

Autism Action

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SD ASA Board Members Gregory Fletcher, Chantal Sicile-Kira, Rachel Z., Shelly Van Brabant, and Shirley Fett display Chapter of the Year award at ASA's 36th Annual National Conference in Nashville recently. More on page 4.

Spotlight on ABA

WHAT IS APPLIED BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS ?

Applied Behavioral Analysis, otherwise known as ABA, is based on Operant Conditioning. This model is based on the theory that consequences have an affect on behavior. It is critical then that there be a consistent delivery of consequences to get the desired behavioral change.

Typically most agencies will provide two types of ABA. This is in the form of behavior modification as well as discrete trial training. Based on research that has been done over the past several years, many agencies have expanded these concepts into more natural forms of therapy. In any case they are mostly based on the original concepts of Operant Conditioning.

List of local providers begins on page 5.

**INFORMATIONAL
 MONTHLY MEETINGS**
New dates!
Dynamic programs!
Enjoy a light dinner!

6:30-8:30pm
TMI Conference Center-2nd floor
4740 Murphy Canyon Rd
San Diego/Kearny Mesa

**Getting the most out
 of your IEP**

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

Advocates/Educational Therapists:
 Belinda Brav, Joanne Ellison
 Patricia Cromer

**Medications &
 the Autistic Patient**

Tuesday, October 18, 2005

Child-Adolescent Psychiatrist
 Dr. Michael Ricciardi

speaker profiles on page 4

from the president Shirley Fett



I had the great opportunity to participate in the recent National Autism Society of America's annual convention in Nashville. While there were many excellent speakers, lots of great information and exhibits, the most compelling part of the trip was meeting parents of adult children with autism and meeting adults with autism.

It was quite inspirational to attend a presentation by parents of adult children and see their continued motivation and passion for improving the lives of their children. These are parents, undoubtedly who are in their 60's and 70's, who are lobbying for more funding, creating training models for working with adults in the community and running community agencies.

If, for a moment, I thought my work would ever be done, hearing them speak made me realize how important planning for the future and creating opportunities now should be. While millions of dollars are raised for research, there is virtually no money being "raised" or allocated for adult services. Our children will be adults far longer than they will be children, so as the incidence of autism increases, the amount of money currently available will be minimal to non-existent for all of the future adults with autism.

For those of us who have children in the early teen years, the message was loud and clear to start visualizing our children as adults and what they and we want their lives to be like when they reach adulthood. Eighteen, nineteen or twenty years of age is too late to begin this process. No matter how "high-functioning" the person, all need long term planning and preparation to have a meaningful adult life. One of the sad examples given was about a young man, who had a great deal of intervention while in school and had done quite well. The failure came when there was no long-range plan of what he would do after age 21 when school services ended. He spent his days at home, playing video games and "existing". We must be

pro-active in outlining the future for our kids--- today.

Hearing adults with autism speak at the convention was very insightful. Interestingly, most of them preferred to be called "autistic" rather than a "person with autism". While many had successfully gone to school and college, all of them shared the fact that they faced many challenges daily—including overloaded sensory experiences with things like fluorescent lighting in offices, air conditioners buzzing, phones ringing, etc. They shared continued problems with social nuances and maintaining eye contact. Most of the adults admitted they still had to "stim", but had learned to control this away from public view most of the time.

Certainly there was a great deal to consider and "digest" from the convention. It was meaningful, inspirational and a little terrifying at times to think what our future may hold. One thing was clear; the ASA is an organization with a mission of addressing the needs of the autism community for the lifespan—not just kids or adults, not just research or services. You will see us around for a long, long time.....all the best.

Shirley

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Layout Design by Kay Freeman
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Mission Statement

The mission of the Autism Society of America is to promote lifelong access and opportunities for persons within the autism spectrum and their families, to be fully included, participating members of their community through advocacy, public awareness, education and research related to autism.

