



IN THIS ISSUE....

Socialization and AT: It's Not Child's Play

Parents are the key to the socialization of a child with disabilities. Assistive technology plays a crucial role in the socialization process by enabling children with disabilities to be heard, to be recognized as individuals of value, to build the self-confidence necessary to interact positively with the world at large. Parents who advocate for AT, who believe in its ability to help children perform at their highest possible level, have given their children powerful tools. Pairing the use of the AT with the setting and maintaining of high standards for a child's achievement can produce startling results, according to this month's featured expert, Dr. James Messina.

Dr. Messina Speaks

Tough love is his motto. Tough love by parents, he believes, is the best way to prepare children with disabilities to face and surmount the challenges of daily life. It's what, he says, helped his disabled daughter, now 33, achieve a normal life, a life that includes a husband, children, a college degree and a career. His approach requires that parents of children with disabilities begin planning for their child's eventual departure from the home at age 18 when the child is but two or three years old.

With his wife, Connie, who teaches students with learning disabilities in the Hillsborough County (FL) public schools, Dr. Messina, a licensed psychologist in private practice in Tampa, authored a series of books entitled

Tools for Coping. Begun in 1985, the series, excerpts of which are highlighted on the couple's website www.coping.org, is designed to minimize the stress of parenting while emphasizing the measures the Messinas believe are effective. Among those measures is abundant use of assistive technology.

Dr. Messina, who earned his doctorate in community mental health administration from the State University of New York at Buffalo, is co-founder and past president of the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) and past chairman of the National Academy of Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselors (AACD) and the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC). He is a past recipient of the AMHCA Counselor of the Year and AACD Professional Development Award. He has authored *Marriage Work-Out* and 26 other books and numerous journal and professional articles. He is currently a professor at Florida's Argosy University.

Supporting our interview with Dr. Messina are resources to assist parents and others in furthering their children's socialization. We also feature members of our **Knowledge Network**. The members spotlighted this month focus on various aspects of socialization supported by the use of assistive technology. We invite you to contact these members for further information.

Please share this newsletter with other organizations, families and professionals who may benefit from it. We invite you to contact us at <http://www.fctd.info>. We welcome feedback, new members and all

who contribute to our growing knowledge base.



Socialization & AT: What's Love Got To Do With It?

*An Interview with
Dr. James Messina, Ph.D., Author*

It all comes down to the nature of love. Is love protection or preparation? Is a parent primarily responsible for protecting a child with disabilities from the hurts and challenges of life, or for preparing that child, with all the child's vulnerabilities, to meet the challenges head on in order to build a meaningful independent life in the world at large? To Dr. Jim Messina, preparation is the only option that's fair to the child. Assistive technology (AT), he insists, is a major ingredient in the effort.

"The [goal of socialization] is to help an individual feel that he or she fits in, that they're part of society, that they can meet the responsibilities of the everyday world without being singled out as being special or different or perhaps even entitled," Dr. Messina declares, firmly. "AT, he adds, is the tool that makes socialization happen for children with disabilities and their families.

Dr Messina spent 20 years as a counselor for United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) where he ran support groups for parents of children ages 0-5 who had physical or mental challenges. That stint was the foundation for his later work with teenagers and adults. For 25 years he's been an advocate for the disabled in Tampa, FL and surrounding Hillsborough County.

Teaching a Child to Accept Responsibility

"Parents need to understand that, yes, your child may have a disability, but we can't

treat the child so specially that he or she becomes spoiled and feels entitled." According to Dr. Messina, "We've got to set limits and boundaries to ensure that kids become responsible. That's the only way to achieve real and lasting normalization and socialization."

The idea behind normalization, he says "is to encourage a child with a disability to accept the normal responsibilities that come with growing up into teenage years and into adulthood, and to know what the requirements are for what responsible adults are supposed to do for themselves." His goal, he says, "is to have the individual, no matter how disabled, function as normally as possible."

"I've worked with kids who are severely, profoundly disabled to mildly impaired, so, obviously, normalization for the severe-to-profoundly disabled child is centered around achieving inclusion into the community." In those cases, he says, "there's not a lot of feedback from the child, except that the child seems happier when he or she is involved with activities like church and social programs where they have been fully included."

His book, *Parenting Pathfinders*, emphasizes the tasks that parents need to implement in order to help teach kids natural and logical consequences for their behaviors. "Parents of kids with disabilities who have used the book have been grateful," he asserts. "My wife and I have used the materials for kids with learning disabilities, high-functioning autism, high-functioning kids with physical disabilities who were normalized in regular classrooms."

His philosophy is derived from his own experience. "We are parents of a disabled young lady who is 33 years old and fully functional, married, with a graduate degree. She works in a community college. She wouldn't be any of those things if it weren't for the fact that my wife and I have followed the Pathfinder Parenting guidelines to the hilt."

According to Dr. Messina, in the normalization model, at age 18 disabled children usually leave the home, get a job, get an apartment, or go to college and live in a dorm. "A parent needs to be preparing, when the child is 1-3 years old, for their child to move into a community facility at age 18, whether the child is in the severe/profound mentally handicapped range or in the trainable handicapped range or is severely physically involved."

