



TEACCH

Autism Program

Services Across the Lifespan

WINTER 2012

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A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR...

As we approach the holiday season, our TEACCH team is spending time reflecting back on the past year. Next week, we will meet for our annual retreat to celebrate our accomplishments and to make plans for the coming year. One of the highlights of our year is the incredible support that we have received from professionals, families and other members of the community who work collaboratively with our TEACCH programs across the state.

As we began charging for services last January 1st, we agonized over how this would impact low income families who simply could not afford even our reduced rates. We established a TEACCH Financial Assistance Fund and crossed our fingers and toes that we would receive enough donations to help continue our ability to provide services to all families across the state. We are so thankful to those individuals who have supported us in the past year. With the donations that we received, we were able to provide some financial support to more than 300 families across the state. As you can see from the list on page 6, our Financial Assistance depends on the generous gifts (big and small) of many members of our community.

We are also thankful for the community collaborations that have developed in the past year. I'd like to highlight two of these collaborations. The TEACCH Supported Employment program at our Greensboro Center is partnering with Guilford County Schools and with High Point Regional Health System to teach employability skills to high school students with autism. Our Chapel Hill Center is partnering with Extraordinary Ventures, a Chapel Hill business that employs adults with developmental disabilities, to develop a curriculum for their managers about how they can successfully employ adults with autism and how they can work with the myriad of job coaches who support their employees. We are incredibly thankful for the collaborative spirit of our community partners as we work together to meet the needs of our growing population of adults with autism.

We wish you a very happy holiday season and look forward to a new year with continued creative community collaborations. Thank you for your support!

CAREGIVER CORNER

Twelve Tips for Helping Those Living with Autism Have a Happy Holiday Season

Reprinted with permission from Autism Society

While many happily anticipate the coming holiday season, families of people on the autism spectrum also understand the special challenges that may occur when schedules are disrupted and routines broken. Our hope is that by following these few helpful tips, families may lessen the stress of the holiday season and make it a more enjoyable experience for everyone involved. The following tips were developed with input from the Autism Society, the Indiana Resource Center for Autism, Easter Seals Crossroads, the Sonya Ansari Center for Autism at Logan and the Indiana Autism Leadership Network.

1. Decorations around the house may be disruptive for some. It may be helpful to revisit pictures from previous holidays that show decorations in the house. If such a photo book does not exist, use this holiday season to create one. For some it may also be helpful to take them shopping with you for holiday decorations so that they are engaged in the process. Or involve them in the process of decorating the house. And once holiday decorations have been put up, you may need to create rules about those that can and cannot be touched. Be direct, specific and consistent.

2. If a person with autism has difficulty with change, you may want to gradually decorate the house. For example, on the first day, put up the Christmas tree, then on the next day, decorate the tree and so on. And again, engage them as much as possible in this process. It may be helpful to develop a visual schedule or calendar that shows what will be done on each day.

3. Know your loved one with autism and how much noise and activity they can tolerate. If you detect that a situation may be becoming overwhelming, help them find a quiet area in which to regroup. And there may be some situations that you simply avoid.

4. Prepare a photo album in advance of the relatives and other guests who will be visiting during the holidays. Allow the person with autism access to these photos at all times and also go through the photo album with him/her while talking briefly about each family member.

5. Practice opening gifts, taking turns and waiting for others, and giving gifts. Role play scenarios with your child in preparation for him/her getting a gift they do not want. Talk through this process to avoid embarrassing moments with family members. You might also choose to practice certain religious rituals. Work with a speech language pathologist to construct pages of vocabulary or topic boards that relate to the holidays and family traditions.

6. Since it is the unknown that often escalates anxiety, it may help some individuals with autism to wrap their own gifts or see what gifts they will be receiving in advance. For example, some families leave a small part of the gift unwrapped so that the individual with autism can see what they are unwrapping.