Endorsement Policy

The Autism Society of America does not endorse individual programs. References appearing in the Autism Action regarding programs, resources, treatment, etc. should not be interpreted as an indication of endorsement by the Autism Society of America. They are provided for information only.

for your information

Weekend Recreational Programs for children with autism:



As a result of a pilot training program by Autism Spectrum Consultants, several local businesses have been able to add weekend classes that serve children with developmental disorders. Nightingale Music Studio, in Bird Rock, La Jolla, offers music and movement classes for children aged 3 to 13. Children of a variety of ages and abilities can come together to participate in a fun-filled group activity, with music, instruments, puppets, songs and dancing. The class is taught by a certified music teacher, and is designed for children with good listening comprehension and an ability to participate, with prompting, in a group setting.



EncouraGYM, also located in La Jolla, offers their "Play and Learn" movement classes in a sensory gym atmosphere for younger children of any developmental stage, ages 2 to 6 years. Children have access to the gym for free play, and then are introduced to weekly themes, with songs, manipulatives, bubbles and movement activities. Both weekend recreational programs are offered on Saturdays. These programs are designed as parent participation, and are being offered at cost. For information on either program, please contact Jennifer Tandy at Nightingale Music at 858.488.3244 or Audrey Gans at EncouraGYM at 858.456.1500.

Planned Charitable Giving

As we confront the challenges of the future, we know that the generosity of those who assist us will make all the difference in our success. There are many ways that your philanthropic giving can accommodate your financial situation and tax planning.



One of the easiest ways to make a gift to the ASA is with a Bequest in your will or revocable living trust. Bequests work particularly well for those who are unable to make an immediate gift, but would like to support the future work of ASA.

Please contact the ASA at 619.298.1981 if you would like more information about Planned Charitable giving.

All gifts, large and small, make a difference to the future of ASA!

FREE CHILD CARE

for Children with Disabilities

1-888-873-5145

Visit website: www.SanDiegoHeadStart.org

Support Group For Adults with Autism

The San Diego Autism Society would like to start a local support group for adults on the autism spectrum. This group would be modeled after support groups in Los Angeles and Tucson and would allow adults on the spectrum to share experiences and advice. We are looking for a few people to help start the group and shape its future. It is anticipated that monthly meetings will be held in the San Diego area starting in November, 2005. Topics discussed at meetings might include careers, relationships, health care, and social services.

If you are interested in the possibility of joining this group or would like additional information, please contact:

Lars Perner • lperner@mail.sdsu.edu

<http://www.LarsPerner.com> • (760) 768-5614.

THE AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS RESOURCE GUIDE
a guide for parents in San Diego County is
available online: www.sd-autism.org

Help Us Raise Funds!



Please help the ASA earn extra dollars – by doing barely anything!

Donate your used printer cartridges and cell phones! Bring them with you to the Pool Parties or Informational meetings, and SD ASA can get between \$2 and \$12 per cartridge! For more info visit www.cartridgesforkids.com

OR, sign up at you local Vons and Ralph's grocery stores for eScrip – just call the toll free number on the bottom of your receipt, and if you are a club-card member, they will donate a portion of each receipt to the ASA. You can also pick up a special Albertson's club card at any ASA function and use that the same way!

Call For Papers

The Involved Exceptional Parents Day (IEP Day) conference planning committee is seeking workshop proposals for the 23rd annual IEP Day conference, which will be held on March 25, 2006 at the Handlery Hotel in San Diego.

The theme for this year's conference is Including Everyone As Partners. You are invited to submit proposals for 90 minute workshops of interest to parents of school aged children with special needs, and encourage parent/professional partnership in meeting the needs of the children.

Special consideration will be given to workshop proposals offered in Spanish, as well as to Parent/Professional teams.

If you are interested in submitting a proposal, email Karyn Searcy @ KARYNLS2@AOL.COM, or call 858 695 9444. All submissions must be received by October 15, 2005.

For your information

ASA'S 36TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

An Event to Remember

Thousands of ASA Members, Supporters Descend on Nashville for Largest Autism Conference in Nation



The Autism Society of America (ASA), the leading voice and resource of the entire autism community, hosted its 36th National Conference and celebrated its 40th anniversary in Nashville, TN, July 13-16, 2005. Thousands of ASA members and supporters attended the conference, which offered more than 75 sessions on a variety of autism-related topics applicable to individuals across the lifespan, including sessions on behavior issues and supports; communication; early intervention; education; family and sibling support; medicine and research; personal perspectives; sensory processing; social skills; technology; and transition planning and options for adulthood.

The conference, which was attended by many local SD ASA members, provided exciting seminars and information, such as the panel presentation of adults with autism. "This conference provided a forum where adults with ASD could speak frankly and openly about the joys and challenges of living with autism", said Rachel Zjisltra. "I found their stories poignant and enlightening and hopeful for the future". Shelly van Brabant concurred, and found the adults with autism to be simply mesmerizing. "I am never going to underestimate my son again!", said Karen Dotson.

In addition to attending seminars, our chapter was on-hand to receive the Chapter of The Year award, presented at the Opening Ceremony. The SD ASA was recognized as leaders in the ASA family. In addition, local author and ASA Board member, Chantal Sicile-Kira received the ASA Outstanding Literary Work of the Year for her book *Autism Spectrum Disorders*.

ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS

September 20, 2005

Belinda Brav ACSW, MSE Educational Consultant/Advocate

Belinda Brav has national recognition as a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers and a Masters Degree in Social Work. She has worked as a School Social Worker with differential diagnostic responsibilities; a Program Director of a residential treatment facility for adolescents; and as Assistant Executive. Director of a child and family services agency with oversight of four residential programs, Ms. Brav has worked on behalf of children with special needs for more than 25 years.

Joanne Ellison, Certified Educational Therapist Special Education Advocate

Mrs. Ellison is a Special Education Advocate and Educational Consultant serving all of San Diego County and parts of Riverside County. Mrs. Ellison is the Educational Consultant for UCSD Mother, Child & Adolescent Program and some local attorneys who specialize in Education Law. She has been interviewed and aired on Channel 10 concerning Special Education in San Diego County.

Joanne earned degrees in Special Education from Boston University and Columbia University and completed certification in Educational Therapy at UCSD. Joanne taught in the classroom for many years in New York, Boston and San Diego, had a private practice in Educational Therapy, served as Director of Instructional Services for the Moyers Learning Center in San Diego and finally opened a private practice concentrating on Special Education Advocacy.

In her role as advocate and consultant, Mrs. Ellison reviews educational records and evaluations performed by a variety of professionals in regard to each student. She opens communication with school districts and represents families at school related meetings in order to secure special education services when appropriate. She monitors

children's progress in the school setting and is part of a team that develops Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) and 504's for each student according to the mandates of education law (IDEA) and the Office of Civil Rights.

Patricia Cromer

Ms. Cromer is a sole practitioner who focuses exclusively on special education and expulsions. Ms. Cromer represented parents of special needs students, managed legal documents, assisted in case preparation, mediations and due processes while serving as a law clerk for Joan K. Honeycutt, Attorney at Law. Ms. Cromer has made presentations to California Juvenile Judges at their annual meeting, the Stockton Bar Association, including Juvenile Judges and parent support groups, and at a panel discussion at NCEC in 2001. She has been a guest lecturer for Master level classes at UCSD and SDSU Child Development classes. Ms. Cromer is presently working on a self initiated project to provide representation to minors involved in the juvenile court system in the special education arena.

October 18, 2005

Dr. Michael Ricciardi

Dr. Mike Ricciardi of Coronado, CA, is a retired Navy Captain with over 20 years of service. He is a board certified child-adolescent psychiatrist.

**Parent-to-Parent Support,
Resources, Information, Referral, California Early Start
intake - assessment for developmental delay, phone
Exceptional Family Resource Center:
1.800.281.8252 • www.efrconline.org**

spotlight on ABA

The following is a list of local agencies that provide ABA therapy as well as their contact information. Inclusion on this list does not imply endorsement, nor does oversight/exclusion suggest a lack of endorsement by SDASA.

Autism Spectrum Consultants, Inc

Populations served: Early intervention infant programs, through high school

Services offered:

- Clinical Supervision (set up and maintenance of ABA program)
- Parent & Staff Training
- Senior Therapy by trained staff, to work in home and school settings
- Social Skills Training, social facilitation, and group therapy
- Inclusion & Mainstreaming, including curriculum modification

Funding sources: private, insurance, school district, Regional Centers

Locations served:

Central San Diego, coastal and inland North counties, Temecula/Riverside County, and Orange County

The Clinical Director holds a PhD in Educational Psychology and is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Case Supervisors are Master's level therapists, and are completing the Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA) certification. The Behavioral therapy staff are mainly BA level employees with a background in psychology or early childhood education.

