

6TH ANNUAL COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

# WORKING *Together*

HOSTED BY

**NSSA**

Nassau Suffolk Services for Autism



THE EDEN II PROGRAMS

Connecticut  
Center for *Child  
Development*



ALPINE LEARNING GROUP  
*Meeting the Challenge*

## Systems and Strategies for Improving Outcomes for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders

**New York Academy of Medicine  
1216 Fifth Avenue • New York City  
March 28th & 29th, 2008**

This conference is a collaborative effort to disseminate accurate, practical, and useful information about the provision of effective education services for individuals with autism. We believe that communication and collaboration, across disciplines and service provision models, can have a far-reaching impact across a broad audience to benefit many individuals and families affected by autism. The conference is designed to address a wide range of topics regarding autism intervention across age and functioning levels and will be relevant to parents and professionals alike. It is our hope that by sharing information and resources, and encouraging collaboration between agencies, diagnosticians, service providers, educators, and families, more individuals with autism will have an opportunity to maximize their full potential and be able to live lives with dignity and purpose.

# Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup> - Conference-Day 1

**7:45 a.m.-8:45 a.m.**

**CHECK IN AND REGISTRATION** - Continental breakfast provided - Exhibit Area open

**9:00 a.m.-10:15 a.m.**

## **KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: THE SOCIAL BRAIN IN AUTISM**

Presenter: ROBERT T. SCHULTZ, PhD

Social deficits are one of the cardinal features of autism and autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). This presentation will review some of the research literature on deficits in social perception (e.g., face perception) and social cognition among persons with an ASD. Data from my lab suggests that deficits in accurately perceiving identity and emotion from faces are especially large, and thus of importance in terms of a point of entrance for understanding cognitive and brain mechanisms that cause autism. This neuropsychological work (including results from a novel treatment study showing that face perceptual skills can be enhanced) will be highlighted. Several complementary MRI studies comparing persons with an ASD and matched typically developing controls will also be presented. MRI data of three types will be discussed - analyses of brain anatomy from structural MRI (sMRI), analyses of axonal connectivity from Diffusion Tensor Imaging (DTI) and analyses of brain function from studies of social perception and social cognition. Data from all three sources converge on implicating specific regions of the temporal lobes as subserving operations that are impacted by autism. One region in particular - "the fusiform face area" - appears to be especially aberrant in terms of its local anatomy, axonal connections, and functional activity. We conclude that processes governed by the temporal lobes are especially impacted by ASD and that it is, therefore, very important to devote effort to understanding developmental and genetic sources of influence on these circuits, including systematic studies of learning and intervention.

**10:15 a.m.-10:30 a.m.**

*Break - Exhibit Area open*

**10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**

## **BREAKOUT SESSION 1**

### **1. FEEDING, NUTRITION, AND DIET IN THE CHILD WITH AUTISM**

Presenter: SUSAN HYMAN, MD

Feeding problems are commonly reported among children with autism. This talk will address the potential reasons for feeding difficulties, review how they may relate to intestinal problems, and discuss current approaches to treatment. The effect of eating behavior on dietary intake, dietary intake on behavior, and the potential influences of dietary alterations on behavior will all be reviewed. In addition, the research related to dietary interventions for autism will be examined.

### **2. FITTING IN AND HAVING FUN: STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING SOCIAL COMPETENCY**

Presenter: TERESE DANA

This workshop will provide an overview of various strategies and hands on techniques to help individuals with high functioning autism and Aspergers decode, interpret, and respond appropriately to social situations. Video taped examples will be provided to illustrate various strategies and skills to target.

### **3. SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FROM AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN TO AN INDIVIDUALIZED VOCATIONAL PLAN**

Presenters: NICOLE WEIDENBAUM, MS Ed, SAS, JASON WATSON

Until recently adults with autism were perceived to be incapable of integration into the community and workforce. Fortunately, with increased advocacy and awareness, and effective educational programming, these perceptions are changing. The challenge now is to continue to provide the same level of support that was deemed necessary and appropriate up until the age of 21 despite a significant decrease in funding and a lack of experienced and qualified support staff. This presentation will focus on the need to individualize adult service provision and the challenges faced in doing so. We will discuss the successes and pitfalls that we have faced within our adult services program as well as some creative ways to access opportunities for job sampling and community integration.

