coming into this training with many years of experience working with children with autism. But for those persons new to the field, opportunities to collaborate, discuss and observe are vital to gaining competency.

What sets more specialized ABA training apart from what we typically learn in a graduate-level learning theory course is its emphasis on developing the skills of task analysis and understanding of functional relationships in order to create optimal learning programs and environments for children who exhibit more significant skill and social deficits.

According to the Behavior Analyst Certification Board there are fewer than 100 registered BCBAs in Connecticut. The need far outweighs the supply.

In addition, many of the BCBAs who work in Connecticut are either self-employed or employed by agencies or private institutions; yet the greater number of children with ASD attend public schools.

It is clear that the need for additional professional training opportunities for those working with autistic populations, particularly those in public schools, is great. It is my hope that the colleges and universities in our state will recognize this need and develop programs that will support those of us who have chosen to dedicate our professional lives to children and families affected by autism. ▫

being set up for failure? It seems that sometimes our kids work so hard at holding it together in stressful environments that they fall apart from sheer exhaustion. Also beware of the opposite situation in which the child is "doing well" because of the excessive absence of demands. Is he or she allowed to escape from requests and learning opportunities in order to avoid "setting him off?"

Effectively changing your child's problem behaviors won't be the easiest thing you have ever done but it might be one of the most important. . . The reward will be in helping make the rest of your child's educational program more effective by reducing or eliminating the behaviors that interfere with learning, and in preparing your child for more satisfying community and family experiences.

Home and School Working Together

Often, when a child is displaying unwanted behaviors at home, it is important to work with the school team and other professionals to develop a behavior plan. Everyone on the child's team should be on the same page when you are working to change a specific behavior.

If possible, observe your child in his or her classroom. Review behavior data from school if available. See if your child is demonstrating the same types of behaviors at school. Are his teachers and others using strategies that work to reduce the frequency or intensity of the behavior? Are they *effectively* teaching your child acceptable alternatives to the undesired behavior? For example, is your child learning how to request a desired item with words or pictures rather than engaging in aggressive or tantrum behaviors for it? Or to request a break during work sessions rather than melting down or zoning out? If so, you might be able to use the same strategies at home. If not, a behavior plan should be developed.

Under current federal law, if a child's behavior "impedes the child's learning or the learning of other children," the child's IEP (Individualized Educational Program) must include a behavior intervention plan (BIP) to address the behavior(s). Individualized behavior plans are usually based on functional behavior assessments (FBA).

Behavior Assessments and Plans

An effective behavior plan can be designed if the problem behavior is clearly defined, and the function and possible triggers of the behavior are identified. Prioritize when choosing what behaviors to address and in what order. When we did this with my son, we chose to concentrate first on the behavior where he would most likely injure himself (in his case, hitting the window or TV). Once we were able to get that behavior under control, we worked on another - hitting others.

A functional behavior assessment should be conducted by a qualified professional as a basis for the behavior treatment plan. Generally a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) who has experience writing and implementing behavior plans for children with autism will have the experience, training, and insight to decode the A-B-Cs (antecedent, behavior and consequence) of these challenging behaviors, and to develop effective intervention plans.

In order to do the FBA, the behavior analyst will usually need to come to your home to observe your child. He or she will probably also ask you to keep a list of "events" and will help you to keep track of the antecedent (what happened just before the problem behavior occurred), the exact behavior your child exhibited ("used his hands to hit brother in the head") and the consequences (what happened immediately after the behavior occurred).

Once the A-B-C data is collected over a period of time, a behavior plan can be written and implemented. The function of the behavior (why the child engages in the behavior, for example to escape work or to get something he wants) and the situations that act as triggers for the behavior can be identified. This will help the team to teach other acceptable behaviors that function in the same way as the problem behavior (to request a break or a desired object appropriately), and to plan strategies to help your child handle the situations that can trigger the unwanted behavior-learning to accept "No," for instance.

Focus on building acceptable behaviors to replace the unacceptable ones. A behavior plan should be 95% proactive and 5% reactive. The major emphasis should be on effectively teaching and consistently reinforcing appropriate replacement skills. This training should occur at home, in school and in other environments, and with a variety of people.

At one point in my son's plan, we had a recording set up that would go off at random intervals (between 30 seconds & 3 minutes) as a reminder to "catch him being good." When the tone went off and my son was doing what he was supposed to do, we reinforced him for it (in his case, with verbal praise). This was a very effective approach.

Two other components of a behavior plan should be

what to do when your child begins to show signs that the problem behavior is likely to occur (precursor behaviors), and what should be done when the child does exhibit the unwanted behavior. These instructions should be based on the results of the functional assessment and clearly written to ensure that everyone who interacts with the child can follow through with the plan. If the precursor behavior is the child's way of saying that the work is getting too demanding (the function of his behavior is to escape demands), the plan may be to have the child do an easier, familiar task and then get a break. Or the plan may be to prompt the child to request a break (appropriate replacement skill) so that he can do something he finds enjoyable or calming. You don't want to teach your child that he can get out of work any time by acting up. If the plan is to ignore the unwanted behavior, then EVERYONE - including siblings, grandparents, friends and school staff - has to ignore it or the plan won't work and the behavior will become more difficult to eliminate.

Ongoing data collection is important as it allows the team to assess progress and make adjustments to the plan as needed. This will save a lot of time and effort in accomplishing behavior goals. How often is the behavior occurring? Has it gone from ten times a day to five times a day? Then the plan is working. If it stays the same or increases, then the plan needs to change. If you have no data, then you don't know if the plan is effective or not.

The *proper use of reinforcers and motivation are essential* to successful behavior plans. Be sure the rewards being used are reinforcing for your child. Remember, a reinforcer is defined by what it does —it increases the frequency of desired behavior. All of the individuals who work with the child, including parents and other family members, should be trained in assessing and using reinforcers and motivation.

Equally important is knowing how to *avoid using rewards as bribery*, an easy trap to fall into and one which can lead to serious problems in the long run.

Other Tips to Support Good Behavior

Deep breathing, exercise, yoga, listening to or playing music - whatever he finds calming, can be regularly scheduled into your child's day. Or teach him to ask for a break to do those calming routines when he feels the need.

Social stories and video-modeling are some ways to

teach alternative responses and to help your child to know what to expect in a given situation. They can be highly effective for some children and do not require the use of prompts that later need to be faded. They can also be helpful in teaching a child to accept "No."

