

# Autism & Aspergers Consulting, LLC.



## An Integrated Solutions Approach

www.aactnow.com

### CORPORATE PROFILE

#### Type of Business

Health Care Consulting

#### Number of Locations

Two Office locations, with clients in Wisconsin, Illinois, Florida, California Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Mexico.

#### Number of Employees

Eight

#### Size

80+ Clients

### Play with a Purpose

By Michael A. Montes

Play skills are an essential milestone in human development. Establishing relationships during interactive play is a key element in an effective treatment program. There are often misconceptions about effective therapeutic play.

Forcing a child to play an activity that he or she does not want to engage in is not an effective strategy to improve play skills. A critical aspect to developing play skills in children with autism is to follow the child's lead.

A person must be observant and infer what motivates the child and following the child's lead will ensure in-



Each catch and throw can be a circle which helps build interactions.

CD repeatedly. One way to step into the child's world is for you to act like Disney characters in a very animated way. Ultimately, you may teach the child to request different characters for you to imitate. This makes the activity functional

(Continued on page 2)

sight into the child's interests. Next, entice with activities that will lead to shared interaction with the child. The goal is to create circles of interaction with the child in which the child seeks you out to engage or complete a desired activity based on their own motivation.

For example, a child may enjoy listening to a Disney



Following the child's lead is important during play...when in doubt imitate.



## Spotlight: Springing into Awareness in 2006

### Inside this issue:

Play with a Purpose	1
Spotlight	1
Play with a Purpose (Continued)	2
Balancing Act	2
Michael Montes Employee of the Year—2005	3
Perspectives	3
About Autism & Aspergers Consulting, LLC.	4



April is Autism Awareness Month and Autism & Aspergers Consulting will hit the conference trail to promote Autism awareness and provide information about our services to families and professionals alike.

### Spring 2006 Conference Schedule

April 1: Developmental Disabilities Conference  
Del Valle High School, El Paso, TX

April 8: Autism & Disability Awareness Conference, sponsored by PROUDD  
Faith United Methodist Church, Champaign, IL

April 28 - 29: South West Autism Society of America Annual Conference, El Paso, TX

April 27 - 29: Autism Society of Wisconsin Annual Conference, Four Points Sheraton - Milwaukee Airport

May 24-28: Autism One  
The Westin O'Hare Hotel, Rosemont, IL

## Play with a Purpose (Continued)

because you are now sharing a common interest and you are increasing language as the child learns to request spontaneously.

You will know you have made progress when the child smiles endlessly in your presence and looks forward to play sessions with you. Energy and creativity are imperative to motivating a child to step out of the "world of autism" and join in our social world. Building a solid relationship with a child through play can influence performance during other types of programming.

Behavior change can often be a difficult task. Excess behaviors such as throwing toys are sometimes associ-



*Is throwing a self-stimulatory behavior or is this child playing appropriately?*

ated with autism. Throwing toys is usually perceived as an inappropriate behavior; however, children with autism may enjoy the activity for several reasons. Throwing toys may result in receiv-

ing attention or the child may enjoy the sensations provided by the activity such as, watching an object fly through the air and/or the sound of an object making contact with another. The child perceives pleasant visual and/or auditory input and these excess behaviors are considered self-stimulatory.

When such behaviors occur, one should ask what can replace this behavior or how can it be made functional.

Assess the child's strengths and use this information to make the activity functional. In the case of throwing toys, an alternative behavior such as shooting a basketball or ball play could be taught.

Through means of positive reinforcement the child may begin to pair shooting baskets as a pleasant activity.

Over time reinforcement or rewards may be faded and shooting baskets will become a desirable activity for the child. The child can now receive attention for a more appropriate play activity rather than a negative activity. Furthermore, the child can now expand on what he or she has learned and play basketball with a peer or sibling.

Developing appropriate play skills is critical to opening the door of success for children with autism.

## Balancing Act

By Maura Aguilar

Our curriculum utilizes a combination of different theoretical frameworks to help children with Pervasive Developmental disorders receive the best possible treatment.

One approach we commonly incorporate in our programming is based upon Dr. Greenspan's theory of Floor-Time interventions. We use Floor-Time to recreate a dynamic state of equilibrium for a child who has been diagnosed with Autism, Aspergers or other Pervasive Development Disorders-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS).

One of the main goals of this type of play therapy is for the child to select the game,

direct the action, control the conversation, and take the lead in what you do together.

Our use of Floor-Time helps each child develop their individuality and learn to make choices which helps counter balance the more structured components of our program.

According to Piaget, a child develops schemes in order to assimilate and accommodate for changes according to their developmental stage. He theorized that a child coexists with their environment in a state of equilibrium. This is, of course is until some sort of event or stimulus presents itself to alter that environment.



*Work and play are always a balancing act for everyone.*

Children with special needs may have a type of magnified response to changes or stressful situations. This change disrupts the child's present state of equilibrium and has the ability to create a problematic situation for both instructors and parents who provide ABA services.

