



**Behavior Analysis  
Association of  
Michigan**

# BAAM-ASIG News

**Official Newsletter of the Behavior Analysis Association of Michigan's  
Autism Special Interest Group**

Volume #1 Issue #1

September 2001

**Welcome to  
BAAM-ASIG News  
Krista Kennedy, M.S., LLP  
Editor of BAAM-ASIG NEWS**

As editor, I would like to welcome all of you to the first issue of BAAM-ASIG News. Our special interest group was established at the BAAM convention 2001. In the coming months we are planning many opportunities for ASIG members to share ideas and information with other members via our email list at <http://www.smartgroups.com/groups/BAAM-ASIG>. In addition, this newsletter will be a useful tool in soliciting, organizing, reporting on treatments and new research, and getting information on upcoming local presentations, conferences, and workshops.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the next issue of BAAM-ASIG News is encouraged to do so. Submissions should be sent to the following address: Krista M. Kennedy  
PO BOX 1249  
Taylor, MI 48180

Articles also may be submitted via E-mail at: Kmanganello@provide.net. Feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

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### Introduction to the BAAM-ASIG Board Members

Chair: Krista M. Kennedy, M.S., LLP  
(Behavioral Building Blocks, P.C.)

Treasurer: Gina Truesdell-Todd, M.S., LLP,  
Ph.D. Candidate  
(Behavioral Building Blocks, P.C.)

Secretary: Amy Jenkins, B.A.  
(Eastern Michigan University)

BAAM members that attended the Autism Special Interest Group Organizational meeting elected the board members on March 16, 2001. Board members will hold their positions for a five-year term. All elections will be held at the annual BAAM convention ASIG meetings.

### **Mission Statement for the Behavior Analysis Association of Michigan's Autism Special Interest Group**

BAAM-ASIG is dedicated to providing information and education to professionals, students, and parents interested in autism and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). We plan to do this in the following ways:

- Provide information on upcoming educational opportunities such as conferences, workshops, and classes related to autism and ABA.
- Provide information about recent publications related to autism and ABA.
- Provide information on agencies in Michigan that provide ABA services for children with autism
- Provide a forum for discussion on autism and ABA through our online email list at <http://www.smartgroups.com/groups/BAAM-ASIG>.

BAAM-ASIG is also dedicated to promoting the integrity of the field of ABA. We plan to do this in the following ways:

- Supporting valid autism research in ABA by establishing a research award for a student paper in autism and ABA to assist them in attending the national ABA convention.
- Supporting ethical and effective treatments in ABA for individuals with autism.

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Local Events:**

- Behavior Analysis Association of Michigan 2002 Conference  
Thursday-Friday March 14-15, 2002  
Eagle Crest Conference Center  
(Ypsilanti Marriott)  
Special Guest Speaker:  
Ron Leaf of Autism Partnership  
(others to be announced)

For more information go to the BAAM web site at <http://www.baam.emich.edu/> or contact James Todd by e-mail to: [psy\\_todd@online.emich.edu](mailto:psy_todd@online.emich.edu) or fax to 734-487-0394

#### **National Events:**

- Association of Behavior Analysis 2002 Conference Sheraton Centre, Toronto  
For more information about the times, dates, and speakers see <http://www.wmich.edu/aba/>

For other national events please review the files sent through the BAAM-ASIG email list at <http://www.smartgroups.com/groups/BAAM-ASIG>

### **Announcements**

- BAAM 2002 CALL FOR PAPERS  
Deadline for Submissions December 6, 2001 for online submissions go to <http://www.baam.emich.edu/> or submissions can be emailed to James Todd [psy\\_todd@online.emich.edu](mailto:psy_todd@online.emich.edu) or faxed to 734-487-0394

## **Applied Behavior Analysis Resources for Children with Autism in Michigan**

### **The Early Intervention Center**

#### Program Description

The Early Intervention Center is designed to bring quality behavior analytic services, and provide information on other aspects of treatment, to children with autism ages 2-6 and their families. Our philosophy is one that applies the science of behavior to all aspects of learning. Children at the Early Intervention Center learn academic skills, social skills, self-help skills, and play skills.