Visual supports (using pictures or written words) such as daily schedules, activity schedules and others can be very effective in supporting positive behavior in children.

Keep Your Eye on the Ball

Effectively changing your child's problem behaviors won't be the easiest thing you have ever done but it might be one of the most important. It will mean cooperation, patience and consistency on your family's part, as well as with all staff members at school. The reward will be in helping make the rest of your child's educational program more effective by reducing or eliminating the behaviors that interfere with learning, and in preparing your child for more satisfying community and family experiences. Expect bumps along the way and utilize the appropriate professionals to assist your child's team in this very important part of your child's education.

My son is now 14 years old. Addressing these issues when he was younger has made him a very pleasant young man who is nice to have around. ▫

How to Avoid Using Rewards as Bribery Advice From the Experts

Parents and educators can find helpful advice on avoiding this common pitfall in *A Work in Progress*, by Ron Leaf and John McEachin (1999). "Do Not Use Rewards as Bribery!" is one of the 15 rules of reinforcement that the authors detail. They caution that "Bribery is extremely seductive! It looks extremely effective over the short term. Children often immediately stop the disruptive behavior when offered a bribe. This is a short-term strategy that may bring immediate relief but cause lasting problems. You and they can become dependent upon bribery. You will find yourself having to often 'remind' them about the reinforcer and what they should be doing to earn it. It also invites negotiation and bargaining, and it could get them into a pattern of first

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thinking about whether the reinforcer is worth the effort you are asking them to make.”

Here are some of the guidelines they offer:

1. Do not get the child used to hearing in advance about the reinforcer he will earn. The authors suggest that we announce the award after appropriate behavior occurs.

2. If your child becomes disruptive, do not remind your child of the reinforcer, or threaten him or her with its loss.

3. If a problem behavior escalates, do not offer additional reinforcers. “You must be extremely careful that the occurrence of disruptive behaviors does not become a cue for you to increase reinforcement.” This will teach your child to engage in undesired behaviors in order to receive rewards.

4. Offer some reinforcement as your child begins to regain control of his behavior, but the amount of reinforcement should be less than what the child would have otherwise obtained

*Editor’s Note: Readers can find a review of **A Work in Progress** at [www.ctfeat.org/news/NewsLet_2\(2\).htm](http://www.ctfeat.org/news/NewsLet_2(2).htm). ▫*

More Behavior Improvement Resources for Parents and Teachers

Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies offers free articles and literature reviews. Articles on functional assessments, guidelines for selecting behavior analysts, and many other topics are available to parents and professionals at www.behavior.org/autism.

Behavioral Parenting Abstracts offer literature reviews of behavior interventions, including contracting, token systems, functional analysis, ADHD, behavioral safety training and more at www.behavior.org/parenting.

How Do I Deal With Non-Compliance or Negative Behaviors Using ABA? www.autismtreatment.info/non-compliance+or+negative+behaviors.aspx

What is Reinforcement in ABA?
www.autismtreatment.info/What+Is+Reinforcement.aspx

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO USE EVERY DAY www.bbbautism.com/behavior_management_strategies.htm ▫



Day Trips and Other Activities to Enjoy with Your Child

(John Hudson)

Here are some cool places to take your child that are autism / MR friendly. These recommendations and comments are those personally of the author and do not reflect the views of CT FEAT. This list covers many of the places that my son and I have enjoyed together. I have divided the different activities into categories that I hope will be helpful:

I. STRUCTURED RECREATION & SOCIAL GROUPS

TOPSoccer

U S Youth Soccer TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer) programs are staffed by very welcoming volunteers who run Saturday morning soccer programs in some regions around the State. Special children of all abilities and youth mentors participate and everybody gets to play. The emphasis is on play and interaction rather than the usual competitive edge of sports. For general information about starting or locating a TOP-Soccer program, go to

www.usyouthsoccer.org/programs.

For the Simsbury area TOPSoccer program, contact Dan Carr at ctcarr5@comcast.net.

Library Groups for Special Children

I am aware of two groups that meet on Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.: one meets at the Terryville (Plymouth) Public Library located at 238 Main Street in the Terryville section of Plymouth. Their number is (860) 314-1400. There is another group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month at the Newington Public Library. For info. about the Newington group, call (860) 665-8720.

“Rhythms of Grace” Church Programs

Families of children of all abilities are welcome. These are fun, very well organized activity groups for children, teens and adults with developmental challenges, with a religious theme. They are sponsored through the Episcopal churches in Torrington and Plainville and all denominations are welcome and encouraged to participate. The Torrington group meets on the first Sunday of each month, from October through June of each year. The Plainville Group meets on the third Sunday from October through June. Directions and service schedules are available at www.rhythms-of-grace.org, or by calling 860-482-6027.

Therapeutic Horseback Riding

There are several programs around the State. Some run year-round. Some just operate seasonally. Some are well staffed and others may be run as private, one-on-one lessons. High Hopes Therapeutic Riding Center in Old Lyme (860-434-1074), www.highhopes.org, and Rivendell Farms of Durham (860-349-8466), www.rivendell.net, are two of these programs. Also, there is a new horseback riding program which has just started up in New Hartford. Newly opened Celestial Gates Therapeutic Riding Center (860 - 482-7621) is in New Hartford.

II. AMUSEMENT CENTERS AND MUSEUMS

“Jonathan’s Dream” is the premier special playground in the Hartford area, located at the Greater Jewish Community Center, 355 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford. Reservations can be made for parties (860-243-8315).

Imagination Nation, Bristol, CT (860-314-1400)

Admission is \$5.00 for children and adults. Best for children ages 4 to 8. It can get noisy in there - so parents with children who are noise sensitive should beware. If your child can tolerate the noise, it can be great fun. They have all sorts of craft bins, rubber-band art, a climbing wall, pretend areas and much more (www.imagination.org).

Mystic Marine Life Aquarium, Mystic, CT.

This place needs no introduction. The glowing jellyfish at the entrance to the main indoor exhibits is always a hit with my child. He also loves the cold water tidal pool exhibit. Some of the indoor areas can be noisy and crowded on busy days. A child with noise sensitivities will enjoy the outdoor exhibits as well. Over by the penguin and tidal marsh exhibits, towards the rear of the park, it can be very quiet -a nice place for an anxious child to chill out for a while (www.mysticaquarium.org).

The Quadrangle, Springfield, MA (800-625-7738).