For this reason, Floor-Time, should be incorporated into a therapeutic setting. It facilitates the establishment

of rapport with a child and builds a foundation for future work. Most professionals recognize rapport as a key feature of any intervention program. In fact, research has shown that rapport alone can be the sole reason many clients receiving psychological therapy begin to change.

There is no doubt that a structured ABA program is critical for recovery. However, with building a solid relationship including strong play and social emphasis, the help of trained professionals, perseverance, and consistency, a child with a developmental disorder may achieve their best possible outcome and a bright future.

## Michael A. Montes: Rising Star



Michael will receive his award at the annual employee award and dinner banquet in late April, 2006.

Autism & Aspergers Consulting, LLC, is proud to announce that Michael Montes is the company's 2005 Employee of the Year.

As one of Autism & Aspergers Consulting's leading associate consultants, Michael is responsible for conducting workshops and training instructors in ABA for 10 families in the El Paso, TX and Las Cruces, NM areas.

Additionally Michael continues to provide individual



therapy for children, assist with marketing efforts, and coach kids basketball in his spare time.

Mike began his career in ABA in December of 2003 as a line instructor. Immediately, Mike was hooked. He learned everything he could

as quickly as he could and in a short time became the best instructor on the team.

Mike has worked for Autism & Aspergers Consulting, LLC, as an Associate Consultant since September of 2004. Mike excels in working with children through his thorough and playful approach.

Mike is definitely one of the company's current rising stars and we are honored and proud to have him on our staff.



## Perspectives

By Rhonda Black

Twelve years of experience teaching children with learning disabilities and academic weaknesses did not prepare me for the day I heard the developmental pediatrician say, "Your daughter meets the criteria for a diagnosis of autism. She will need to be placed in special education classes with a personal assistant and she will need further assistance as an adult." That moment, five years ago, I began living dual roles.

As a professional, I had supported many families receiving similar news and now all of that strength had to be redirected to my own family. Having basic knowledge of pervasive developmental disorders and their treatments was no longer enough. Contact needed to be made with the resources to which I had referenced in the past. I wanted to expand my knowledge and learn everything known



Grace, (age 10), Rhonda and Meredith, (age 8 who was diagnosed at age 3).

about autism and its treatments. Research had demonstrated that Applied Behavioral Analysis was the best chance for my daughter to reach her potential and I became committed to giving her the chance at life that all children deserve.

We started from scratch by hiring a consultant from Wisconsin and forming our instructional team with willing but untrained persons. The intensity of the program lasted just over two years and my nonverbal, unsocial child learned to speak and to be an independent

learner in a typical classroom with no assistant. She is now in second grade, participating in extracurricular activities, joining athletic teams, and bonding with her older sister more and more each day.

The impact of ABA did not end with my daughter's gains. I have also gained a new direction. My career now focuses on serving families affected by autism. I have a perspective that lends fully to this choice. I have been in your shoes. I have heard the doctor's words. I have faced the battles of providing for a child with disabilities. I have been desperate for answers. The countless trips to the doctor no longer haunt us. The battle scars are fading. And, the most significant answers I sought were discovered. Luckily, I have a loving and supportive husband who trusted my instincts. ABA was the treatment option that returned dreams to a

broken future.

I have been working with Autism & Asperger's Consulting, LLC for approximately one and a half years now. The level of understanding, standard of service, and genuine compassion that James Deehr and the AACT Now staff brings to each family are the characteristics that made a difference to my family. I am honored and challenged regularly as I continue to meet my goal of sharing these qualities with families in Illinois and Indiana from a unique perspective, a parent who has been there and a professional who cares enough to give her all.

*Rhonda Black is a graduate of Indiana University. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with a specialization in reading instruction and a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology. She has been providing specialized instruction and support for families since 1989.*



**Wisconsin Office**

14110 W Linfield Drive  
New Berlin, WI 53151

Main Phone: 262-784-8062  
Main Fax: 262-784-8063  
South West Office: 915-587-0929  
Email: Info@aactnow.com

**An Integrated Solutions Approach**

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
**WWW.AACTNOW.COM**

*Founded in September 2001, Autism & Aspergers Consulting, LLC, strives to provide the highest quality individualized in-home behavioral treatment for children between the ages of 2-15 with special needs. Since the company's inception we have led the way in innovative curriculums to dramatically improve children's lives. Our work is based on that of Dr. Ivar Lovaas whose research indicated 47% of children in the study recovered from their disorder when certain treatment conditions were met. We have taken this powerful approach and combined it with the latest advances in therapeutic intervention, including Floor time interventions, Sensory integration, Natural Environment Training and the Verbal Analysis approach. Although many of our client have a diagnosis of Autism, we also treat children with Aspergers, Traumatic Brain Injury, Cerebral Palsy and Downs Syndrome. In addition to in-home treatment programs we also provide informational workshops, school consultations and Family Mental Health Services.*

**Autism & Aspergers Consulting, LLC**  
14110 W. Linfield Drive  
New Berlin, WI 53151  
Fax (262) 784-8063  
Voice (262) 784-8062

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE