

CAROL'S KIDS NEWS

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APPLIED BEHAVIORAL CONCEPTS PRESENTS AT THE MAKING CONNECTIONS PARENTS MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 29

Suzanne Roten and Kim Cantrell presented information on teaching social skills to children with autism. While this skill is appropriate for the higher functioning autistic and Aspergers syndrome children we serve, the presentation was targeted to lower functioning children by request of Making Connections.

Mrs. Suzanne Roten opened the presentation with a briefing of the current research on social skills and the importance of typical peer interactions. This was followed with specifics on how to begin understanding social communication in children with very

little social and communicative ability.

The parent "How to's:" was presented by Mrs. Kim Cantrell. Kim brought a unique perspective on social skills training from her experience as a parent. Kim was able to answer questions from her knowledge from her work with children with autism and adolescents with troubling behaviors.

Much of the information presented was also presented at the P.L.A.Y. project, recently attended by both Kim and Suzanne as well as Ms. Carol Vancil, BCBA. In August.

"We feel it is important not just to present the topic, but to give the

tools needed to implement the practices." said Mrs. Cantrell. "Too often I attended presentations by people who never told parents exactly what to do. We didn't want to do that.. This is a forum to *help* parents, not add to their frustrations!"

As Applied Behavioral Concepts could not foresee the audience size, notes from the presentation are available upon request from info@appliedbehavioralconcepts.net

While brief introductions of both Kim and Suzanne were given, their full qualifications are posted on our website. In the archived section of the Carols Kids News.

APPLIED BEHAVIORAL CONCEPTS, INC. OFFERS:

INCLUSION

INCIDENTAL TEACHING

DISCRETE TRIALS

1:1 OR 2:1 STUDENT TEACHER RATIO

BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES

SCHOOL OBSERVATIONS

TRAINING FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

THOROUGH EVALUATIONS

AUTISM RESOURCE FOUNDATION EVENT

The Casino Night to benefit the Autism Resource Foundation was held on September 22 at the Huntsville Train Depot Roundhouse. The event had ten tables offering Texas Hold 'Em, Poker, Blackjack tables, Roulette and Craps.

"I had a really good time," said June Buff, who attended the event. "Next year you may want to have the football game on some wide screen

televisions!" she added. Mrs. Buff is an ardent Alabama fan and along with many others, tried to keep up with the Alabama-Georgia game which coincided with the event.

Appetizers included a variety of choices from spinach dips, cheese trays, muffalettas and meatballs to the most successful dish, Heath Bar brownies. Coffee was served complements of Starbucks.

Ten door prizes were awarded

throughout the evening and 29 raffle prizes were given out based on the number of tickets for chips earned during the event.

Additional funds were raised through the Silent Auction of 14 items.

If you missed the event this year, keep watching, ARF plans on this being an annual event!

RESEARCH SHOWS INCLUSION AIDS CHILDREN IN RETAINING SKILLS LEARNED

Applied Behavioral Concepts removed services into Premier Preschools in August 2006. The rationale is to offer children with developmental delays the opportunity to model behaviors of age-matched peers. Appropriate interactions encourage development of social and communication deficits often found in children with a PDD or ASD diagnoses.

Recent research indicates that this may not be the only benefits. In a study recently published in a joint research group of the University of Sheffield and the University of York looked at social and communication skill sets of children with an ASD learned during a peer or "circle of friends" setting. (*Improving Communication Between Children with Autism and Their Peers Through the Circle of Friends: A Small-scale Intervention Study*; Kalva and Avra-

midis, (2005). *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 18, 253-261).

The purpose of this study was to provide a setting where children can be in regular and supported contact with socially appropriate peers in order to address social interaction and deficits. Children in the study engaged in a general activities or larger group circle time as well as a smaller "circle of friends". During the study period children were encouraged to participate in group activities and singing of nursery rhymes and imitative toy play. The children with autism were provided a therapist to intervene only if the need arose. Observers recorded the number of responses and initiation attempts during a baseline, post-intervention and a two-month follow visit. Researchers found children who engaged in the "circle of friends" group had a statistically significant increase in

appropriate responses and a decrease in inappropriate ones. The researchers also found that these effects remained longer after the interactions stopped.

The study also found in follow up visits that children with this peer group learned how to initiate and respond in more appropriate manners compared to the control group who maintained services in a clinical setting. The control group continued their pattern of inappropriate interactions.

"Studies such as this one is why Applied Behavioral Concepts encourages inclusion with behavioral support as much as possible and appropriate based on the individual child. It is important to have developmentally delayed children with typically developing children" says Suzanne Roten, "We know inclusion addresses social deficits in young children, but it may also decrease other problems which may arise later including depression and anxiety."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Making Connections Parents meetings

For more information about Making Connections call Debbie Bumbika at 256-885-5959. Childcare is available on a first come first served basis.

North Alabama Chapter Autism Society

Held at the Jane K Lowe, on Lowe Cir-

cle, near Pete's Body shop. Child care is available. For more information call Carol Wright 880-1239 or visit [www.autism-society.org/chapter 101](http://www.autism-society.org/chapter101).

Applied Behavioral Concepts Parent Training

October 15: Generalization for the Home will be presented by Kim Cantrell. This is open only to the families of children

enrolled in a program with Applied Behavioral Concepts, Inc. Since this meeting coincides with a staff meeting, we will be unable to provide childcare. Regretfully, we understand that only one parent will be able to attend.

CEU Courses now open to the public!

Contact Premier Schools for more information 489-5437

October 11: Health & Safety
October 27: Material Explorations

The Autism Resource Foundation offers help for families in the Huntsville area. The mission of ARF is to provide a financial and family support network. For information or to support the mission, please contact Jeff at 714-8464.

SPOTLIGHT ON MAURA EDWARDS, SLP

Mrs. Maura Edwards, CCC-SLP is a certified Speech Language pathologist holding a current Alabama license. She holds a Master's degree in Communication Disorders received in Albany, New York in 1980.

Mrs. Edwards moved to Alabama in 1993. She holds a national certification of clinical competency

from the American Speech-Language Association. She has 27 years experience including 17 years of private practice.

Mrs. Edwards is a Blue Cross Blue Shield approved provider and is seeking additional provider status upon request.

Mrs. Edwards joins Applied Behavioral Concepts team of profes-

sionals to offer speech therapy to reach individual goals which will be included in the daily programming.

If you are interested in having Mrs. Edwards as a part of your child's team, please feel free to pick up one of her business cards in the foyer of Bradford or the Educational Building of Premier. Or you may contact Carol to set up an initial meeting.