Well worth the drive to Springfield, Massachusetts. There are four museums and a library here, all situated around a central lawn which is home to the Dr. Seuss Sculpture Garden, a collection of life-sized sculptures of Dr. Seuss characters. There is also a reception building with a Dr. Seuss exhibit and gift shop. Of the four museums (the Museum of Fine Arts, the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, the Springfield Science Museum, and the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum), I like to start off with the science museum. The first room features the huge resident tyrannosaurus rex and lots of room for a busy child with special needs

to explore. There are three levels of amazing live and stuffed animal exhibits, a small planetarium, interactive astronomy exhibits, and much more. The Ancient Treasures Gallery in the Smith Art Museum is home to an Egyptian sarcophagus, medieval Japanese weaponry and a “hands on” art area just for kids. After three hours at the Quadrangle, my child is happily exhausted and ready for a long drive home. There are no problems with parking, but getting back onto I-91 can be tricky (www.quadrangle.org).

The Children’s Museum (formerly the Connecticut Science Museum), West Hartford, CT. (860-231-2824). Fun interactive and sensory activities. Beware of rainy weekends - it will be super crowded and noisy. A child on his or her first visit may spend many hours on all the cool stuff that children of all developmental ages can enjoy. The planetarium show is great if your child is able to sit and watch. Best to go on weekdays after the school groups are done, or on weekends when the weather is nice since it will not be quite as crowded

(www.thechildrensmuseumct.org).

Beardsley Zoo, Bridgeport, CT

Although most popular in the summer, this attraction is great any time of the year, even in the winter. My child enjoys watching the prairie dog tunnels through the little observation windows. The monkey house is always a hit, despite the odor. Funny how the tigers seem to watch us as much as we watch them. A child with noise sensitivities will have no problem at this place, since 90% of the exhibits are outdoors. Children with hyperactivity issues also can enjoy this, since the zoo can only be seen by walking (or wheel chairing) over a half-mile loop with plenty of room to run and jump.

Kid City, Route 66, downtown Middletown

The many interactive activities can be a treat for children but it can be very loud and crowded, especially on rainy weekends. Most of the interactive exhibits are aimed at children ages 4 to 8. They have been enlarging the building to better accommodate families, and part of the facility was still under construction the last two times we visited (www.kidcitymuseum.com).

III. THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Kent Falls State Park, Kent, CT

The falls are a series of steep rapids and short water falls. Kids love to wade in the pools at the base of the falls. There is a well-fenced hiking trail that runs about two or three hundred feet up the falls. A special place any time of the year, but most impressive in May or on a

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(Continued from page 11)

warm day in April when the falls are really roaring along from melting snow and spring showers. The park also offers a large open field for picnickers and Frisbie athletes.

Rocky Neck State Park, East Lyme, CT

A nice beach to stroll along. Snack bar and bath houses conveniently located. The giant rocks at the West end of the beach can be fun to climb on, but keep close tabs on your child.

Hammonasset Beach State Park, Clinton, CT

Even when crowded, this is a great place to take a special needs child on a summer weekend. There is plenty of parking, good changing rooms and miles of sandy beaches. What child doesn't love the first sight of the ocean from the parking lot? Summer camping available by reservation.

Haystack Mountain, Norfolk, CT

A giant stone tower at the top is open to the public. Good views. Easy hike, about one and half mile up through the woods. Can be buggy in the early season. We prefer late summer hikes here.

Talcott Mountain State Park, Bloomfield, CT

Take a 30 - 40 minute hike up Tower Trail to the historic Hubelein Tower. The views of the Farmington River Valley are absolutely stunning - especially from the tower. The tower is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The trailhead is on Route 185, near the intersection of the Simsbury and Bloomfield Town Lines.

MacLean Wildlife Refuge, Granby, CT.

There is a fun three-mile hiking loop that begins and ends at the pond. Nice rolling hills and, if you are quiet enough, there are forest animals to be seen. We have had some very serene hikes in the winter, when the snow was not yet deep.

Session Woods, Burlington, CT.

My child most enjoys the one-mile hike to the beaver pond. There is a cool observation deck built out into the lake. There is also an old fire tower further down the trail with amazing views of the Connecticut River Valley. A quiet, peaceful and fascinating time for everyone.

White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield, CT

The boardwalk near the nature center puts you out into the lake for an unusual walk along the water's edge and is pretty neat. The hiking trails can go on for miles and miles and many of them do not circle back to your starting point, so be sure that you know your route and

have a map. There are also some nice quiet kayaking routes through the marshes and out into the lake. Whatever activities you decide to explore with your child this summer, have fun out there! ☺



Gate House Café Summer Concert Series

Free Outdoor Concerts Tuesday Evenings at 6:30

The Music Therapy Department of Southbury Training School aims again to provide quality musical entertainment to an integrated audience with its ninth annual free concert series. The general public is invited to bring a lawn chair or a blanket and join the residents of Southbury Training School on the lawn next to the Gate House Café for any or all of eight concerts on Tuesday evenings through August 12. Take-out beverages, snacks and light dinner foods (salads and sandwiches) are available at the Café. The concerts will be held in the STS Pavilion in the event of inclement weather.

The series kicks off to a fun start on Tuesday, June 19th at 6:30 p.m. with the East Coast's most popular swing band ***Eight to the Bar***. Other performances include the contemporary jazz and classical sounds of ***The Brubeck Brothers Quartet***, R&B singer ***Timmy Maia***, percussion ensemble ***Rhythm Room***, and others to more than satisfy a variety of musical tastes. The kid-friendly lawn provides plenty of room for a walk away from the activity if needed. And dancing is encouraged!



STS music therapists Julie Andring and Meg Capen designed the program as a reverse-mainstream project that succeeds each year in bringing high quality musical performances and neighbors from the greater Southbury area to the STS campus for integrated leisure activities. The program is funded through the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services and friends and families of the residents of Southbury Training School. For more information and a schedule of concerts call 203-586-2144.

🎵 Music in the Air 🎵

Julie and Meg also offer monthly listings of family-friendly musical events throughout the Northwest Corner. You can contact them (203-586-2144) to be added to the email list for *Music in the Air*. ☺

The Connecticut Center for Child Development Opens Second Location



Over the last 12 years, CCCD has been providing educational services to children across the spectrum, including those with High Functioning Autism (HFA) and Asperger's Syndrome (AS), within their existing outreach and private school programs. Last fall, CCCD moved the majority of their students with High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome to a new, off-site location.