7. Prepare family members for strategies to use to minimize anxiety or behavioral incidents, and to enhance participation. Help them to understand if the person with autism prefers to be hugged or not, needs calm discussions or provide other suggestions that will facilitate a smoother holiday season. If the individual becomes upset, it might also be helpful to coach others to remain calm and neutral in an effort to minimize behavioral outbursts.

For the complete article go to: www.autism-society.org

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Collaboration with Community Partners

Glenna Osborne, TEACCH Supported Employment Program

As the beginning of our mission statement states: "The University of North Carolina TEACCH Autism Program creates and cultivates the development of exemplary community-based services." Over the past 7 years, the Supported Employment Program at the TEACCH Greensboro Center has been involved in four different projects providing community-based services involving the local school system, local mental health agency, local Vocational Rehabilitation agency, sister agencies providing adult services, and local employers. These projects focus on creating and cultivating transition services for students leaving high school and entering the adult world. As the numbers of adults diagnosed with ASD increased, the funding for services decreased, TEACCH recognized the need to collaborate with other providers to create successful employment opportunities for individuals who have ASD.

The first three projects were supported through grants from the Weaver Foundation, Autism Speaks and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and helped to develop community-based training programs that are being implemented in a new project



that started on November 1, 2012. This current project provides internships for high school students as part of their daily schedule in a classroom following a model developed by Project SEARCH at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in Cincinnati Ohio. On their website, the Project Search team state that "the goal for each student participant is competitive employment. The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills to help youths with significant disabilities make successful transitions from school to productive adult life....The presence of a Project SEARCH High School Transition Program can bring about long-term changes in business culture that have far-reaching (continued)

effects on attitudes about hiring people with disabilities and the range of jobs in which they can be successful.” Excerpted from the website(www.projectsearch.us/OurPROGRAM/HighSchoolTransition.aspx). The Project SEARCH site, located at High Point Regional Health System is a collaboration among several local agencies with funding provided by the local mental health agency. High Point Regional Health System provides the classroom space and internship sites for high school student with ASD. This project involves a teacher from the Guilford County School system working alongside two TEACCH job coaches to provide employability skills training and workplace internships at the hospital for high school students who have ASD. The students spend the first 45 minutes to an hour of their day learning employability skills, and then practice these skills as they complete three different structured internships at various sites around the hospital. ARC of Greensboro is overseeing a sister project at Friends Home in Greensboro for students with intellectual disability. The TEACCH staff is working together with the ARC of Greensboro to provide training to the job coaches across both of their respective sites. In addition, the ARC of Greensboro received a grant to fund the purchase of appropriate internship clothing for the students and the cost for the TEACCH



staff to attend the annual Project SEARCH conference. There are more than 100 Project SEARCH sites across the United States, UK, and Australia but only one other ASD specific site, which is located at Virginia Commonwealth University. We are proud to be part of this collaborative project to help high school students with ASD become valued employees in their home community.

RESEARCH

Fighting Worries and Facing Your Fears

Allison Meyer, Graduate Research Assistant

The research team at TEACCH is excited to explore different strategies and treatments that may be beneficial to our TEACCH clients. We have noticed that many of our clients come to the clinic with anxiety and we want to learn about new treatments that may be helpful for these individuals. As a result, TEACCH has partnered with Judy Reaven at the University of Colorado, Denver on a National Institute of Health funded project called “Fighting Worries and Facing Your Fears.” This project provides group intervention for children between the ages 8-14 with high-functioning ASD, anxiety symptoms, and their parents.

We have completed two groups and have started a third group as part of this project. In 2013 and 2014, we will have five additional groups to help our families. Our research team and TEACCH therapists are having a great time working with all the families from squashing worry bugs to making movies.



We are very excited to partner with our friends in Denver and feel honored to be a part of this large-scale intervention project. TEACCH is an ideal place for treatment outcome research and we are eager to continue this intervention research in the future. Stay tuned to hear about the results!

If you are interested in hearing more about this project please contact Allison Meyer at TEACCH_Research@med.unc.edu. This research project is available at Chapel Hill, NC.

Were you one of the first families to come to TEACCH in the 1960's, 70's, 80's and 90's? The Research Team at TEACCH wants to hear from you!

The Research Team at TEACCH wants to hear from you! One of the missions of TEACCH is to provide services to a growing population of adults with autism. In order to achieve this goal, we first need to know the challenges faced by adults with autism and the services and supports that are needed.

If you're interested in learning more about this research study, please contact Allison Meyer or Patrick Powell at: TEACCH_Research@med.unc.edu or 919-843-5259.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

ADOS Training

Kathy Hearsey, TEACCH A&R

The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) was originally published in 1999; since then, it has become one of the most frequently used diagnostic instruments for Autism Spectrum Disorder, in the world. TEACCH is very fortunate to have on their staff, Pam DiLavore, the assistant director of the Chapel Hill TEACCH Center. Pam worked as part of the team that developed the ADOS-2 a number of years ago and is one of the authors of the original ADOS. A revised edition of the ADOS was published in May, 2012 (ADOS-2).

The ADOS-2 was designed to create a relaxed, friendly social atmosphere in which clinicians interact with the individual in a casual manner in order to observe communication, social interactions, and any unusual or repetitive behaviors that may be related to autism. It has five modules to use with people of varying ages and abilities. The new Toddler Module is for children who are 12 to 30 months old, Module 1 is for children over 30 months old who have limited language ability, and Module 2 is for children over 30 months who speak in phrases. These three modules are heavily based on fun play activities such as playing with bubbles and dolls, and there should usually be a parent or other caregiver in the room with the child and the clinician. There are two modules for people who have fluent language; Module 3 is for children and younger teenagers, and Module 4 is for older teens and adults. These modules also have activities such as looking at books and pictures, but they also involve quite a lot of conversation. The ADOS-2 can be fun to administer because it is based on positive



interactions with people, but it's sometimes a little tricky to stick to the standard administration while everyone is having all that fun. The ADOS-2 is a particularly good fit for the TEACCH Autism Program because of the wealth and range of clinical experience that our clinical staff brings to the administration.

As an independent ADOS-2 trainer, Pam has offered training to professionals in clinical and educational settings. In addition to an overview of the five modules of the ADOS-2, the workshop includes live demonstrations of two of the modules followed by an opportunity to practice and discuss the scoring criteria. A workshop on the Clinical Use of the ADOS-2 will be offered on March 7 – 8, 2013. Please go to www.teacch.com/trainings for more information.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

From North Cyprus to Charlotte: A Lighthouse on an Unrecognized Shore

By Dr. Erdem Beyoglu, M.D.

My country, North Cyprus, has been functioning as an independent state (with the support of Turkey) since 1974, but although many years have passed since then, it has not been recognized as an independent country by any other country except Turkey. My country's situation thus always recalls to me the situation of a child with autism; they are both de facto modes of reality which constantly confront us.

Autism has constantly attracted the attention of



researchers around the world since it was defined by Leo Kanner; yet even with the pool of knowledge we have obtained from the research done so far, we still do not know the real causes of autism. In spite of this fact, however, there are some positive developments in the area of genetics, and in the future we may even be able to talk about the causes and effects of autistic factors.

The only treatment for autism that is accepted worldwide is specialized education. In fact, the best defined knowledge of autism today is based on special education, through which the quality of life of individuals with autism can be improved. As a result, they may be enabled to fulfill their own needs, as well as develop independence. Yet although our knowledge of autism is increasing, its causes remain obscure, and at this point special education is the only support system which appears to be having a positive effect.