Explains Dr. Messina, "I've tried to prepare parents in my parent groups to plan for the independent living that should occur when their child reaches age 18. So, of course, those parents will see the article in this morning's paper that says 25% of adults still live at home and everything I've said goes up in smoke!" That single statistic, he insists, "argues against the normalization model because America is fast becoming a community of spoilers – and I don't understand it."

Socialization and AT

How does he believe the socialization process is supported by assistive technology?

"It's really important for children to feel respected for who they are, that they are accepted unconditionally because they are human beings and that they are not seen just as kids with disabilities, Dr. Messina declares.

One of the more egregious mistakes made by professionals, he asserts, is the labeling of children according to their disabilities. "Children have names and individuality, not just a disability. They want to be accepted unconditionally and not just known by their diagnosis. That's why we strongly encourage inclusion, where the child who has the disability is not even identified."

Ideally, he says, the child with disabilities is in the classroom with 25 other students and no one knows who the learning disability

teacher is working with when that teacher comes into the classroom. In fact, he adds, "the learning disabilities teacher works for the entire classroom and uses the modifications and the approaches that help a learning disabled child to learn but also does it for all the children."

His wife, Connie, he notes, fills that role in the Hillsborough County school system. "She tells a story that we love. She had to do some paperwork on her learning disability-identified children, some IEP work. So she came into the class and announced, 'Will all the children who are assigned to me please come into my office.' The entire class stood up and began walking out of the room. She was thrilled. The identified child had no notion that he was identified. He was treated just like everyone else."

Great Expectations

"What my wife and I are seeking is the Pygmalion effect," Dr. Messina comments. "I'm referring to the Pygmalion study where teachers were told that some students sitting in the classroom were gifted students. The teachers weren't provided with any reports on these students. So they taught the students at an above average level as though they were gifted or high functioning students when, in fact, the majority of the kids had been functioning at a minor level of intellectual capacity, borderline IQs or below."

By year-end, he notes, the students were functionally academically at a higher level than ever before, "certainly higher than they would have achieved if the teacher's expectations for them had been lower."

The higher the expectations adults place on children, he asserts, the higher functioning the child will be. "In socialization it's important that each child be accepted unconditionally and that we expect the best of each child. If you expect the best, you'll get the best. Don't catch the child doing wrong, catch the child doing good. The more you catch the child doing good, the more you

reinforce the good behavior while the negative behavior tends to fall by the wayside."

Another ingredient in the Pygmalion socialization process, he adds, is the development of a child's understanding of his or her place in the world. "Children have to understand what their role and function is in society," he says. "If I'm in school – elementary school, middle school or high school -- my role is to be a student. Just as mom and dad go to work, the child goes to school. That's the child's role and function."

A Troubling Situation: Kids as Parental Surrogates

Dr. Messina is concerned that siblings of children with disabilities suffer role confusion in the family. He explains, "It's the sibling of a kid with a health problem or a developmental disability, who suffers most from lack of attention." Much attention is drawn to the special needs child and away from the high functioning child who is then often left in charge of the special needs child even if the special needs child is older. The result: role confusion. These are the children Dr. Messina feels most sorry for. "I have worked with these children in my counseling practice because they have no clue how to nurture themselves."

Children, he comments, need to be taught that the need for approval of others is secondary to the child's self-approval, that the child's primary role as she matures "is to learn how to love herself unconditionally, to accept herself unconditionally." With unconditional self-approval and love he declares, "a child believes there isn't anything she can't accomplish in life." However, if she's been made to feel conditionally that she's only good if she can walk or talk, she feels bad about herself."

The Pivotal Role of AT

"That is why AT is so important," he says. "I'm a huge proponent of AT, because I believe that kids who cannot verbalize, who

have the capacity to tell others what they have to say but just can't verbalize it due to a physical condition, those individuals need the AT so that they feel normal."

With AT, he comments, "children with disabilities feel that others can hear them. Because if you are unable to communicate to another individual what you need or want, you'll be treated as if you don't know anything."

He has closely observed children who were provided computerized speaking equipment. "Once even high functioning kids have been provided with that kind of technology to help them communicate, they make amazing strides in speech therapy."

Some of these children, he notes, grow out of their disability because their actual intellectual capacity has been underestimated. "They get so frustrated that they're tongue-tied." However, when augmentative communication devices or augmentative communication signs are employed, improvement is marked and steady. "That's why some kids are taught how to sign at an early age. That eliminates the sense of frustration that accompanies the inability to communicate. Many kids have to struggle to get their diaphragm under control or get their oral muscles under control to be able to say the words."

If children are frustrated, Dr. Messina explains, "they'll be even more stressed out, and it's going to be harder for them to perform well on complicated tests. But if children have an augmentative communication device right there to do the talking for them, suddenly they get relaxed and can speak along with it."

It's enjoyable, he adds, "to watch individuals whom we all thought were lower functioning verbally become very verbal and very functional because the stress on them was reduced."