Although the program itself is not new, the idea of housing this segment of the autism spectrum in an alternative location is new for CCCD. CCCD's principal Jon Oddo explained, "In the past, it has sometimes been difficult for parents of children who have more advanced social skills to overcome their concerns about placing their children in a program that encompasses such a wide range of abilities and deficits. By opening this second school location, we now have the ability accept this segment of the population at either school location. Both program sites offer the same individualized, creative programming based on educational strategies and principles validated by research that are the cornerstone of CCCD's educational philosophy."

The second classroom is located at Naugatuck Avenue in Milford, approximately 2 miles away from the main CCCD campus and has been approved by the Connecticut State Department of Special Education as a private school placement for 8 students.

The new school location is designed specifically for students with HFA, PDD-NOS and AS who are able to derive educational benefit from a combination of small group, dyadic, and one-to-one instruction. Currently the program will accept applications for children ages 7 – 16 years of age. Like the main school facility, the new location utilizes motivational systems that are uniquely designed for each student to accelerate acquisition of new skills, well defined goals and objectives that are observable and measurable, and data based evaluation of each student's progress.

Like the primary CCCD campus, instructional strategies at the new school program are based upon applied behavior analytic educational principles that have been demonstrated to be effective with typical children and

adults as well as those with special needs. All programming is data based, IEP driven, and customized to each student's needs. Curricula are derived from direct instruction, precision teaching, the learner's IEP and the sending school district's general education curriculum. Positive reinforcement and motivational systems are customized for each student to teach new skills and minimize those which interfere with social and academic progress.

Please contact Jon Oddo, Megan McCarron or Kristine Marino at 203-306-0005 for additional information or to arrange a site visit. ✉

Have You Visited Us Lately?

www.ctfeat.org

New at the CT FEAT Web Site...

GOOD SCHOOL-BASED ABA PROGRAMS:

What Every Child with Autism Deserves

(Sue Frost)

Setting up and running a school-based ABA program is demanding. It requires energetic and involved parents, supportive administrators, and highly qualified staff who are dedicated to improving the futures of children with autism. It can also be the most rewarding work you ever undertake. Read this article to learn how to provide such a program in your town.

Also at www.ctfeat.org

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Summary of the Action during the 2008 Connecticut Legislative Session

(Robert F. Shea, Jr.)

During the 2008 Connecticut Legislative Session, the Connecticut Legislature enacted three different laws that are designed to help our children and our families. House Speaker James Amann from Milford led the charge to get the legislation passed – it was a very successful year!

Several parents from across the state of Connecticut traveled to the State Capitol to testify at public hearings, and to meet with key lawmakers and the key officials in Governor Rell's Office. Several parents also made phone calls and sent emails to key public officials. These three new laws would not have passed, but for the extremely hard work by parents and friends.

◆ **Public Act 08-63: ACT CONCERNING EXPANSION OF THE PILOT PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS.**

This new law took effect on May 12, 2008. The new law expands the existing pilot autism spectrum disorders program that provides a coordinated system of supports and services, including case management, for persons with autism spectrum disorders who do not have mental retardation, and their families. The new law states that the pilot program shall serve up to seventy-five adults with autism spectrum disorders who are not eligible for services from the Department of Developmental Services. The new law also requires the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services to expand the pilot program to ensure that access to the pilot program is available to persons in a geographic area not previously served by the program. The new law also maintains the requirements that the Commissioner of Developmental Services: (1) identify appropriate individualized services and supports for each person in the program and the family of each person in the program, and shall coordinate the provision of such services and supports to such person and family, and (2) report to the Connecticut Legislature's Public Health Committee not later than January 1, 2009, concerning the results of such pilot program. Finally,

the new law extends the period of the Pilot Program to June 30, 2009.

◆ **Public Act No. 08-132: AN ACT REQUIRING INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER THERAPIES.**

This new law is effective on January 1, 2009. The new law requires certain individual and group health insurance policies in Connecticut to provide coverage for physical therapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy services for the treatment of autism spectrum disorders, as set forth in the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders," to the extent such services are a covered benefit for other diseases and conditions under such policy. Because it is a Connecticut state law, the new law does not affect insurance policies that are governed by federal ERISA law.

◆ **Special Act No. 08-5: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.**

This new Law became effective on June 5, 2008 (a nearly identical law was passed in section 31 of Public Act No. 08-169). This new law provides that the Commissioners of Education, Higher Education and Developmental Services and the President of Southern Connecticut State University, or their designees, jointly and in consultation with such state, local and other entities as they deem appropriate, including, but not limited to, the constituent units of the state system of higher education, independent colleges or universities, the State Education Resource Center, and the regional educational service centers, shall define autism and developmental disabilities for purposes of this section, and develop recommendations for a comprehensive state-wide plan to incorporate methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities into:

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- (1) Programs for teacher preparation;
- (2) Requirements for candidates seeking an initial educator or provisional educator certificate;
- (3) In-service training; and.
- (4) Training provided to school paraprofessionals, related service professionals, early childhood certificate holders, administrators and parents.

In developing recommendations, the commissioner and chancellor, or their designees, shall, at a minimum, address the following issues related to the incorporation of methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities into the programs, requirements and training:

- (1) Competencies for teaching professionals;
- (2) Existing capacity to incorporate methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities into the programs, requirements and training and the extent to which new capacity is needed at the elementary and secondary school levels and in institutions of higher education;
- (3) The extent to which methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities need to be implemented in school readiness programs and grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive;
- (4) The availability of persons with expertise concerning the methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities;
- (5) Collaborative partners who should be involved in the process of the development of training concerning the methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities;
- (6) Best practices in pedagogy concerning the teaching of children with autism and other developmental disabilities, including research-based strategies that at a minimum address:
 - (A) Characteristics of students with autism and other developmental disabilities;

B) Curriculum planning, curricular and instructional modifications, adaptations, and specialized strategies and techniques;

(C) Assistive technology; and

(D) Inclusive educational practices, including, but not limited to, collaborative partnerships;

(7) The incorporation of methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities into the programs, requirements and training that are in compliance with requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1400 *et seq.*;

(8) A budget and timeline for implementation of the plan developed pursuant to this new law; and

(9) Steps to assess the impact of the implementation of the plan developed pursuant to this new law on school readiness programs, elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education.

The new law also provides that not later than February 1, 2009, the Commissioner of Education and Chancellor of the Connecticut State University System, or their designees, shall report recommendations developed pursuant to this new law to the Connecticut Legislature's Education Committee, Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee and the Public Health Committee.