In special education we always encounter TEACCH; it holds a special place because of the difference it is making through the accumulation of knowledge and experience, and its effectiveness. This difference can be seen from outside, even when it is observed from an unrecognized country; and this is why I wanted to take advantage of TEACCH by experiencing it myself directly and seeing the difference it makes with my own eyes. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity, generously granted by the Fulbright Commission, to visit TEACCH Charlotte last (Continued)

June. What I experienced there was hands-on experience of methods that I had previously only read about in textbooks – it was like actually going into a kitchen to watch a meal being prepared. I was able to be present at and observe the meetings, special education applications, and evaluations.

Observing the methods of evaluation and special education applications was especially valuable as it helped me to gain new perspectives. It was also a new and rewarding experience to see the applications of making concepts visual and visual educational techniques and their impacts. After having had this experience, I now believe that visual support is imperative in special education

for autism, and that this is the only way to give individuals with autism an effective, quality, special education.

It may be that autism will keep its mysteries hidden for a long time, but TEACCH will keep on illuminating our path like a lighthouse. I am hoping that TEACCH methods will also light the way in my unrecognized country and be used here in specialized education centers for students with autism. I would like to thank TEACCH Charlotte for their hospitality and their warmth and for making me feel at home. I hope our collaboration will continue, and I will do all that I can to further our relationship.



The TEACCH Charlotte Center Staff and Dr. Erdem Beyoglu

UPCOMING TEACCH TRAININGS

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY REGIONAL TEACCH CENTERS

Visit our website www.teacch.com for additional information and other upcoming trainings

- 1/28/13 - Structured TEACCHing Across the Spectrum - TEACCH Greenville
- 1/31/13 - Setting Up the Learning Environment for Young Children - TEACCH Wilmington
- 2/25/13 - Communication and Self-Advocacy - TEACCH Asheville
- 3/07/13 - Clinical Use of the ADOS-2 - TEACCH Chapel Hill
- 4/08/13 - Advanced Topics Seminar - TEACCH Chapel Hill
- 5/02/13 - Structured TEACCHing with Adults in Vocational & Residential Settings - TEACCH Asheville

TEACCH FIVE-DAY CLASSROOM TRAINING NOW POSTED ONLINE

TEACCH offers several five-day, hands-on, classroom trainings across North Carolina. These courses provide a theoretical foundation as well as hands-on opportunities to assess and teach children and adolescents with ASD (ages 3 – 21) in a classroom setting. The premise of this foundation is an understanding of the learning styles of students with ASD and the development of individualized structure. An emphasis is placed on the use of Structured TEACCHing principles to teach students with ASD (ages 3 – 21) skills in the areas of academics (literacy and numeracy), communication, independence, social, leisure, relaxation and coping strategies as well as behavior management. These courses are designed for teachers, psychologists, speech and language therapists, researchers, clinicians, and others interested in educating students with Autism Spectrum disorders in a classroom setting.

Go to www.teacch.com/trainings for full details.

Click [here](#) if you are interested in receiving occasional emails regarding upcoming TEACCH trainings or send an email to TEACCHtraining@med.unc.edu to subscribe to mailing list.

DONATIONS

Donations allow TEACCH to expand our clinical and training programs, pilot innovative research projects, and support our financial assistance fund. As a University based program, donations to TEACCH are tax deductible. When making a donation, please include your choice of the two donation funds (*Financial Assistance Fund* or *General TEACCH Fund*) and any acknowledgement (*in honor of* or *in memory of*) that you would like to include. Thank you for your interest and support of TEACCH.

Please send your gift to:
TEACCH Autism Program
Attn: Development Office
CB #7180 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

The University of North Carolina TEACCH Autism Program appreciates the donations that were received over the past year. These contributions have enabled TEACCH to improve clinical services for individuals with ASD and their families across the state of North Carolina, provide financial assistance to families seeking services, enhance the lives of the residents at the CLLC, and provide professional development opportunities. Thank you for your generous support.

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TEACCH Newsletter

Editor - Kathy Hearsey
Design and Layout - Michelle Jordy

Special Thanks to Mary Lou (Bobo) Warren and Betty Camp for their time, support and superlative editing efforts.

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