Contact info: Dawn Holman, PhD, Managing Director
Shannon Wallace, MA, Assistant Clinical Director
Susan Yount, Administrative Director
7590 Fay Ave Suite 519, La Jolla, CA 92037
858.456.2249, www.autismconsultants.com

Applied Interventions & Methodologies (AIM)

Populations served: Children, adolescents & adults with ASD and other developmental disabilities

Services offered:

- Infant development programs
- Intensive ABA programs
- Behavior consultation
- School based behavioral & educational services
- Social skills & life skills training
- Psychological & educational assessments
- Individual & family psychotherapy and behavioral support.

Funding sources; private, insurance, school district, Regional Centers

Locations served: Central San Diego, North Coastal San Diego, North Inland San Diego and parts of East County San Diego.

Contact info: Dr. Sandy Shaw, Director of AIM

Address: P.O. Box 12462, La Jolla, CA 92039

Phone: (858) 492 - 8511

Website: www.aimautismservices.com

Bridges Educational Corporation

Populations served: Children with autism, PDD, and other developmental disabilities ages 0-12

Services offered:

- ABA home programming and supervision, behavior consultation, education consultation, school district programming, supervision, and staff training.

Funding sources: private, insurance, school district, Regional Centers

Locations served: Children, families, and school districts throughout San Diego County

Contact info: Erin D. Ring, Ph.D. and Kim Berman,

MSW, BCABA,

7804 Miramar Road, Suite 205,

San Diego CA 92121

ering@bridgesaba.com

kberman@bridgesaba.com

www.bridgesaba.com

Office: 619.540.0676

spotlight on ABA

Center for Autism and Related Disorders, Inc.

Populations served: Early intervention

Services offered: comprehensive treatment services to children with autism.

ABA program, & numerous specialty programs.

Supervision & Consultation

Direct 1:1 Therapy:

Workshop Consultation: Domestic & Abroad:

Assessment:

District Training & Consultation:

Medical Consultation and Dietary Intervention

Parent Training

Funding sources: private, insurance, school district, Regional Centers

Locations served: San Diego County & other locations

Contact info: Andrea M. Zarsadias, M.A., BCBA
Senior Clinic Supervisor
7297 Ronson Road, Suite E, San Diego, CA 92111
(Phone) 858 278-6603
email: a.zarsadias@centerforautism.com
www.centerforautism.com

Comprehensive Autism Services and Education, Inc. (C.A.S.E., Inc.)

We serve children, teens and adults with Asperger's Syndrome and High Functioning Autism.

We provided ABA home therapies (IAM), Consultations services, Assessments, A social understanding group entitled Friends' Club, Social coaching for teens and young adults, Gender talk, Summer Camps, Parent Trainings, and Voice and Movement Therapy.

C.A.S.E., Inc accepts all types of insurances including: Blue Cross/ Blue Shield, Managed Health Network, Pacific Care, United Behavioral Health, and Cigna. We also accept scholarships through Autism Services Foundation (ASF), Regional Center for ABA programs, School Districts, and private pay.

We are located in Carlsbad, CA. Our address is 580 Beech Ave. Suite B, Carlsbad, CA 92008. Our other office is located in Roberts Creek, BC.

For more information please contact Maria Lyon at 760-720-4964 or feel free to email her at casembl@aol.com.

B.E.S.T. Services, Inc

Population served: Children diagnosed with Autism

Services offered: ABA both in-home and at school, parent training, behavior consultation

Funding sources: Private, Regional Centers, School Districts

Locations served: Sand Diego, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties

Contact info: Norah Wilson 619-442-1271 or drnlw@cox.net

CARES, Inc. (The Center for Autism Research, Evaluation and Service)

We serve individuals on the autism spectrum and related disorders from infancy through adulthood.

We are funded through the Regional Center, school districts, private pay and insurance.