#### Services

- Individual assessment of academic and daily living levels
- Personalized instruction based on skill level and acquisition rates
- Empirically validated procedures
- Data driven processes
- Continuous monitoring of progress towards goals
- Structured environment
- Diet and nutritional information
- Referrals to local physicians and professionals
- Parent and sibling training, conferences, and workshops
- References for autism

Hours of Operation: 8:30am – 4:30pm  
(Children attend from 9:00am-3:00pm)

Program Director: Summer Ferreri

#### Contact Information

2225 E. 14 Mile Road  
Birmingham, MI 48009-7259  
Phone 248.258.6271  
Fax 248.258.6425

### **Behavioral Building Blocks, P.C.**

#### Program Description

Behavioral Building Blocks, P.C. provides behavioral intervention services designed to improve each child's communication, functional, and social skills. The training methods employed by Behavioral Building Blocks, P.C. are based on scientifically proven principles of behavior.

When working with Behavioral Building Blocks each child will receive an individualized assessment and treatment plan to target that child's specific needs. In addition to this we will supply you and your child's treatment team with the appropriate training and supervision necessary to implement the treatment.

Behavioral Building Blocks, P.C. provides a variety of therapeutic services based on Applied Behavior Analysis such as, discrete trial training, communication training, behavior modification, community support services, and didactic services. This service is priced according to current market rates.

#### Hours of Operation

Behavioral Building Blocks employees do not specified hours for therapeutic intervention. Services are scheduled according to psychologist and family availability. Hours are flexible and evening and weekend consultations are often available.

#### Program Location

Services are rendered in the child's environment. This means that the psychologist will come to the child's home or school for consultations, training, and evaluations. There will be a drive charge based on a mileage rate from the psychologist's location.

Program Directors

Gina E. Truesdell-Todd is a Ph.D. candidate in the Human Development and Family Life program at the University of Kansas. She earned her master's degree in Clinical Behavioral Psychology in 1994 from Eastern Michigan University. Gina has practiced psychology for several years working with a variety of populations including children and adults with autism, closed head injury, mental illness, and mental retardation. She currently specializes in the application of Applied Behavior Analysis for the purpose of improving the communication, social, and functional skills of children with developmental disabilities.

Krista M. Kennedy earned her master's degree in Clinical Behavioral Psychology in 2000 from Eastern Michigan University. Krista has helped children gain skills through the application of Discrete Trial Training for several years. She received her initial training in the use of Applied Behavior Analysis at Western Michigan University, where she earned her bachelor degree in Behavioral Psychology. She has extensive experience and success assessing, developing, implementing, and monitoring clinic based and home based discrete trial programs.

Contact Information

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<http://www.behavioralbuildingblocks.com>

**Kalamazoo Behavioral Services PLC,**  
Program Director: Carl Sundberg, Ph. D.

3426 West Main Apt #1

Kalamazoo, MI 49006

(616) 343-2967

[Ctsundberg@aol.com](mailto:Ctsundberg@aol.com)

No description was available at this time.

**WMU Center for Autism**

Program Description

The Center for Autism is a center-based program for children diagnosed with autism. We provide evaluation and behavioral treatment services to children diagnosed with pervasive developmental disorders such as autism or Asperger's Syndrome. If your child has been previously diagnosed, or you suspect that your child might have a developmental disorder, contact our clinic for an evaluation. Our services are designed to relatively short-term supplemental programming for children who are already receiving services from local agencies.

The program offers 2-3 hours per week of direct contact for a maximum of 2 years. All programming is designed to address specific referral questions and to compliment on-going educational activities. Our primary treatment and research areas include the following: communication, socialization, self-help/functional skills, play skills, ritualistic behavior, perspective-taking skills, etc.

The Center for Autism has two main objectives. First, the center serves as a primary training opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students in psychology who wish to pursue careers in the field of autism and developmental disabilities. Second, the intervention services provided at the center allow ongoing research in the most effective methods of assessment and treatment.

The Center for Autism will accept referrals for children between the ages of 2 and 12 who have an existing diagnosis of autism or a pervasive developmental disorder. We also accept referrals for diagnostic evaluation. All referrals must be for a specific referral problem including specific communication problems, social-skills deficits, problem behavior (including aggression and tantrums), ritualistic behavior, or other problems.

#### Cost and Arrangement of Services

Services are arranged on a fee-for-service basis and payment is due at the time of your appointment. Specific charges are arranged on a sliding-fee scale and will be based on your family income.

#### Hours of Operation

The Center for Autism operates Monday through Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and children are typically scheduled twice a week for a 1-hour block of time.

#### Program Location

The Center for Autism is located on the first floor of Wood Hall in the Room 1504 suite on the Western Michigan University campus.

#### The Program Directors

Dr. Linda A. LeBlanc is an assistant professor of psychology and a member of the clinical psychology faculty. She received her B.A. in 1990, M.A. in 1993, and Ph.D. in 1996 from Louisiana State University. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (Kennedy Krieger Institute) in 1997. She served on the faculty at Claremont McKenna College before joining the faculty at WMU in 1999. Dr. LeBlanc's research and clinical interests include the assessment and treatment of autism and mental retardation, ritualistic behavior, social skills training, and clinical gerontology.

Dr. LeBlanc has published widely in peer-reviewed journals and has written several book chapters.

Dr. James E. Carr is an associate professor of psychology and a member of the behavior analysis faculty. He received his B.A. from the University of North Florida in 1991 and completed his Ph.D. at Florida State University in 1996. Dr. Carr served on the faculty at University of Nevada-Reno prior to joining the faculty at Western Michigan University in 1999. Dr. Carr's research and clinical interests include the assessment and treatment of problem behavior in individuals with developmental disabilities, the assessment and treatment of tic disorders, reinforcer identification, time-based reinforcement schedules, and instructional design in college teaching. Dr. Carr has published widely in peer-reviewed journals and has edited two books. He is a member of the editorial boards for Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, Behavioral Interventions, and Education and Treatment of Children.

#### Contact Information

Center for Autism  
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E-mail Address: [autism-enter@wmich.edu](mailto:autism-enter@wmich.edu)  
Web Site:  
<http://www.wmich.edu/psychology/resources/autism/autism.html>

## **Microsoft 1st National US Corporation To Cover ABA Treatment For Autism**

(press release from the online Families for Early Autism Treatment newsletter)

[This information comes from Eric Brechner: My wife and I are members of FEAT of Washington and subscribe to your news service. We have found it very helpful in providing the right services for our autistic son. I am also a Microsoft employee. As you can read below, this year Microsoft began special coverage of ABA therapy for all employees nationwide and around the world.

After nine months they are now ready to publicize this new coverage and work with other insurers around the country to adopt a similar benefit. However, corporate PR is pretty busy with the announcements of X-Box and Windows XP. I offered to write the press release and Human Resources and corporate PR have given me permission to have it distributed through news services, like yours.

I think families around the country would greatly benefit from insurance coverage for ABA therapy, and this announcement could help them to achieve that goal.]

In January of this year, Microsoft became the first national US corporation to provide coverage for Applied Behavioral Analysis for the treatment of autism. After three years of working intensely with parents, providers, the University of Washington Center on Human Development and Disability (CHDD), and Aetna US Healthcare, a new comprehensive health care benefit was added to the core Microsoft health care plan. The benefit covers over 4500 hours of intensive therapy for children on the autism spectrum under the age of seven.

Now that Microsoft and Aetna have had the coverage in place for nine months, they are hopeful other companies will follow their example and provide this critical benefit for families with autism. Many safeguards were put in place to limit cost and liability while providing truly useful and meaningful coverage to employees. There are limits on which diagnoses are eligible, who can provide treatment, the amount of supervision received by front-line therapists, and the number of visits both yearly and lifetime that a child can receive from front-line and professional providers.

Using this model, Microsoft and Aetna hope other local and national corporations and insurance providers will follow with their own coverage of effective treatment for this debilitating disorder. Without coverage, families often lack the funds and, just as importantly, the guidance to provide beneficial treatment for their children. Through three years of hard work by health care professionals, benefits workers, and parents, now families around the region and throughout the country have new hope that their children will receive the proper Applied Behavioral Analysis treatment. Treatment their children need to reach their full potential.

### **Behavioral Therapy**

Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) is a method to change behavior. It consists of the delivery of systematic prompts that elicit responses from the child which are followed with consistent reinforcement or correction procedures. The theory is that "behavior that is reinforced will reoccur." This is much the same way that most children are taught to say, "Thank you." You give a child something they want, then prompt with, "What do you say?"

The child responds with, "Thank you," and you reinforce this correct response with praise and, "You're welcome."

In a landmark UCLA study, 47% of children on the autism spectrum who received early, intensive ABA-based intervention achieved normal intellectual and educational functioning, 40% were assigned to classes for the language-delayed, and 10% were put in classrooms for the retarded. In contrast, in a control group of children on the autism spectrum who received typical special education services, only 2% achieved normal educational and intellectual function, 45% were put in language-delayed classes, and 53% were put in classrooms for the retarded.

Early intensive behavioral intervention can make a significant difference in the life of a child with autism. Rooted in basic behavioral principles, its fundamental goal is not only to teach a child specific skills, but to ultimately develop a child's ability to learn how to learn. Even though ABA holds great promise, it is not necessarily the whole toolbox needed to deal with autism. Other interventions such as occupational therapy, diet modification for food intolerance, etc., can also mitigate the effects of autism. They should be evaluated as part of an integrated program to complement and enhance the effectiveness of ABA.

#### Benefits to the whole community

The process of providing this new coverage led to the creation of the UW Autism Center and the establishment of certification guidelines for treatment providers. Both the Autism Center and the certification of qualified professionals can be used by the wider community to support families with autism and enable other companies' health plans to provide these same benefits.

The UW Autism Center was established in June of last year through a \$5 million dollar donation by Microsoft Senior Vice-president Richard Fade and his wife, Susan, along with a matching gift from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. While the Fades, and many other families with autism in the Puget Sound

region, have long seen a need for such a center, that need became crystallized in the initial discussions between Microsoft parents and company over establishing coverage for behavioral treatment. Microsoft needed assurances of quality care and controlled liability before it could risk creating an unprecedented new health benefit for a company of its size.

A tacit understanding was made between the Fades and company executives. If a center could be created which certified qualified providers, established best practices, and provided training of new providers so all employees' families could enjoy the new benefit, then Microsoft would do its best to work out the details with Aetna to cover treatment. Working closely with Dr. Geraldine Dawson of the University of Washington, Microsoft Human Resources, and Microsoft families, Richard and Susan Fade established both the money and charter for the Autism Center. The center has already certified a number of providers serving children across the region. For Microsoft families, these services are fully covered with a 20% coinsurance charge.

Families played a large role in designing the benefit

Once the Autism Center provided a way to assure quality care, the hard work of finalizing the guidelines and restrictions for the new coverage fell on the Microsoft Benefits team. Michael Cochran, a Microsoft Benefits Manager, worked long, hard hours with Microsoft executives, the legal department, and Dr. Dawson and her staff at the Autism Center to establish the new rules. A key to the success was also deeply involving Microsoft parents.

Every aspect of the new coverage was reviewed, critiqued, and negotiated with parents. Mike knew the program wouldn't truly benefit families if the parents weren't intimately involved. When the final

compromise was reached, families were thrilled with the coverage. While many families are still hopeful for extending the coverage past age seven, all are deeply grateful for the courageous steps taken by Microsoft to enhance its support of families in a whole new area, even in these difficult economic times.

Finding out more

If you are a media professional, health benefits professional, or corporate executive and would like to find out more about the Microsoft Applied Behavioral Analysis health benefit, please contact Nicole Miller at Microsoft (wnicolm@microsoft.com).

If you are a parent, family member, or friend of a family with autism and would like ABA covered by your insurance, please forward this mail to your company's human resources department and/or your insurance provider and ask them to contact Microsoft and find out more about this coverage.

# Join us!

## *BAAM-ASIG*

### **Behavior Analysis Association of Michigan Autism Special Interest Group**

\_\_\_\_\_ I am the parent of a child with autism and would like to be a member of BAAM-ASIG.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a student and would like to be a member of BAAM-ASIG.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a professional and would like to be a member of BAAM-ASIG.

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership is \$5.00  
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