During the 2009 Connecticut Legislative Session, we are hoping to keep the positive momentum and keep moving forward for our kids and our families. Thanks to all of the parents who helped with the legislation. We are all grateful!! α



Elms College Offers

New Graduate Programs in Autism

Nearby MA College and River Street Autism

Program Partner to Offer BACB Approved Courses

Elms College in Chicopee, Massachusetts, in partnership with Connecticut's *River Street Autism Program*, recently announced a new Master of Science degree program in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The master's program and a new certificate of advanced graduate study (CAGS) in autism spectrum disorders will be offered in September for the first time.

"As the incidence of individuals with autism disorders has risen," says Kathryn James, Professor and Chair of the division of Communication Sciences and Disorders, "there has been a concomitant increase in the need for educational opportunities in a wide variety of related fields. Our new degree and certificate programs in ASD will help address this need."

The master's in ASD and the certificate of advanced graduate study in ASD, each with a required practicum, are designed for educators and healthcare professionals who work directly with children with autism and/or who intend to become board-certified behavior analysts.

The Elms College program is unique in New England because it is offered by a college-based Department of Communications Sciences and Disorders.

Educators, social workers, nurses, agency administrators and other professionals interested in understanding autism, but who do not intend to become board-certified behavior analysts may pursue the certificate or masters degree with an optional practicum.

Students who intend to become board certified behavior analysts will be required to complete three practica at either the *River Street Autism Program at Coltsville* in Hartford, Connecticut, or the *River Street School* in Windsor, Connecticut.

Faculty will include Dr. Kathleen Dyer, clinical director of the River Street Autism Program, Dr. Michael Rice and Arlene Kaye of the River Street program.

The River Street Autism Program at Coltsville provides intensive year-round services for young children with autism using the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA). The curriculum follows a developmental progression using discrete trial teaching with a strong emphasis on the generalization of skills to more natural learning environments. The River Street School in Windsor, CT, serves students ages 3 to 21 with autism and a variety of communicative, behavioral and neurological disorders. RSS offers a range of educational experiences including self-contained classrooms to supervised work programs in the community.

"I am excited about the tremendous potential of this program to respond to the severe shortage in trained personnel," says Dr. Dyer. "This partnership between Elms College and The River Street Autism Program will offer a true research-to-practice experience, allowing master's degree students to practice the science-based strategies learned in the Elms classroom with children with ASD in a real school setting."

"Elms College is pleased to offer this new master's degree program, which responds to a critical community need," says Walter Breau, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Elms. "In partnership with the River Street Autism Program—one of the preeminent autism programs in the Northeast—we will provide educational opportunities for a wide variety of professional service providers and educators interested in understanding and working with individuals with autism."

In addition to its partnership with River Street, Elms College has supported autism education and research programs in recent years in a number of ways. During the 2007-2008 academic year, the college was a sponsor of the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism's "Flutie Bowl to Strike Out Autism," and hosted an Autism Spectrum Disorders Forum Series, which included the panel, "Hope and Acceptance: Inspiration for Families of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders," and a screening of the award-winning film, *Billy the Kid*.

Applicants do not have to hold a degree in the field of communication sciences and disorders—all undergraduate majors are eligible. Admission is on a rolling basis, but qualified applicants will be admitted on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information and an application for the new ASD programs, contact the graduate studies office at 413-265-2445 or maloned@elms.edu. □

Saint Joseph College to Offer Graduate Certificate in ASD

Saint Joseph College in West Hartford, Connecticut, in conjunction with its Gengras Center, is now offering a five course, 15-credit Graduate Certificate in Autism

Spectrum Disorders (ASD). This initiative was recently approved by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education.

The certificate program can function as a stand-alone credential for degreed professionals, or may be applied to a Master of Arts Degree in Education or Special Education at St. Joseph College.

Practicum experience, field studies and observation at The Gengras Center and in public schools are part of the curriculum. The Gengras Center, an affiliated component of Saint Joseph College, offers a unique, state approved special education program for elementary, middle and high school students with intellectual, developmental and learning disabilities, related behavioral challenges and Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The ASD Certificate program will be under the direction of John Molteni, Ph.D., BCBA, a licensed psychologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst who has fostered instructional and behavioral programs for children, adolescents and young adults with autism and related disabilities. Dr. Molteni is the coordinator of School Based Consultation Services and has served as co-director of the Feeding Clinic at The Center for Children with Special Needs in Glastonbury, CT. He earned his doctorate in Clinical Child Psychology from St. John's University and has recently served as an adjunct faculty member at Southern Connecticut State University (Special Education Department) and Eastern Connecticut State University (Psychology Department).

Also instrumental in leading the launch of Saint Joseph College's new ASD Graduate Certificate program are Roger D. Frant, Ph.D., who served as an education consultant with the Connecticut State Department of Education, and Kathleen Whitbread, Ph.D., an associate professor of education and director of the Special Education program at Saint Joseph College.

Dr. Frant was recently honored by the Autism Society

of Connecticut with their 2007 Distinguished Service Award. He will continue to serve as a consultant to the program.

Dr. Whitbread brings more than 20 years experience of working with children with developmental disabilities in school and community settings, and has expertise in working with children with autism spectrum disorders that have serious behavioral challenges.

Based on the increasing prevalence rates, both nationally and statewide of students with ASD and the requirement to provide instruction in the least restrictive setting, Connecticut schools are facing the challenge of meeting these unique needs in the classroom in the absence of available training. This need is underscored by the current 2008 Connecticut legislative action proposed on behalf of children, adults and families. In essence, all teachers will be required to complete coursework instruction on effective methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities.

Graduate students completing the five course ASD Certificate Program at Saint Joseph College will take part in practical experiences in a variety of classroom settings, including inclusive classrooms in the public school setting.

"We are thrilled to announce the approval and launch of this new program," says Daniel Nussbaum, Ph.D., Dean of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education at Saint Joseph College. "Within Connecticut there is a documented shortage of trained and knowledgeable staff to provide support and instruction to children with ASD in school and community settings. Our new graduate certificate program will prepare school personnel to meet the expectations of children and families. Saint

Joseph College looks forward to working collaboratively with other Connecticut colleges and universities, Connecticut state agencies and family groups towards

building a well-trained workforce to provide services to citizens throughout the state with ASD across the life span and across settings."