We are located in San Diego County, Imperial County, Orange County and the Inland Valley.

Our contact information is:
CARES, Inc. 6160 Cornerstone Ct. East #255
San Diego, CA 92121, 858-623-2777 x397 between 7 and 5pm. web: www.caresnpa.com

Coyne & Associates

Population served: Children with Autism and other developmental disabilities 0-12 years old.

Services:

In-home ABA Early Intervention Program for children 0-3 years old.

In-home ABA and in school ABA programs for children 3-12 years old.

Parent Training.

Behavior Consultations for parents and teachers.

Funding: For children younger than three years old is funded by Regional Center. Services for children older than three are funded by the local school district.

Locations Served: San Diego County and Orange County

Contact: Business office- 760-634-1125;
Paul Coyne PhD BCBA, 760-213-1776

spotlight on ABA

Rachel Brown, Behavioral Consultant

Populations served: Early intervention-high school age

Services offered:

Individualized programs grounded in Applied Behavior Analysis:
Program Development & Staff Supervision
Parent & Staff Training
Behavior Management
Discrete Trial
Pivotal Response
Inclusion & Mainstreaming
Social Skills Training

Funding sources: private,

Locations served: Central/ San Diego and coastal north county (other SD areas considered if scheduling permits)

Contact info: Rachel Brown, Behavioral Consultant
619-839-3860, PO BOX 17477
San Diego, CA 92177

ACES, inc., Comprehensive Educational Services

- * Populations served through the lifespan. Primarily autism and aspergers
- * Services offered: DTT, ABA, PECs, TEACCH, RDI, play based therapy. School shadowing, Classroom consultations, parent trainings, school trainings, OT
- * Funding sources specific private insurance, school district, Regional Centers 0-3 and 3 and above
- * Staff Qualifications: PhD, MFT, BCBA, MSOT, Masters in social work, Masters in special education. Some have trained under Dr. Gutstein for RDI, Trained in North Carolina for TEACCH, Some under Greenspan/Weider for DIR.
- * Locations served--San Diego through Los Angeles counties
- * Contact info: Bridgette Anderson,
3731 6th ave #100, San Diego, CA 92107
phone:619-278-0884 email: banderson@acesangels.com

DMS Consulting

Educational and Behavioral Consultants

Enhancing the lives of individuals with different abilities.

Populations served: Children to Adults with autism, aspergers, PDD, and other developmental disabilities, ages birth to adulthood.

Services offered:

Educational consultation
Behavioral consultation
Home programming and supervision
School district programming/consultation/supervision
IEP coaching, parent training,
classroom and home staff training to include therapist and in home staff

Funding sources: San Diego Regional Center, school district contracts and private.

Locations served: San Diego and surrounding counties

Contact info: DeeDee Spangler, M.S. (Masters in Special Education) dmsconsulting@san.rr.com
www.educationalandbehavioralconsulting.com
619-886-2778

Lovaas Institute for Early Education (LIFE)

- * Populations served: preschool through age 8
- * Services offered: 1:1 behavioral intervention; parent, peer play, discrete trial, & natural environment training.
- * Funding: private, insurance, school district, and Regional Center
- * Locations served--San Diego & other areas
- * Contact info: Miriam Luttbeg
6540 Lusk Blvd Suite c-157, San Diego, CA 92121, phone: 858.678-0963
www.lovaas.com, mluttbeg@lovaas.com

Children's Hospital, Autism Intervention Center

- * Populations served: 2-10 years of age
- * Services offered: Pivotal Response Parent Training
- * Funding sources: private, insurance, school district, San Diego Regional Center
- * Staff Qualifications: All Therapists have Masters Degree's or Ph.D.'s with a minimum of 3 years experience
- * Locations served: Main office at Children's Hospital - San Diego, & satellite in Solana Beach
- * Contact info: Bonnie Corbin 858-966-7453

autism advice

By Dawn Holman, Ph D

It is estimated that as many as 10-20% of autistic children are also known as “hyperlexic”. Hyperlexia is defined by the presence of a developmental disturbance (such as autism) that is accompanied by the early appearance of single word decoding skills, usually by age 3, but prior to the age of 5, that is self-generated, learned without specific instruction, and characterized by compulsive behavior in the form of a preoccupation with reading.

The true nature of hyperlexia and its relationship to autism is still disputed among researchers. Some have questioned whether hyperlexia is a distinct disorder or whether it is merely a symptom of autism. Children characterized as hyperlexic display many of the symptoms of autism, including language deficits and impairments in socialization, in addition to their preoccupations with letters and reading. The majority of researchers believe that autism and hyperlexia are on the same continuum of Pervasive Developmental Disorders.

In the 1970’s, several researchers reported that children with autism who were also classified as hyperlexic had improved outcomes. Others found that the hyperlexic autistic children actually had higher IQ’s than those autistic children who were not classified as hyperlexic. The age-old question of which came first, the chicken or the egg seems to apply here. Is it that children with higher IQ’s are also the ones who are hyperlexic, or is it the fact that children with hyperlexia are such avid readers that they are able to achieve higher IQ scores?

Regardless of this debate, as we begin our 2005-2006 school year, it is important to understand our children’s strengths and difficulties in the area of reading. Parents of hyperlexic children often tell their child’s teacher that they are excellent readers. What is important to understand however, is that just because something can be read aloud, doesn’t mean that it is being understood. I can read a paragraph or two in Spanish quite well, but my understanding (or reading comprehension) of what I just read aloud is very poor – because my understanding and use of Spanish as a language is very limited. Similarly, as hyperlexic children may amaze their parents or teachers by reciting an article in Newsweek, but when questioned about details of what they read, they may frequently answer “I don’t know”.

While some hyperlexic children may be able to answer simple questions about facts in books they read, when the questions delve into the area of social comprehension, the overall reading comprehension really decreases. What parents and educators need to understand about reading comprehension is that if an autistic child doesn’t comprehend social interactions as they occur in real life, everyday, around him, then how can he be expected to make inferences about social interactions from books? Deficits in theory of mind (understanding other people’s perspectives, their intentions, and unspoken thought processes) will be paralleled in reading comprehension deficits once the reading level is at approximately 3rd grade level and above.

But the news about hyperlexia as a whole is good news! Chil-

dren with hyperlexia have a special interest in letters, words and books. This can and often is used to their advantage. The following is a list of tips that can be incorporated into many school and home programs, in order to increase language comprehension through words.

Reading at the 1-2 word stage:

- Put words on EVERYTHING – label your kitchen, bathrooms, bedroom, the classroom, etc.
- Use words to teach new labels. Add words to pictures and/or icons (such as PECS, which can be turned into WECS! – Word Exchange Communication System).
- Create a written word schedule instead of or in addition to a picture schedule
- Use words to prompt for attention or to give instructions quietly. Hand the child a sticky note with a written request, or place a note card on their desk or work area.
- Use words to prompt for longer verbal answers, such as using an “AND” cue card to get a child to give two responses to certain questions
- Use words plus pictures to represent more abstract language concepts, such as WHO/WHAT/WHERE/WHEN etc.

Reading at the sentence level:

- Use short sentences as above as visual prompts in the classroom, instead of the more intrusive verbal prompts from the teacher or instructional assistant.
- Use sentences as mini-scripts to teach answers to questions, such as conversational answers, personal information, etc. that you want your child to learn
- Make sure to teach emotion words, so that emotions can be identified in later reading materials. Match emotion words with pictures of emotional situations.
- Use written language to explain uncertain situations or topics to your child. Introduce short Social Stories (Carol Gray) that give specific instructions to the child regarding certain behaviors or situations. Include pictures or icons as well as words.
- Make sure that your child can read and answer simple comprehension questions (like the WH questions from above).
- Use simple worksheets to elicit answers, rather than always testing your child verbally (depending on the child’s ability to write or type the responses)
- Teach simple homophones, homonyms, etc and the importance of determining the context to determine the definition (for example, tear and tear: “The girl had a large tear in her dress after jumping over the fence” vs. “The girl had a large tear running down her face when she saw her dress was ripped”)

Reading at the multi-paragraph or text level:

- Increase the amount of language in Social Stories and use as needed to help teach new social and behavioral concepts
- Add comprehension questions intermittently throughout the texts that your child is reading. Do not let him read straight through without comprehension monitoring. Place a recognizable icon throughout the text (e.g. a star sticker) that will be a cue to remind the child to stop and summarize, answer questions with you, etc.
- Make sure that if comprehension is breaking down, you identify what aspects of the text the child DOES understand. Most often, facts and details are learned, but a greater understanding of the “moral of the story” or theme is lost. Work on these concepts, as well as emotions and inferences, outside of reading tasks.

ask the experts

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

As we return to school this fall, we thought we'd ask some local "experts" for some of their tips for a helpful transition back to school. Here is a selection of their responses.