If AT is employed early on as a supplement, as an augmentative process rather than as a

replacement process, "it's amazing what kids will do," he says.

First Graders with Laptops

For children with learning disabilities, a calculator is just as valuable as an augmentative communications device is for children who are speech or hearing impaired. "Kids with learning disabilities should be given calculators immediately for math," Dr. Messina declares. Surprisingly, he notes, parents often resist this. "Parents think that these calculators will make their child become lazy. Then I ask the parents, 'Do you do long division or do you use your calculator?'"

Calculators, he adds, "cost 50 cents and the kids can use them on their own." The second piece of equipment that should be made immediately available to children with learning disabilities, he says, is a computer. "AlphaSmart – an electronic keyboard with a small digital readout -- costs \$300. That can then be tied into a computer in the home or classroom and all the projects can be typed out."

In Florida's Hillsborough County, he notes, "AlphaSmarts are available in every – every – elementary school where there's a learning disability resource room. They are available to all kids."

If the parents can afford them, Dr. Messina also insists that laptops be purchased for children with learning disabilities. "I'm talking about first graders -- with laptops."

Parents are shocked at this, he says. "But if they visit one of our more posh prep schools here, they'll see that all first graders there have laptops. If it's okay for the rich kids to have laptops – every single one of them – why is it not okay for a child with a learning disability to have a laptop from the beginning? They have hand-to-eye motor coordination issues and their processing speed is at a deficit, why should these children be disabled by our system because

we are unwilling to let a child have the modifications he or she rightly deserves?"

In addition, "There are various other modifications, like tape recording lectures in high school, and fellow notetakers who can Xerox their notes for use by the learning disabled student." Utilizing this three-part approach, he explains, "the learning disabled child has a laptop to take notes, a tape recorder taping the lecture, and then the student knows that he or she will also get the Xerox copies of another student's notes."

Surrounding a child's learning disabilities with support raises a student's sense of comfort, Dr. Messina asserts. "The student knows that she's capturing the material that needs to be captured in that classroom by one of three means. Suddenly, her productivity increases."

It's Exciting

Dr. Messina is most excited when a student with a learning disability improves sufficiently to graduate from part time SLD (Specific Learning Disability) to consult SLD, "where the student is on the books but is invisible as such in the classroom, which means that the child is going in for consultation for just one hour a week."

According to Dr. Messina, "There's nothing more pleasurable than to watch these kids, with their great potential, where they've been given the kind of support they've needed, including inclusion classrooms, get their self-esteem in hand because they feel better about themselves and they feel productive, they can earn good grades, they get into honors courses, advance placement, they get accepted into colleges."

For his wife, who has been doing learning disability work since 1978, "there's nothing more pleasurable than receiving letters from her former students informing her that the student has just earned a Masters degree, for example. These were kids who felt like failures when she first met them." That's the point, he says: "Disability makes you feel

less than good about yourself. The goal of using AT, modifications and adaptations are to make children feel good about themselves."

Socialization: It's Only Going to Get Better

Gazing into the future, Dr. Messina says that AT-supported socialization "is only going to get better." The equipment manufacturers, he says, "are going to be aware that they have to create vehicles that help get AT users into the mainstream, so they'll improve voice, improve technology, make the machines more socially acceptable, make them easier to manage."

As far as parents increasing their involvement in this field, he says, "parents need to pay attention to the fact that their voices are being heard less and less at the federal level." Many parents, he alleges, became complacent when IDEA reauthorization was achieved and other legislative milestones were realized and became reluctant to join advocacy organizations. "That is a foolhardy approach because while parents relax their guard, while they let others advocate for them, the service delivery for their children with deteriorate." Aggressive advocacy on behalf of AT-supported socialization, Dr. Messina concludes, is a powerful manifestation of a parent's love for a child.



RESOURCES

ARTICLES

Young Children with AAC Needs

By Barbara Mintz, MA

University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion 1998

Although written in 1998, the article contains pertinent, compelling information supporting

the use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices by pre-schoolers. The author explains how AAC supports opportunities for social interaction, communication development, and learning. Although brief, her article also emphasizes the importance of a multi-modality approach when working with young children.

<http://www.umaine.edu/cci/FACTSFC/article/s/childaac.html>

Kids and Low Vision Devices: When is the Right Time?

By Michael Fischer

Envision 2003

The author is a physician specializing in pediatric low vision care. He discusses the importance of magnification devices for children with low vision and suggests several factors influencing the introduction of these tools, including age, visual demands, ability, maturity, responsibility, social issues and familial support. He employs his viewpoint as a medical professional to identify several basic concepts and factors in introducing magnification for children with low vision.

For more information contact:

Lighthouse International

111 East 59th Street

New York, NY 10022-1202

Phone: (888) 222-9320 (toll free)

Email: visionrehab@lighthouse.org

<http://www.lighthouse.org/envision/fall2003/kids.htm>

Virtual World Teaches Real World Skills

By Tom Loftus

MSNBC 2005

The author, an information systems director at Massachusetts General Hospital, describes how virtual technology has the potential to teach social skills to people with neurological disorders, including autism and Asperger's. Using his virtual community, they are free to create an interactive life through technology that they may otherwise have had difficulty with in "real life."