The Autism Spectrum Disorders Graduate Certificate Program was developed as a multi-departmental collaboration at Saint Joseph College, including the Departments of Education, Human Development and

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Family Studies, Psychology, and The Gengras Center. Additionally, public school professionals and parent organizations focusing on students with ASD were actively involved in the planning process and will continue to be involved through participation in an advisory committee.

For more information on Saint Joseph College's Graduate Certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorders, contact Dr. John Molteni at 860-231-5227, or at jmolteni@sjc.edu. Program details are available online at www.sjc.edu/autism. ☐



Parents of ASD Children Have Big Hearts

The Institute of Professional Practice (IPP) here in Connecticut is looking for qualified and loving families to act as foster parents for difficult to place children. Many of them are on the autism spectrum. Training and support are available to foster families as well as a competitive stipend.

Effectively parenting a child with autism takes a lot of training, insight, patience, and a commitment to making a positive difference in a child's life. Children with special needs are indeed in big trouble without having a caring family devoted to them and their future.

It's a lot to ask a family with a special needs child to reach out and help one more. If you can't help, maybe you know someone who can.



Please pass the word on to family, friends or neighbors who might be interested and ask them to call the number below for more information. IPP is willing to help out foster families with training and finances. They just need some loving, caring families to step forward and make a difference in the lives of these special kids.

For more information, please contact Martha Wick-Glaser, Recruitment and Training Supervisor, at 888-968-4489, email Martha at mglaser@ippi.org. ☐

Playing With Jeremiah

(Fiona Shea)

Editor's Note: Fiona Shea, the 10-year-old daughter of CT FEAT president Rosie Shea, wrote "Playing With Jeremiah" for a fifth grade writing assignment about "an activity that you really enjoy in life." Her article was edited here for length.

My brother, Jeremiah David Shea, is a goofball. He is 11 years old and is a great playmate, funny comedian and best brother in general. Yes, my brother has autism (special needs) and yes sometimes it can be hard. But if I had to make a choice right this very second, there is not one thing I would choose to change about him.

"Jer, ready for a tickle fight?" As I march into my brother's bedroom I hear squeals of laughter. Little chirps and squeaks from under and on the bed. As I bust open the door I see it. The big glimmering smile everyone knows and loves.

As I too jump on the bed and dive into the covers I realize my brother isn't just funny. He's hysterical! His smile, his devious laugh and all his funny actions and gestures make everyone laugh. Even though his jokes are not told through words, everyone still laughs or smiles at all of them.



Not only does my brother have a funny and crazy side, but he also can be sweet and sensitive. When I get angry or frustrated with him, he always has something silly up his sleeve ready to cheer me up.

It's not always jokes with this kid. You have to be very careful with him because he has a very sensitive heart that can break easily. Even so, Jer is very forgiving and understands me. He never tells a secret and even if I hurt him he forgives me and moves on. Sometimes I wish I could be more like Jer.

Sometimes it doesn't seem like he has special needs. Other times it can be hard. But I realized a long time ago that it is your attitude going into an experience – going into life – that matters. Jer has taught me many lessons in life about caring for others, helping out and becoming a nicer person.

If you haven't met my brother before then you have missed out on a lot of fun and excitement. This is why I decided to write about playing with Jer as the activity that I really enjoy in life. ☐

Family Support Groups

The Farmington Valley Asperger's Network (FAVAN) meets the last Tuesday of the month at 7 pm at the Farmington Senior Community Center Unionville. The group is open to family members of children or adults who have any form of ASD. For more information, see www.favan.org or call Lee or Shawn McFadden at 860-589-0097.

Litchfield County Autism Spectrum Association (LACASA) sponsors monthly support meetings at Northwestern Connecticut Community College in Winsted. For more information, call Sharon Cable at (860) 693-9128.

Support group for parents of teens on the spectrum meets monthly in South Glastonbury to discuss various topics related to the building of skills necessary for a successful transition from school to college or work. Topics are planned in advance and speakers are solicited as appropriate. Please contact Tricia Winter at Tricia.winter@hartfordlife.com.

Teen and Adult with ASD Support Group



This support group for ages 18 and over is held on every second Friday of every month at 6:00 p.m. in Wallingford. There is no fee for participation - registration is not required. The facilitator is David Tipping, who is a married adult with Asperger's, a teacher, and an excellent facilitator. For more information please contact Lois Rosenwald at ASRC at 203-265-7717 or visit www.ct-asrc.org. ☐

Two New Support Groups Proposed for Family Members of Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

The **Connecticut Autism Spectrum Resource Center (CT-ASRC)** is interested in starting 2 new support groups at the ASRC Center in Wallingford. One support group will be for parents of adults with autism and other ASDs, and a separate support group is being considered for spouses of high functioning Asperger syndrome, or "Shadow Syndrome" adults.

The Center is currently trying to determine if there is a need and desire to participate in these unique support resources for family members of adults with ASDs. If you or others you know are interested in learning more about either of the above listed programs, please contact Lois Rosenwald at 203-265-7717, or by e-mail at ct-asrc@sbcglobal.net. ☐

Rhythms of Grace

Now In Two Locations Child-Centered Worship Services for All Learning Types



This unique "Church experience for those who don't feel comfortable in a traditional worship setting" has expanded to include two services each month. Trinity Episcopal Church in Torrington and the Church of Our Saviour in Plainville welcome children with special needs and their families to informal, nondenominational worship services. The Torrington services are held on the first Sunday and the Plainville services are offered on the third Sunday of each month from October through June.

The services begin with a relaxed get-together during which children and their families "hang out" and welcome one another. Then a short, adapted Bible story, usually presented with visual supports, sets the theme for interactive play time in several learning centers, which in the past have included favorites like a water table, shaving cream art, flower potting, parachute toss and various musical activities.

Worship with music and the breaking of bread follow for those who wish to participate.

The services, which start at 1 p.m., offer families an opportunity to introduce children to group worship in a supportive, relaxed environment.

The program is open to all families. It is lovingly run and skillfully adapted by the Reverend Audrey Scanlon, Rector of the Church of Our Saviour in Plainville, and Mrs. Linda Snyder, Director of Children and Youth Ministries of the Trinity Episcopal in Torrington.

More information, directions and service schedules are available at www.rhythms-of-grace.org, or by calling 860-482-6027. ☐



**BABAT Conference Highlights:
Experts Discuss Assessment and
Treatment of Children with Autism**

(Sue Frost)

More than 600 behavior analysts and other professionals gathered at the 28th annual conference of the Berkshire Association for Behavior Analysis and Therapy (BABAT) last October in Amherst, MA.

This was not a conference geared toward those new to the field: every presenter assumed that the audience had a solid grasp of behavioral approaches and the lingo of ABA.

Because not all behavior analysts work with people with autism, the conference offered a wide range of topics, from how to teach children not to play with guns to a behavior analysis of gambling to using medication to manage challenging behaviors. Four presentations were especially interesting.

The first one was given by Mark L. Sundberg about an assessment tool he has developed & made available: the Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment & Placement Program (VB-MAPP). He said that it is easier & faster to use than the ABLLS, when assessing a child's current skill level & determining which skills to begin teaching. The VB-MAPP is divided into 3 levels (level one is 0-18 months; level 2 is 18-30 months; level 3 is 30-48 months). These levels will help teachers to know which skills are developmentally appropriate to teach each particular child. Once a child is up to the 48-month level, she or he should have the prerequisite skills to be able to benefit from more typical teaching materials. Sundberg was a good speaker: upbeat & personable.

Another good presentation was given by Brian A. Iwata, of the University of Florida, in response to winning this year's *Murray Sidman Award for Enduring Contribution to ABA*. He was also a good speaker, incorporating some humor while providing tons of slides of data. He talked about the challenges that clinics face when they get the severe behaviors of a child under control, and then have to send the child

home. It's just a lot harder for caregivers to continue treatment in a non-clinic setting.

Schools also face many challenges in their efforts to provide ABA. The participants of a panel discussion at the conference had some good ideas about how make them work. They try to get the best paraprofessionals to implement ABA programs, and offer them lots of training & appreciation. They also have figured out ways to simplify the data sheets that paraprofessionals use, so that everyone knows what they need to do each day and plenty of data gets taken on the children's progress. Paraprofessionals should not be expected to modify curriculum; this should be done by special education teachers. The panel members emphasized that, in order to have everyone dealing with a child's behaviors in a consistent manner, it's ideal to have a weekly consult meeting written in the child's IEP.

And then Mark L. Sundberg provided the last session, talking about teaching social behavior to children with autism. He outlined all the reasons peer interaction is hard for them: they are weak in many of the necessary skills, and peers aren't as patient and reinforcing as teachers are. IEPs often include goals about friendship or conversation that require a lot of prerequisite skills, and that are far more complicated to learn than people realize. He recommended using the VB-MAPP (of course!) to figure out the appropriate social skill level to teach. Finally, too much 1:1 instruction without any peers can lead to a dependence on adults, and hurt the child's social interactions with peers later. So bring in peers EARLY, teaching the peers to provide reinforcing things like snacks & rides in wagons.

This conference is held every fall. This year the Berkshire Association for Behavior Analysis and Therapy Annual Conference will be held on October 16 & 17. For more information about BABAT, visit www.babat.org.

Interactive Autism Network

The Kennedy Krieger Institute recently launched the first national online autism registry. The Interactive Autism Network (IAN) is designed to promote autism research by linking researchers and families. Anyone impacted by an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can join IAN's online community to stay informed about autism research, provide feedback, share information and become part of an important national research effort. For more information go to www.ianproject.org

This listing is periodically updated at the CT FEAT web site. Please verify registration deadlines with event sponsors.

If you know about an event that may be suitable for inclusion, kindly send the information to editorctfeat@aol.com. Please note that CT FEAT accepts no advertising. Updates are also circulated among the subscribers to CT FEAT's "parents only" listserv discussion group. Details about joining the listserv are available at the CT FEAT web site (www.ctfeat.org) or by calling the CT FEAT Information Hotline at 860-571-3888.

* This listing focuses on effective autism treatment practices that have been validated by research. For other presentations of interest, check out The Autism Society of Connecticut (ASCONN) "Autism in Connecticut" blog at www.autismsocietyofct.org, where you will find information on a broad range of autism and related presentations, support group activities, etc. ☐

FREE ONLINE LECTURES

Childnett.tv® The Dan Marino Foundation offers free video lectures recorded at presentations by numerous experts in autism treatment at www.childnett.tv/videos/lectures. Topics and speakers include:

Vincent Carbone :Verbal Behavior The benefits of adding B.F. Skinner's analysis of verbal behavior to an applied behavior analysis program are discussed. (111 min) Dr. Carbone has over 30 years of experience designing learning environments for persons with autism and development disabilities. Learn more about Vincent Carbone and Verbal Behavior at www.drcarbone.net.

Selecting an ABA Service Provider A guide for parents and school districts on securing the right professionals for state-of-the-art behavioral treatment for autism. Based on guidelines established by the Autism Special Interest Group of the Association of Behavior Analysis. (50 minutes)

Using Applied Behavior Analysis to Create Effective Home Programs Brian Roselione, MS, BCABA demonstrates how to integrate ABA into home programming. (25 min)

The Homework Blues Marlene Marlene Sotelo-Bumberg, M.S. MT-BC, BCABA demonstrates how to implement homework strategies for students with disabilities. (60 min)

Video Modeling—A Powerful Tool for the Visual Learner (45 minutes) An overview of the practical use of video modeling by a parent of children with autism.

One Brick at a Time—Developing High School Programs for Adolescents with Autism (45 minutes)

What Every School Administrator Needs to Know About Autism Connie Mathis discusses the unique needs of children with autism in school settings. Areas of strengths and deficits and how they are manifested in classroom settings, and the importance of providing opportunities to generalize new skills within the school environment are discussed. Prompt dependency, fading and the importance of administrative support in a child's program are also addressed. (45 minutes)

Parents As Behavior Analysts, and other autism specific topics.

Sexuality Education Video by Dr. Peter Gerhardt

www.talkautism.com/components/video/video.aspx?v=6

Sponsored by the Doug Flutie Jr Foundation

Dr. Peter Gerhardt gives a comprehensive and lively overview of the issues people with autism face regarding sexuality. Dr. Gerhardt shares perspectives, recommendations and helpful resources to educate people on the challenges faced by the autism community and how to help individuals learn about their sexuality. Focus is on the "need for individualized and effective instruction" in this area of adult life for individuals with developmental disorders.☐

Continued on page 22

RIVER STREET ABA ORIENTATION WORKSHOPS

The River Street Autism Program offers two-day orientation in basic ABA and its use with children with autism. The program is offered four times each year, and is designed for parents, teaching staff, and caregivers of children with autism. The registration fee for parents is \$125 per person. Contact Ann Varney at 860-298-9079 ext. 2101 for the 2008-2009 schedule and other details.

September 8 & 9, 2008

Hartford, CT

PECS Basic Training

Presenters: Anthony Castrogiovanni, Ph.D. &

Lauren Frederick, M.A., BCBA

This intense two-day training is designed to teach participants to appropriately implement the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). It begins with an overview of the Pyramid Approach to Education to explore the key components of designing effective educational environments. Participants will learn how to implement the six Phases of PECS, including attributes, through presenter demonstrations, video examples and role-play opportunities. Participants will leave the workshop with a fundamental understanding of how to implement PECS with individuals with autism, related developmental disabilities, and/or limited communication skills. Tuition includes: The Second Edition PECS Training Manual (a \$69.00 value) • Detailed Handouts with space for note taking • Certificate of Attendance • Continental Breakfast both days • ASHA CEUs are available. Cost is \$395.00. Registration information at

www.pecs.com/workshop.php?workshop_id=9

September 24, 2008

Cromwell, CT

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) Conference

Keynote Speaker : George Sugai

Presenters: Dr. Chris Oliva, Fredda Brown, Pat Amos, Sara Woolf, and SERC Consultants. For more information contact Angela Spino (860)-418-8709 or at angela.spino@ct.gov.

October 10, 2008

Princeton, NJ

Inclusion for Students with Asperger's/HFA

Eden Outreach Department. Cost is \$100. Contact jeni.truch@edenservices.org (609-426-8656 ext 23).

October 11, 2008

Augusta, ME

4th Annual Maine Autism Resource Fair

The Benefits of Including B.F. Skinner's Analysis of Verbal Behavior Within Intensive Treatment Programs for Children with Autism

Presenter: Dr. Vincent Carbone

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) has been demonstrated to be one of the most effective forms of treatment and intervention for children with autism. A growing line of research has found that the same principles of behavior can be effectively applied to the teaching of language and communication skills. The benefits of this approach will be described and research data will be presented. In addition, video demonstrations of application of this approach to language teaching will be provided throughout the talk. **There is no cost to attend, but please register to help us prepare.** Contact Heidi Bowden at 207-626-3042 or email: asdresourcefair@aol.com. Dr. Carbone's presentation will be from 9:30 a.m. until noon. Other presentation of interest will be available in the afternoon sessions. More information is available at www.maeproject.org.

October 16-17, 2008

Amherst, MA

The Berkshire Association for Behavior Analysis and Therapy Annual Conference

Every year since 1979, the Berkshire Association for Behavior Analysis and Therapy (BABAT) has hosted a conference for professionals, students, and persons interested in the areas of behavior analysis, autism, developmental disabilities, ethics, behavioral medicine, & staff development. The 29th Annual Conference will be held at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Speakers will include Bridget A. Taylor, Keith D. Allen, Mark R. Dixon, Wayne W. Fisher, Philip N. Heline, Linda A. LeBlanc, Sam Leigland, M. Jackson Marr, Jay C. Moore, Jack Michael, Caio F. Miguel, David C. Palmer, Dennis H. Reid, Peter Sturmey, and David P. Wacker. For more details on the conference, go to www.babat.org

November 6-8, 2008

Albany, NY

NYSABA's 18th Annual Conference

New York State Association for Behavior Analysis

Invited speakers include Drs. Andrew Bondy, Ennio Cipani and Brian Martens. More information is available at www.nysaba.org.

Save the Date!

April 3, 2009

Cromwell, CT

Connecticut Association for Behavior Analysis 5th Annual Conference. More information and a call for papers will be announced soon. For additional information contact Dr.

John Molteni, Ph.D., BCBA at jmolteni@autismct.com. ☐

CT FEAT, Inc.

PO Box 370352

West Hartford, CT
06137-0352

860-571-3888

www.ctfeat.org

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Connecticut Families for Effective Autism Treatment
10 Years of Families Helping Families

ABOUT CT FEAT

Formed in 1997 by parents and relatives, Connecticut Families for Effective Autism Treatment (CT FEAT) is a non-profit organization created to provide information and support to the families of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

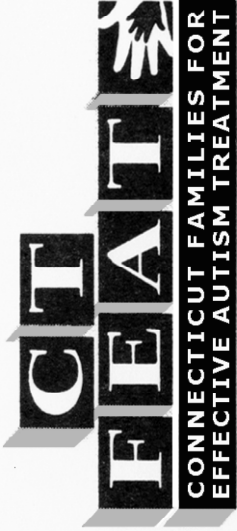
GOALS:

- To provide information and resources that enable families to evaluate and compare the effectiveness of current treatment approaches;
- To support families seeking or implementing behavioral intervention programs;
- To expand the availability of high quality professional services by supporting education and training opportunities in applied behavior analysis (ABA);
- To increase public awareness regarding the high incidence of Autism Spectrum Disorders and the availability of effective, scientifically validated treatments.

RESOURCES:

- The CT FEAT web site, www.ctfeat.org, provides extensive information resources including book and video reviews, conference listings, an 'ABA Job Connections' employment section where prospective employees and employers can find each other, Spanish language resources, research articles, and back issues of the information-packed CT FEAT newsletter.
- Parent Support Group meetings, which take place in Rocky Hill and in Waterbury, CT. The only requirement for participation in the meetings is that parents agree to respect each other's privacy and confidentiality. Please call the Parent Hotline (860-571-3888) or visit the CT FEAT web site, www.ctfeat.org, for information about future meetings.
- An Unmoderated "Parents Only" Internet Mailing List that provides Connecticut parents of ASD children with a forum to discuss effective treatment and education, and other issues of concern to parents. To subscribe to the list, go to the CT FEAT website, www.ctfeat.org, and click on "Join our discussion list."
- The CT FEAT Newsletter which contains news of interest (e.g. book reviews, conference announcements, etc.). To subscribe (free) , please send an e-mail with your mailing address and whether you are a parent or a professional to newsletter@ctfeat.org or call the Information Hotline (860-571-3888) .
- Advocacy and resources to expand the availability of high quality professional services for children and families.

CT FEAT Bylaws provide that all members of the Board of Directors shall be parents or family members of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. There is Board representation from throughout the state. Connecticut Families for Effective Autism Treatment (CT FEAT) is a non-profit organization staffed by volunteers and funded through the generosity of caring supporters. If you are a Connecticut parent or professional and would like to be a volunteer for CT FEAT activities, please call us at (860) 571-3888, write to P.O. Box 370352, West Hartford, CT 06137, or e-mail ctfeat1@ctfeat.org. □



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