Distinguished professor and proficient adult with ASD, Dr. Lars Perner had the following advice:

"To me, the biggest sources of discomfort were surprises and sudden changes in routines. Therefore, I suggest:

- If the new school year involves getting up earlier than has been the case over the summer, it may be helpful to phase this in gradually well before the start of school. It may also be useful to phase in the rhythm of meal times that will be in place during the school year.
- If the child will be wearing different clothes to school than he or she did during vacation, it may be helpful to phase this in ahead of time.
- If siblings are going back to school, too, it may be helpful to prepare for changes that will happen in the family routine.
- To me, it was difficult to transition from vacation to full time school. If homework is involved, it may be useful to get the assignments in advance and work on this material before the start of school so that there will be less, and hopefully no, homework during the first week. If possible, it may help the transition if the child can leave early during the first week.
- If a new school, or a new room at the old school, is involved, it may be important to see this before the start of the term. This room should be examined for possible sensory violations (e.g., creaking doors, lights that may be flickering, fans that may be running in the background, echo, or unusual odors).
- If information about the child's schedule for the coming year is available, it may be better to know this before the start of the year rather than on the first day.
- If there is a new teacher, this will of course be a considerable adjustment. Obviously, it would be helpful to meet this teacher with just the child and family before school starts. To get a sense of expectations, it would be useful to know this teacher's rules as explicitly as possible before school starts.
- When I went to elementary school in Denmark,

the same students stayed together in a class from year to year, but my understanding is that in the U.S., children are put into different groups each year. If a child is in a large class, learning new names and faces can be difficult. If photos are available, those may be helpful. If not, perhaps the teacher, parent, or aide might teach the child the name of one new student each day.

- If new subjects start this year, advance notice of what this class involves is essential, and it is important to look for problems. For example, in my music class, I could not understand the words that the other students were singing. New classes may also involve possible sensory violations.

- Saying that "Everything will be OK" may sound comforting to the person saying it, but those of us on the spectrum are likely either to be very disappointed or very skeptical of this claim. This kind of "reckless and irresponsible optimism" only served to reduce my ability to trust the person saying it!"

Lars Perner, Ph.D.

**Assistant Professor of Marketing
San Diego State University**

"Make a calendar of the months/days from now until the first day of school. Each day "Chancey" (a picture of Chancey) moves closer to the first day of school (a school bus or whatever best represents school to your child). Move the piece together & talk about it every-day."

Karen D., Chancey's mom

"Create a top 10 list of things that have been done over the summer. I have my boys dialogue with mom about this every day, so that it is fresh. When school starts, make a copy of the list and distribute to all relevant people, such as teachers, aides, RSP, Speech etc so that they can have a place to start conversations."

Sandi H., mother of two children on the spectrum

"Verbally, visually and physically prepare the child for going back to school, especially if it's a school or classroom that they are not familiar with (e.g., verbally talk about the school/class/teacher, take pictures of the school/class/teacher and show it to the child, write social stories about going back to school to learn new things and playing with their friends, and take them there to play on the playground a few times before school starts). Create a structured, loose replica of a school setting at home during the summer so that they are not so shell shocked when they go back to school."

Sandy Shaw, Behavioral Consultant, AIM

camp I CAN



There were lots of smiling faces on the campers and their families as Camp I CAN wrapped up another successful 5 weeks this summer. Each week a new group of campers had the time of their lives going to Chuck E. Cheese, Boomer's, Knott's Soak City, ice skating and swimming at the YMCA and Clairemont Boys and Girls Club. This amazing camp would not be possible without the terrific camp counselors (all 25 of them) and the leadership of Robbie Cornell. A big THANK YOU to them. Also, thanks to Stephanie Yoo, the new executive director of the Toby Wells YMCA, for her support these past 4 years.