The author is the founder of Braintalk

Communities, a self-help support group for people with neurological conditions. Despite concerns that repetitively engaging in video gaming can isolate people with Asperger's more by further limiting their engagement in social situations, initial research shows that these types of virtual realities may enhance socialization skills.

Readers can link to the Brigadoon blog, offered in the article. The Braintalk link connects users to in-depth information and discussion regarding neurological disorders. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7012645/>

I See What You Mean: Using Virtual Tools to Support Student Learning

By Patti McVay, Heidi Wilson and Luci Chiotti
Disability Solutions – The Enoch Gelbard Foundation 2003

With the complexity and diverse range of technology available, low-tech ways of solving problems for individuals with disabilities are often overlooked. The authors of this article advocate visual strategies for many students and individuals with a disability, recalling the ease of implementation and these strategies' universality of use. The authors describe case studies of students with a range of inclusion and classroom difficulties. Visual strategies are defined and a list of visual supports and ideas are given to make this simple strategy successful. This article is a useful resource and guide for families trying facilitate socially acceptable behavior, improved class work, following directions, inclusion, or scheduling for a student who has difficulty remembering routines. Article cost: \$2.50 for request of printed material. For more information, or to order, contact:

The Enoch-Gelbard Foundation
Disability Solutions
PMB 179
9220 Southwest Barbur Blvd., #119
Portland, OR 97219
<http://www.disabilitysolutions.org/pdf/5-4.pdf>

Seeing Past a Child's Disability: One Parent's View of Universal Design for Learning

By Lucinda O'Neill
CAST Newsletter 2003

This article describes a parent's struggle to build an inclusive school program for her daughter. Success was achieved through determination, hard work, knowledge of pertinent legislation and support from CAST in implementing the program.

The story highlights the child's progress through school and her success in meeting curricular requirements through AT. The underlying purpose of this article is to emphasize the importance of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Throughout this child's educational career, UDL was used as a guideline. The author believes that Universal Design for Learning is vital not only to the academic progress of students with disabilities but to their social development as well.

<http://www.cast.org/udl/index.cfm?i=720>

Students with Learning Disabilities

AT Training Online Project
University of Buffalo 2002

Five subjects in this article are covered in outline fashion: Reading, Writing, Computer Navigation, References and Social Skills Training. Main ideas are highlighted and brief descriptions of methods used are given. In Reading and Writing, strategies are described using software and hardware to facilitate learning and reference is made to the Reading and Writing modules, located elsewhere on the web site for more detail. Computer Navigation briefly describes AbleLink's Voyager Suite, an integrated group of applications including a web browser, email program and mouse training program.

The References section includes portable reference devices, and software and online references, all to be utilized to help students become more independent. Social Skills Training describes Social Stories and Story Grammar Markers for social practice and

problem solving.

<http://atto.buffalo.edu/registered/ATBasics/Populations/LD/printmodule.php>

Low Impact AT at Play Makes High Impact on Kids' Therapy

By Julie West

AT Journal 2003

This article features Exerwing Flighters, originally designed as a physical therapy tool. Flighters are plush toys in the shape of airplanes, birds, and insects that attach by Velcro straps to the wrists and arms of users. They were originally designed for use in conjunction with hippotherapy to assist in working with a horse's movements to improve neurological function and sensory processing. Children are encouraged to make the Flighter move, thereby helping the child to process movement (such as raising, lowering arms, etc.) The toys are attractive, with bright colors and flowing wings and tails. Kids of all ages and abilities will be delighted by this product and it is predicted that the Exerwing Flighters will be used outside of the hippotherapy arena for movement and social activities. Links to further information on Exerwings and hippotherapy are found at the end of this article.

<http://www.atnet.org/news/2003/apr03/041502.htm>

Tech Advocacy Crucial for OT Clients

By Miriam Struck, OTR/L, ATP

Advance for Occupational Therapy Practitioners 2003

This article discusses the necessity of advocacy by occupational therapists on behalf of their clients so clients obtain computer access. The author notes that occupational therapists must consider whether their clients have basic access to a computer and how technology will affect their clients in learning, employment, and social participation. The article discusses some basic adaptations of computers such as using voice recognition software for clients with physical impairments or using screen reading software for individuals with visual

impairments or learning disabilities.

However, according to statistics cited from Disability Statistics Abstract, people with disabilities are less likely to own a computer than their non-disabled peers, creating the need for advocacy from therapists so that their clients can access the necessary technology. For more information, contact:

Advance for Occupational Therapy Practitioners

Merion Publications, Inc.

2900 Horizon Drive

King of Prussia, PA 19406

Phone: (800) 355-5627

<http://www.advancefort.com/common/EditorialSearch/SearchResult.aspx?KW=Tech+Advocacy&FD=11%2f11%2f2002&TD=11%2f11%2f2003&CW=True&CP=True&CV=False&C=1&SS=3>

Music for Everyone, Part I

By Annette Cerreta, AT Specialist

Parent Advocacy Center for Educational Rights (PACER) 2001

This article is Part 1 of a series about the importance of making music accessible for people with physical disabilities. It is aimed at both children and adults with disabilities. Part 1 discusses the benefits that music provides as well as low-tech solutions to make music accessible to people with physical disabilities. Among the benefits listed are self-expression and creativity, increased social interaction, improvement of functioning, especially fine motor skills, and ease of teaching basic concepts. The author provides examples of low-tech solutions such as use of switches to operate radios or stereos, straps to adapt shakers and mallets, and popsicle sticks on piano keys. Also provided are examples of musical items that can be purchased.

http://www.pacer.org/stc/cm_fall01.htm#music

Animal Assisted Therapy: One Family's Experience

By Ann Killion

The Autism/Asperger's Digest Magazine
2004

While not strictly "Assistive Technology" in the usual context, the therapy dog in this article has become the link to the world for one child. Dogs have been traditionally used as guide dogs for the blind and more recently as service animals. Therapy dogs for individuals are becoming increasingly popular. This article portrays one family's journey to acquire a "Facilitated Assistance Dog" from National Education Assistance for Dog Services (NEADS) for their son who has Asperger's Syndrome. The dog has become a tool in helping to foster increased socialization, task adherence, sensory regulation for this boy, with tremendous success. NEADS and other organizations train various service animals. Some specialize in guide dogs, some in service animals, some in hearing dogs, but all require a lengthy approval and training process. The article addresses only the NEADS organization, but is illustrative of how a therapy animal can assist in an individual's life.

http://home.comcast.net/%7Eakillio1/AMK_Files/Autism_Aspergers_Digest_2004.htm

AT for Infants and Toddlers

Families and Advocates Partnership for
Education 2000

This article focuses on the needs of small children in early intervention programs and the benefits of introducing assistive technology at this early stage in their education. The article points out how important the contributions of assistive technologies are to social interactions and the self-confidence that arises from a child's being able to communicate effectively within his/her environment. The discussion ranges from what kind of technology is available and how to access it, to funding and training. Additional discussion focuses on AT evaluation and on the IDEA definition of AT goods and services. Organizations that can

provide information are listed along with their phone numbers.

<http://www.fape.org/pubs/FAPE-12%20AT%20for%20Infants%20Toddlers.pdf>

On Taking Risks in Teaching: a Teacher Speaks Out

By Carolyn Cosmos

CEC Today 2002

This article describes the unusual curriculum of New Jersey Teacher of the Year, Matthew Jennings. Jennings' special projects required his class of 7th and 8th graders, some with disabilities, to become reading tutors to younger children who were in special education, to teach senior citizens to use computers and to make quilts for infants born addicted to drugs. Each project incorporated reading, writing, math, measurement and social studies topics. Many of Jennings students excelled academically and gained an improved sense of self-esteem as a result of the experimental curriculum. This teacher illustrates the use of creativity and meaningful, real-life situations to assist students in developing academic skills. He emphasizes the need for experimentation, risk-taking and changing what is not working as a necessity in special education.

http://www.idonline.org/ld_indepth/abilities/a_teacher_speaks_out.html

Pagers Offer Deaf Students Independence, Literacy Skills

By Caroline Alphonso, Education Reporter
Toronto Globe and Mail 2004

This is a short, easy-to-read article about the use of two-way pagers by Canadian high school students who are deaf. Parents, teachers, and school administrators/policymakers will learn of the benefits these pagers provided to deaf students. The focus of the article is better communication leading to more independence with a surprising bonus of improved literacy skills in both writing and reading. Deaf students typically graduate from high school with a 4th grade reading

level. They must depend on TTYs for communicating with their parents when they are away from home. Deaf students who use pagers to communicate with their families when they are away from home have discovered an increase in their literacy scores in school assignment. Pagers might be considered as AT technology for deaf students as well as communication aids to all people who are deaf.

<http://aolnetscape.workopolis.com/servlet/Content/fasttrack/20041103/SCHOOLDEAF03?section=education>

Teachers for Assistive Technology Using Online Learning: A Descriptive Study

By Robert K. Kuech, Walter H. Kimball
The Journal of Interactive Online Learning
2003

Kuech and Kimball dissect the impact of social learning and the interactive components of successful online courses. The authors took time to evaluate several of the Virtual Assistive Technology University (VATU) online courses, particularly idea exchange strategies and project completion, as they investigated the nature of effective learning in a world where the "question is no longer whether or not to use technology, rather, how it can be used most productively."

http://www.ncolr.org/jiol/archives/2003/winter/1/MS%2002011_Kuech_Kimball.pdf

Guides

Life Success for Children with Learning Disabilities: A Parent Guide

By M.H. Raskind, R.J. Goldberg, E.L. Higgins, K.L. Herman
Frostig Center 2003

Why do some children with learning disabilities succeed while others find little reward personally, socially or financially? The guide attempts to provide answers to these and related questions for parents raising children with learning disabilities.

The information presented is based on a 20-year study tracing the lives of individuals with learning disabilities from childhood into

adulthood in an attempt to identify individual characteristics and life experiences that lead to successful life outcomes. The guide also draws upon the work of other researchers who have identified factors that contribute to success. Results from this and other Frostig Center projects point to the importance of a set of personal characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors that can help lead persons with learning disabilities to successful life outcomes. By examining the lives of individuals with learning disabilities throughout their lifespan, these studies have revealed a number of "success attributes" that guide an individual to either positive or negative adult outcomes. The guide's case study approach is an excellent way of connecting with readers.

http://www.ldsucceess.org/guide/what_is_succeess.html

Foundations

The Karen Gaffney Foundation

This foundation was established by Karen Gaffney and her family and is headed by Ms. Gaffney, who has Down Syndrome. Her foundation is "dedicated to championing the journey to full inclusion for people with Down Syndrome and other disabilities."

The foundation's website emphasizes that attitudes and stereotypes create disabilities. Karen, with a supportive family, early intervention and ongoing support, achieved personal and academic goals such as full inclusion throughout her school years, community college attendance, and an Associate's Degree. The Foundation has produced two videos highlighting strategies and interventions that have supported Karen in attaining personal and career goals. Karen herself is actively involved in speaking to groups and in training teams to facilitate social inclusion in school environments.

<http://www.karengaffneyfoundation.com>

Software

InformationPLUS – Social Learning Software

Information Plus Ltd. 2004

The software addresses social and behavioral issues in youth, including those with disabilities. Using the "cool factor" of computer technology, issues are presented using appealing graphics, sounds and interaction. Specific issues include drug taking, offending behavior, coming to terms with past events and building healthy relationships and citizenship in the present. Some cultural differences may occur as this is a program developed in the UK. While there are no downloads available, screenshots, descriptions, and fact sheets about each of the software titles are available online. Recommendations for implementation of the software are also available. For those working with troubled youth, these programs could be useful. There is currently no U.S. distributor for this software. Cost: \$85-\$325 plus S&He (converted from GBH). For more information, contact:

InformationPLUS, Ltd.

3 Hill of Heddle,
Finstown, Orkney KW17 2LH

<http://www.information-plus.co.uk/>

Books

Solutions: AT for People with Hidden Disabilities

By J. Lee

North Dakota Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) 1999

This book provides ideas for AT solutions addressing problems with hidden disabilities related to confusion, safety, socialization, and functional limitations due to a disability. It covers a host of both low tech/low cost and high tech/more expensive items that can help individuals maintain functional control in many areas of their lives, without risking their safety. With the ideas and suggestions provided, individuals may find ways to facilitate more independence, or remain in

their homes with support. For more information, contact:

IPAT

P.O. Box 745

Cavalier, ND 58220

Phone: (800) 265-4728

<http://www.ndipat.org/products/solutions/sol.htm>

The ADHD e-Book

By Martin L. Kutscher, MD

Pediatric Neurology Associates (NY and NJ)
2002

Containing comprehensive on ADHD, this book is available for viewing on the website, can be printed, or can be ordered in paperback form under the title *The ADHD Book: Living Right Now*. The author presents facets of ADHD from medical, educational, social and familial perspectives. Effective ways of dealing with ADHD and the pitfalls and rewards therein are covered. Graphics illustrate stress levels of all members of the family in different scenarios. A quiz assists the reader in assimilating much of the information presented in the book. A simulation of what it might feel like to be ADHD is available on the website. A separate chapter aimed at children with ADHD is useful but requires at least a sixth grade reading level. The book is also available at www.amazon.com. Amazon cost: \$14.95. <http://www.pediatricneurology.com/adhd.htm>



KNOWLEDGE NETWORK MEMBERS

Parent Support Network of Rhode Island



The Parent Support Network (PSN) of Rhode Island is an organization of families supporting families with children and youth who are at risk for or have serious behavioral, emotional, and/or mental health challenges, having consideration for their backgrounds and values. The goals of PSN are to: strengthen and preserve families; enable families in advocacy; extend social networks, reducing family isolation; and develop social policy and systems of care.

PSN of RI really tries to emphasize socialization, and they do this in two main ways: through social events for parents and families and through their phenomenal youth group. Social events that are organized for parents and families help reduce the feelings of isolation some families who have children with a disability may experience. The events bring parents together who have a common bond. Similar to these events for families, their youth group has brought together a very diverse group of children/teens through a commonality. The youth group offers many things, but it especially brings about leadership skills and peer support. The youth group is put in charge of planning social events from time to time, and they really step up into these leadership positions and bond at the same time. The peer support they receive from each other is also very beneficial to each individual because they gain friendships and they have people they can go to for help if they need it. Both, the recreational activities for families/parents and the youth group foster socialization skills and support.

For further information on PSN of RI, please contact:

400 Warwick Avenue, Suite 12

Warwick, RI 02888

Phone: (401) 467-6855

Toll-free: 1-(800) 483-8844

Fax: (401) 467-6903

<http://www.psnri.org>

Contact: Cathy Ciano, Executive Director

Email: psnofri@aol.com

Advisory Board on Autism and Related Disorders (ABOARD)



Advisory Board on Autism and Related Disorders (ABOARD) envisions a community where children, adolescents and adults with autism can achieve their maximum personal potential in social, educational, and vocational environments. ABOARD's mission is accomplished through five multiple component programs. These five programs include:

- Building Awareness—Speakers Bureau and Media Communication
- Information Dissemination—On-site experts, free information packages, lending library, and service directories
- Education/Training—Conferences and workshops
- Family Support—Support Groups, Parent to Parent Network, and Person to Person Support
- Collaboration and Partnerships—Professional Advisory Council, Partners, Forum Advancing Autism Care Excellence, Pittsburgh NIH Center, and Guardian Angel Academic Program

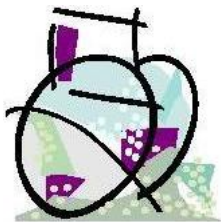
Their primary means of incorporating the idea of socialization into their organization is through their 61 support groups that are located throughout Pennsylvania. Some groups are specifically for children, adolescents or adults on the spectrum. The social groups visit a variety of places together, including museums and malls. The purpose of these outings is to learn how to "be social," how to interact, etc. Some groups, while focusing on parent support, also possess "sibling" groups that help them

understand and relate to their brothers of sisters with ASD. Finally, their trainings have as a theme teaching educators, therapists, etc., the “how-to’s” of helping their ASD students and clients to be social.

For further information on ABOARD, please contact:

35 Wilson Street, Suite 100
Pittsburgh, PA 15223
Phone: (412) 781-4116
Toll-free: (800) 827-9385
Contact: Howard Carpenter
<http://www.aboard.org>
Email: info@aboard.org

Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association



Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association

Guided by the theme, “Wheels Toward a Dream,” the mission of the Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association is to enhance the lives of individuals and their family members, statewide, as they deal with spinal cord injuries - to ensure the maximum possible physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social recovery. The Association focuses on peer support, family support, education of consumers, families, caregivers and professionals and providing vocational, social and recreational resource linkages.

For further information on the AZ Spinal Cord Injury Association, please contact:

901 E Willetta St. #2306
Phoenix, AZ 85006
Phone: (602) 239-5929
Toll-free: (877) 778-6588
Fax: (602) 239-6268
<http://www.azspinal.org/>
Contact: Robert Bohm
Email: info@azspinal.org

Mississippi Families as Allies for Children’s Mental Health, Inc.



Mississippi Families as Allies for Children’s Mental Health, Inc.

Mississippi Families as Allies for Children's Mental Health, Inc., is a statewide, not-for-profit organization for Mississippi's children and youth with mental health needs. All services are offered free of charge and complete confidentiality is maintained. Their mission is to inform, support and serve as an advocate for families of and children with mental health needs. This organization provides a wide variety of programs and services to serve the people of Mississippi, including a toll-free support and crisis line, a mentoring program, emotional support and case advocacy, workshops, and more. They have great programs for children and youth, which include a “Youth Team” leadership and recreation group for teens, summer art day camp for children, summer art and social skills day camp for teens, and a spring-break respite program.

For further information on MSFAACMH, please contact:

5166 Keele Street, Building A
Jackson, MS 39206
Phone: (601) 981-1618
Toll-free: 1-(800) 833-9671
Fax: (601) 981-1696
<http://www.msfaacmh.org/>
Contact: Tessie Schweitzer, MSW, Executive Director
Email: tschweitzer@msfaacmh.org

The Jeremiah Cromwell Disabilities Center



The Cromwell Disabilities Center is a non-profit organization founded on the premise that people with disabilities are entitled to the same dignity, inclusion, and respect that every person deserves as a birthright. The

Center has two principal programs that foster the socialization of people with disabilities.

The *Elementary School Disabilities Awareness Program* is for students in Grades 3 through 6 and instills positive attitudes toward peers and other people with *all* kinds of disabilities (developmental, psychological, learning and physical).

- An innovative interactive method encourages students to discover these positive attitudes on their own and through their peers.
- The self-discovery method enhances socialization in schools and communities of students and other people with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities actively participate in the program.
- The program plants seeds for students to ensure throughout their lives the short- and long-term socialization of people with disabilities.
- The program reached 4,000 elementary school students in the 2004-2005 school year alone, with sessions already scheduled into January 2006.
- The program typically is free of charge to schools.

The other Center program that increases socialization of people with disabilities is the *Special Needs Library Collections Program*. The program provides free of charge to public libraries: (i) 15 high quality resource books for parents and educators of children with disabilities; and (ii) 10 children's books about children with disabilities.

- These titles fill a major void in libraries' collections.
- The collections have been provided to every public library in Maine and Massachusetts, with a distribution of over 9,000 books.
- The Center plans to expand the program into other states.
- Borrowing of the titles has been brisk, especially the children's books.
- Public libraries are hubs of community activity, and these collections integrate in that activity parents and educators of

children with disabilities and the children themselves.

For further information on the Cromwell Disabilities Center, please contact:

57 Exchange Street; Suite 203
Portland, ME 04101

Phone: (207) 775-9955

Fax: (207) 775-9959

<http://www.cromwellcenter.org>

Contact: Jamie Kaplan, Exec. Director

Email: info@cromwellcenter.org

Community Rehab Services, Inc.



Community Rehab Services Inc.

The Community Rehab Services, Inc. specializes in assistive technology for all age groups. They are here to assist with any need for adapting our world to the life of someone with special needs. Their services include: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Massage Therapy, Behavioral Therapy, and Social Services/Mental Health.

For further information on the Community Rehab Services, Inc. please contact:

1650 Medical Lane, Suite 4

Fort Myers, FL 33907

Phone: (239) 277-9818

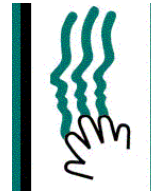
Fax: (239) 277-9289

<http://communityrehabservices.net>

Contact: Barbara Meussner

Email: Meussner@att.net

McMains Children's Developmental Center



The McMains Children's Developmental Center, also the UCP of Baton Rouge, helps children in the area with Cerebral Palsy and other disabilities such as sensory processing disorders, severe speech and learning disabilities, AD/HD, and autism. When designing their programs, they felt that the most important thing for a child is not whether or not they

can walk, but how well they socialize and make friends. Their programs reflect this belief.

The Center has had a very busy summer. They hold one hour therapeutic gymnastics sessions for groups of kids where in addition to promoting gross motor skills, sensory integration, and speech and language skills, they encourage the growth of social skills such as taking turns, cheering for others, and following directions. They also held a week long program called Capable Arts where they brought in a dance/movement teacher, a painter, a photographer, a potter, and a cookbook author to expose the children to various social arts. During this week the children made friends and learned new creative ways to express themselves. Finally, in the summer they have a Functional Life Skills group that culminates in a trip to a local fast food restaurant, where all of the children successfully order their own food. In addition to sponsoring programs for just kids, the Center also sponsors a canoe trip for kids and their families, which brings a variety of families together in a social setting.

The Center is busy providing programs during the rest of the year as well. Their social workers pair an older child with a younger child in counseling sessions to encourage mentorship and friendship. They are starting a new program in the fall for preschoolers called "Wee Can Do" which will be an adapted play program that will use assistive technology to get kids ready for a typical preschool, while teaching the kids how to socialize. Finally, they are collaborating with the Y, MDA, and LSU to provide a monthly recreational program for kids called "So Can I at the Y" where there will be a learning class called "Introducing Physical Education and Recreational Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities".

For further information on the McMains Children's Developmental Center, please contact:

1805 College Drive

Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Phone: (225) 923-3420

Fax: (225) 922-9316

<http://www.mcmainscdc.org>

Contact Janet Ketcham, Executive Director

Email: jketcham@mcmainscdc.org

Minnesota Life College



Real Skills for Real Life

Minnesota Life College is a 2 to 4 year postsecondary, life-skills training program for young adults with learning disabilities. MLC provides direct, professional instruction in a safe, easily accessible urban campus. Independent Living and Employment Readiness (leading to jobs with benefits) are at the heart of MLC's unique program. Other key curriculum areas include: Decision-making for Success, Social Skills Development, and Fitness and Wellness.

For further information on Minnesota Life College, please contact:

7501 Logan Avenue, S. Suite 2A

Richfield, MN 55423

Phone: (612) 869-4008

Fax: (612) 869-0443

<http://www.minnesotalifecollege.com>

Email: Info@minnesotalifecollege.com

The Clinical Center for the Study of Development and Learning



THE CLINICAL CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING

The Clinical Center for the Study of Development and Learning (CDL) works to improve and enrich the lives of children and adults who represent the broadest spectrum of developmental disabilities—from those who face special challenges as a result of mental retardation and physical impairment to those who experience problems in school and at work due to attention issues and learning difficulties. In addition to the extensive training and technical assistance services

they provide, CDL also provides evaluation services. These evaluation services may include: appointments with individual clinicians, select teams of two or three clinicians, or a full interdisciplinary team representing four or more of the following ten professional disciplines; Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics, Nursing, Psychology, Speech-Language Pathology, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Education, Audiology, Social Work, and Nutrition.

For further information on CDL, please contact:

CB# 7255 UNC-Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Phone: (919) 966-5171

Fax: (919) 966-2230

<http://cdl.unch.unc.edu/>

Contact: Melvin D. Levine, M.D., Center Director

Email: mel.levine@cdl.unc.edu

Newsletter Editor:	Thomas H. Allen
--------------------	-----------------

Electronic Formatting And Distribution:	Ana-Maria Gutierrez
--	---------------------

The
**2005 FCTD Assistive
Technology Resources CD**
is here.

The CD provides resources produced by the Family Center compiled onto one CD-ROM. You will find transcripts of our online discussions and Summer Institute, monthly newsletters, resource reviews, member listings and more. On the CD you can also find the ***Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology***.

To order your free copy, please visit...

<http://www.fctd.info/resources/orderCD.php>