### **4. DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR: A DECISION TREE**

Presenters: JUDITH L. PALAZZO, MS, BCBA, AIMEE HARAY

Working with children with autism often entails dealing with intensive challenging behavior. This presentation will provide an overview of challenging behavior generally affiliated with autism and outline a priority framework for making decisions regarding such challenging behavior.

**12:00 p.m.-1:15 p.m.**

*Lunch Provided - Exhibit Area open*

### **5. KEY COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

Presenter: JED BAKER, PhD

This workshop will review strategies to motivate students to learn as well as ways to teach essential social skills. In addition, strategies to promote generalization of these skills into the natural setting and increase acceptance and tolerance from peers will be reviewed. Information will be imparted through lecture, interactive exercises, and video clips.

### **6. PEER MENTORING: TEACHING TYPICALLY DEVELOPING CHILDREN TO INSTRUCT CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Presenters: MOIRA CRAY, LMSW, JULIE FISHER, LMSW, BCBA

This workshop will describe a pilot program that trains typically developing middle school students to become peer mentors for children with autism in a public school program. Small groups (4-5 students) of peer mentors (both high performing students as well as students at-risk of academic failure) were invited to participate by the School Principal and Project Coordinator. Participation involved giving up their free period (i.e., recess) three days per week for ten consecutive weeks. Training sessions were conducted in a public charter school exclusively serving children with autism located within the public school building. The training involved four components: (1) didactic training on autism and discrete trial teaching; (2) observation of students with autism in their classrooms; (3) hands-on practice sessions implementing discrete trial teaching with students with autism in the training room; and (4) generalization of discrete trial teaching skills to autism classrooms and, eventually, to a wider variety of academic and leisure skills. At the end of the training program, peer mentors gave a PowerPoint presentation on autism, including video of their teaching, to students within their own classrooms.

### **7. AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION DEVICES AND AUTISM: ASSESSMENT TO INTERVENTION**

Presenters: KATE CERINO BRITTON, MS Ed, MA, JAIME SCHILLING, MS

Children with autism may benefit from augmentative communication systems to enhance their communication skills. This workshop will discuss components of an effective assistive technology assessment and programming ideas to incorporate the device within an ABA-based school program. Video samples will illustrate programming goals with an emphasis on incorporating these devices within and across curriculum areas and settings. Potential barriers of augmentative communication devices will also be addressed.

### **8. INCREASING INDEPENDENCE FOR MAXIMUM SUCCESS**

Presenters: BRIDGET TAYLOR, PsyD, BCBA, HANNAH HOCH, PhD, BCBA

With the advance of Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention, children with autism can learn many skills never thought possible. Some children with autism can learn to talk, play with toys, socialize with their peers, and become active functional participants in their families and communities. The goal of any intervention program, however, is to help individuals with autism perform these responses without immediate supervision and direct prompts from adults. This presentation will review specific skills that enhance the independent functioning of individuals with autism across a range of curriculum areas and will highlight behaviorally-based teaching strategies to achieve maximum independence. Videotaped case presentations will illustrate procedures and skills to target.

2:45 p.m.-3:00 p.m. *Break - Exhibit Area open*

### **9. NO MORE MELTDOWNS: CREATING BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT PLANS FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

Presenter: JED BAKER, PhD

Students on the autism spectrum often present with difficulty regulating their feelings and interacting socially. This presentation will describe how to handle meltdowns and design effective behavior plans to prevent these moments as well as reduce frustration and anxiety.

### **10. PROMOTING LANGUAGE IN INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS: WHAT'S NEW?**

Presenter: JOANNE GERENSER, PhD, CCC-SLP

This workshop will provide a model for integrating research in the areas of psycholinguistic development, early social development, as well as lexical development within behavioral programming for young children with autism. The workshop will provide an overview of the literature on speech acquisition, word learning and abstract language development as well as the nature of the deficits within this area present in children with autism. Implications for assessment and intervention will be discussed across all areas.

## 11. MAKING LEARNING FUN

Presenters: JILL CASTELLANI, MS, BCBA, KRISTINE MARINO, BCABA

This workshop will discuss why and how learning should be made fun, including ideas for incorporating fun into a child's programming, materials, and environment. The audience will learn benefits to making learning fun; ideas on how to make programming fun; ideas on how to make motivational systems fun; ideas on how to make materials fun; and ideas on how to make the overall environment fun for the student and teacher.

## 12. APPLYING BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS STAFF RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT: PROMOTING QUALITY OUTCOMES

Presenters: EILEEN HOPKINS, PhD, RANDY HOROWITZ, MS Ed, SAS

The past decade has seen a considerable growth in the incidence of autism and a corresponding development of programs serving individuals with autism. While these programs are essential to meet the needs of the autism community, issues of attracting, training, and retaining a qualified workforce becomes very difficult. Organizational behavior management (OBM) is the application of applied behavior analysis to organizational improvement. This workshop is to provide an overview of organizational behavior management and how to utilize behavior management techniques to address issues within the field of human service, most specifically, issues of staff retention and turnover, staff development, as well as issues of quality assurance and improvement.

# Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup> - Post-Conference Workshop-Day 2

**8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.** CHECK IN AND REGISTRATION - *Continental Breakfast Provided*

**12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.** *Lunch Provided*

**9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** Workshop # 1

### The Use of Assistive Technology to Increase Functional Skills in Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorders

Presenter: MICHAEL J. CUNNINGHAM, MS Ed, MS CCC-SLP

As the incidence of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has increased, so too has the need for education and habilitation services. One area where there continues to be an outstanding shortage of service providers and access to services is Assistive Technology. Hallmarks of ASD are a decreased ability to encode and decode text and to use one's natural speech to meet daily communicative needs. Instructional Technology (IT) and Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC) are two areas of Assistive Technology that can be used to compensate or remediate these skills. This workshop will present an overview of the learning deficits associated with ASD's and the technology available to remediate and compensate those learning deficits.

**9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** Workshop # 2

### Innovative Teaching to Accelerate Student Progress

Presenters: MARY McDONALD, PhD, BCBA, NICOLE WEIDENBAUM, MS Ed, SAS, STACEY AGOSTA, MS, DEBORAH ASTMAN, MS Ed, ELIZABETH BOYD, JACQUIE FRANGOULIS, MS Ed

Students with autism spectrum disorders often struggle with a particular goal or demonstrate inconsistent progress. By using creative teaching materials and methods, adapting materials, and using a clinical-problem solving model, the student's success will be maximized. Specific examples of actual materials will be shared. This session will focus on school age children and adolescents with various learning styles. Participants will practice modifying lesson plans, materials, and teaching methods for a case student. In addition, video illustrations of a variety of innovative teaching methods will be shown throughout the workshop. Participants will also have opportunities throughout the session to problem solve in groups (e.g., formulating measurable goals, developing alternative teaching methods, and applying novel methods to improve student success).

# CONFERENCE *Registration*

Please complete registration form, detach, and mail with payment information to address below or fax completed form to 631-462-4201

**Collaborative Conference c/o NSSA  
80 Hauppauge Road Commack, NY 11725**

If paying by check, please make checks payable to: NSSA  
For further information, contact 631-462-0386.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization : \_\_\_\_\_

Check One:  Parent  Professional  Student

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: Home ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference registration fee includes: attendance, conference material, continental breakfast, and buffet lunch

- \$150.00 Conference • Day One only  
 \$125.00 Post-Conference Workshops • Day Two only  
 \$250.00 Conference Day One & Post Conference Workshops Day Two

#### Walk-in attendees

- \$175.00 Conference • Day One only  
 \$150.00 Post-Conference Workshops • Day Two only  
 \$275.00 Conference Day One & Post Conference Workshops Day Two

**Breakout Session Choices:** Every effort will be made to accommodate your choices, however, seating is limited and will be determined on a first come first served basis.

*Conference - Day 1*  *Workshops - Day 2 (Select 1)*

Session 1: (circle one)    1    2    3    4                       Workshop # 1

Session 2: (circle one)    5    6    7    8                       Workshop # 2

Session 3: (circle one)    9    10    11    12

**Refund Policy:** No refunds after March 20, 2008. All refunds will be subject to a \$20 processing fee.

#### Payment Method:

**Purchase Order Payment:** Please enclose your purchase order with your registration form.

**Check Payment:** Please make all checks payable to NSSA

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

**Credit Card Payment:**  Visa  Master Card  American Express      Security Code # \_\_\_\_\_

**Card Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Expiration Date:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

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# *THE AGENCIES*

## *Alpine Learning Group*

Alpine Learning Group is a private, non-profit corporation established in 1988 dedicated to providing state-of-the-art educational and intervention services to individuals with autism and their families. The Alpine Learning Group's Educational Program provides a full day, 12 month program for students ages 3-21. Its Outreach Program provides assessment and ongoing training, supervision, and program development to families and tutors within the child's home. Alpine Learning Group currently provides adult programming as of July 2004.

## *Connecticut Center for Child Development*

The Connecticut Center for Child Development (CCCD) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children with autism and related disorders by providing educational opportunities utilizing established, empirically validated teaching strategies. CCCD operates a private school for school-aged children with autism, an early intervention program for children under the age of three, and offers a graduate training program in Applied Behavior Analysis in conjunction with The University of North Texas. In addition, CCCD operates its subsidiary organization, the Institute for Educational Planning (IEP), which provides diagnostic testing services and conducts educational placement evaluations, and the Extra Steps Program which provides respite services that are customized to meet the unique needs of each participant in the program.

## *Eden II Programs*

The mission of the Eden II / Genesis Programs is to provide people with autism specialized community-based programs and other opportunities, with the goal of enabling them to achieve the highest possible quality of living across their life spans. The Eden II model provides specialized treatment services designed to meet the particular needs of individuals with autism. At the present time, the Eden II Programs serve more than 200 families of individuals with autism across more than five programs. Eden II currently has two school programs, a preschool program, and an adult services program. The adult program has a residential component as well as an extensive family support program.

## *Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism*

Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism (NSSA) is a private, non-profit agency providing services to children with autism and their families. NSSA's Martin C. Barell School provides full day, 12-month educational programming and behavior intervention for preschool and school-age children ranging in age from 3-21 years. The primary goal of these services is to enable the learner with autism to more fully participate in family life and prepare them for the transition to increasingly less restrictive educational environments. It is NSSA's objective to develop the skills necessary for individuals to secure future employment and to develop the skills that facilitate full participation in community living. In addition to its education program, NSSA offers an in-home respite program, center-based recreation program, summer camp, consultation services to local school districts, and an adult services program.

## CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

### **Deborah Astman, MS Ed**

Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism

### **Stacey Agosta, M.S.**

Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism

### **Jed Baker, PhD**

Social Skills Training Project

### **Elizabeth Boyd**

Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism

### **Jill Castellani, MS, BCBA**

Connecticut Center for Child Development

### **Kate Cerino Britton, MS Ed, MA**

Alpine Learning Group

### **Moir Cray, LMSW**

New York Center for Autism

### **Michael J. Cunningham, MS Ed, MS CCC-SLP**

Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism

### **Terese Dana**

T.D. Social Skills

### **Julie Fisher, LMSW, BCBA**

New York Center for Autism

### **Jacqueline Frangoulis, MS Ed**

Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism

### **Joanne Gerenser, PhD, CCC-SLP**

Eden II/Genesis Programs

### **Aimee Haray**

Connecticut Center for Child Development

### **Hannah Hoch, PhD, BCBA**

Alpine Learning Group

### **Eileen Hopkins, PhD**

Eden II/Genesis Programs

### **Randy Horowitz, MS Ed, SAS**

Eden II/Genesis Programs

### **Susan Hyman, MD**

University of Rochester/Strong  
Center for Developmental Disabilities

### **Kristine Marino, BCABA**

Connecticut Center for Child Development

### **Mary McDonald, PhD, BCBA**

Hofstra University/ Eden II/Genesis Programs

### **Judith L. Palazzo, MS, BCBA**

Connecticut Center for Child Development

### **Jaime Schilling, MS**

Alpine Learning Group

### **Robert T. Schultz, PhD**

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)

### **Bridget Taylor, PsyD, BCBA**

Alpine Learning Group

### **Jason Watson**

Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism

### **Nicole Weidenbaum, MS Ed, SAS**

Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism

CEU Information for Speech-Language Pathologists and Behavior Analysts Continuing Education Units will be offered for both Board Certified Behavior Analysts and Board Certified Associate Behavior Analysts through the New York State Association for Behavior Analysis (NYSABA). A fee to NYSABA is required upon your submission of CEUs post conference. This conference is also certified by ASHA for CEUs. For more information about CEUs, contact (631) 462-0386.

Eden II School for Autistic Children, Inc. is approved by the Continuing Education Board of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) to provide continuing education activities in speech-language pathology and audiology. The conference program is offered for .5 CEUs (Various level; Professional area) and each post-conference workshop is offered for .6 CEUs (Various level; Professional area).



This event is sponsored by the New York State Association for Behavior Analysis (NYSABA). NYSABA is approved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) to offer continuing education (CE) for Board Certified Behavior Analysts and Board Certified Associate Behavior Analysts.



**NSSA**

Nassau Suffolk Services for Autism

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