It is hard to believe this was the fourth year of Camp I CAN. Many of you have asked how you can help keep the camp going. You can help by volunteering to help with fundraising, attending our fundraising events and writing letters of support. Some of you may work for employers who have community giving or grant giving opportunities. Any time or help you can offer will assist us in continuing Camp I CAN. We welcome your support!!!



Surf Camp for Children with Autism

As this newsletter goes to press, Surf Camp for Children with Autism, is set to begin. Once again, we have over 30 campers enrolled. Each of the 4 days, the campers will get to play on the beach, try surfing and boogie boarding and play beach games. This camp would not be possible without the support and expertise of Tammy Anderson, CEO and owner of Aqua Pros Swim School.

The SDASA wants to extend a BIG THANKS to Tammy and her crew. Not only do they run surf camp, but they also run the popular, monthly Friday night pizza and pool parties and our swimming lesson program for persons with autism.

Look for the opportunity to help continue these worthwhile programs by participating in our upcoming "3rd Annual Splash for Cash" Fundraiser early in 2006. Get your fins and goggles ready!!

upcoming events



October 27th-31st Fall 2005 DAN! Conference, Long Beach, CA. Information, registration and hotel accommodations will be available www.danconference.com on or about September 1st



FREE Family Workshops

Wednesday September 14, 2005 ,6:30-8:00 P.M.
at Crimson Center for Speech & Language In Miramar/Scripps

Toolbox for Young Children with Autism

Melissa Katz, Ph.D., Educational Psychologist from
Children's Hospital's Autism Intervention Center and Toddler-
School

Dr. Katz will address the needs and common difficulties of
young children with autism who are included into typical
preschool settings. Call 858 695 9415 to sign up for this
presentation



Relationship Development Intervention (RDI):
Going to the Heart of Autism

a two day introductory workshop
October 7-8, 2005 (9am-4pm)

Town and Country Resort & Convention Center
500 Hotel Circle North-San Diego
for information: 1-866-378-6405
www.rdiconnect.com

4th Annual SDASA Two-day Conference

November 3rd and 4th, 2005, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm



IconTalk

Featuring
Barbara Bloomfield, SLP
expert & Executive Director of Icon Talk, returns to San Diego to present
***Visual Supports & Teaching Tools for Students with High Functioning Autism
and Asperger Syndrome***

Brenda Smith Myles, PhD
Award-winning author of books on autism presents:

***Social and Behavioral Interventions for Children and Youth
with Asperger Syndrome
and High Functioning Autism***

Registration will begin September 15th, 2005, For details go to www.sd-autism.org



SD ASA November Informational Meeting presents
Xcite! School and Summer Mentorship Programs
Tuesday, November 15, 2005

featuring
Stefan Hochfilzer

Xcite! is an after school and summer mentorship club dedicated to assisting families
who need a helping hand in educating, mentoring or just involving their children in athletic,
academic or social activities.

www.exciteway.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Employer _____ Title _____

How did you hear about us? _____

Membership type (includes National, State and SDASA dues)

- Full Time Student \$25
- Individual \$40
- Family \$50
- Autism Action Newsletter only
-1 year subscription \$10
- Yes, I'd like to make an additional
donation to the SDASA of
\$ _____

Is this a:

- New Membership
- Membership Renewal

Payment

- Check (payable to Autism Society of America)
- Credit card # _____ Exp _____
name on card _____

I am interested in helping the SDASA by:

- Serving on the board
- Special events
- Newsletter
- Legislative action
- Parent Mentor
- Fundraisers
- Speaker's Bureau

What is your relationship to the person with autism? (check all that apply):

- Parent
- Service Provider
- Individual with autism
- Family Member
- Medical Professional
- Edu- _____

Applications can be mailed to: San Diego /Autism Society of America,
PO Box 420908, San Diego, CA 92124
Or, you can join/renew online at www.SD-autism.org
Dues and Donations are Tax Deductible

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Autism Society of America

SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHAPTER

