



Community Connection

Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, Department of Child & Family Studies — Volume 8, Issue 1 • February 2005 - July 2005

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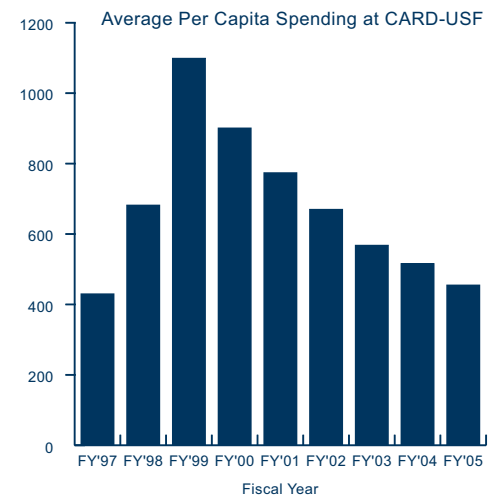
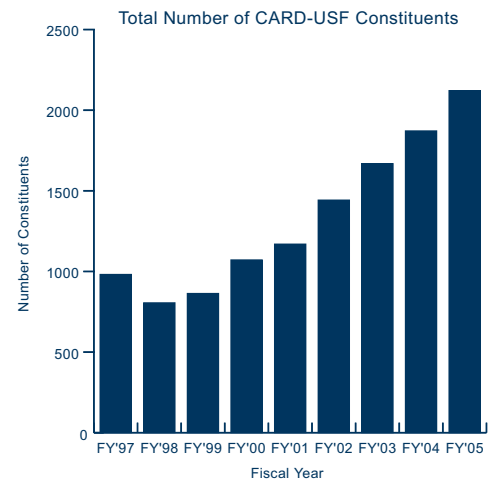
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Director's Note

In preparing for our November constituency board meeting, I had come to recognize that CARD at USF and other sites around the state are at a pivotal point this year. Our funding has remained at the same level for the past 5 years, and yet, our constituency base increases yearly by a significant percentage. In doing the math, each constituent receives fewer dollars allocated for services each year our funding from the legislature remains the same. As resources such as staff, materials, and operating costs go up, CARD finds it more and more difficult to keep the quality and quantity of services stable. I am asking that each of you consider what this personally means to you, and for the future families who need a resource, consultant or training. If CARD is an important component in the life of your family member, I am asking for your support. It is time for families around the state of Florida to come together around an issue of importance and make a difference. We have connected the constituency board members from around the state from all CARD sites and will organize a plan of action. We will then communicate with you about how you can help CARD meet its goal of raising our funding level for the new fiscal year. To illustrate my point, please check the graphs.

Our constituency board that represents the interest of families has designated a goal for this year. That goal is for all of CARD-USF's constituents to become familiar with your board representatives. We will be sending you a mailing in the near future introducing our board members and how you can



communicate with them to ensure that your needs are considered. In addition, if you or anyone you know is interested in becoming part of CARD's constituency board, you can e-mail card-usf@fmhi.usf.edu.

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Our Mission

The mission of the Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD) at the University of South Florida is to provide support and assistance that optimizes the potential of people with autism and related disabilities. Our effort to achieve this mission is exemplified in the four "components for caring" that are the focus of our work:

- Direct Assistance – Providing individualized support for people with autism and related disabilities, and their families, in natural community settings.
- Technical Assistance & Consultation – Undertaking activities on behalf of programs (e.g., classroom, supported living residence, supported employment site, etc.) that serve people with autism and related disabilities.
- Professional Training – Providing instruction on autism and related disabilities through our workshops, conferences, in-service training, and college courses.
- Public Education and Awareness – Developing and disseminating information about people with autism and related disabilities.

As one of six regional, university-based CARD sites, CARD-USF provides its services to individuals with autism and related disabilities, their families, related professionals, and the general public throughout an eighteen county catchment area in west, central, and southwest Florida.

Endorsement Policy

As a policy, CARD will not lend its name to the endorsement of any specific program, practice, or model that is offered for service to people with autism and related disabilities. However, the sharing of information and training opportunities are key functions of the CARD program.

Events, activities, programs, and facilities of the University of South Florida are available to all without regard to race, color, marital status, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, Vietnam or disabled veteran status as provided by law and in accordance with the University's respect for personal dignity.

Director's Note (continued...)

CARD-USF has hired a new training director, Karen Fritch who joined us at the beginning of September. You will see new training options as well as new formats for offering training using technology in delivering workshops for families unable to attend in person. We also want to welcome 3 new support specialists. Glenda Ubina brings experience in teaching children with autism. Glenda is bi-lingual and will assist in addressing the needs of our Spanish-speaking constituents. Shelton Gilyard comes to us from Early Intervention services and is working with our youngest group of children. Mindy Stevens is working on our school-aged team and has been a teacher for the past 7 years working with high school level students with autism. Our team has been built with the

idea that diversity of backgrounds and experiences makes us a stronger and helps us offer the best services possible.

CARD-USF is beginning to work on designing a new look for itself. All future materials, trainings, and brochures will have a design that helps folks know it is a CARD-USF product. The branding of CARD in such a way will help us become better known in the 18 counties we serve. I believe you will have a clearer understanding of what CARD is able to provide through our new materials.

With various internal additions of structure and standards, I hope you will see some positive changes in our work. As always, I welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to make CARD-USF work best for you.

—Karen Berkman, Ph.D.

The Road to Transition for Students with Asperger's (a series)

When I was in elementary school, I was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, a form of autism. During my education at middle school, I was placed into a program at the school that wasn't designed for my learning capabilities. Maintaining straight A's for the consecutive years I attended there, I began to experience mental stress because I was not getting a good education to satisfy my intelligence. After taking several physiological and IQ tests, it was proven that my intelligence levels were over the curriculum levels, especially in the areas of math, science, and technology. My parents and I started making requests that they would accelerate me. No matter how hard we tried, the school rejected the results of the tests and did not want to accelerate me. One of my math teachers told me and my parents that I was not smart in math or in computers, even though I had A's in the math course at the time. All of these set backs were causing me to fall into a state of depression, for I was hungry for learning something new, not to learn something that I already knew.

After a few months and a legal battle with the school district, I was finally placed into Pine View School for the Gifted. Upon entering Pine View School for high school, I was to be the first labeled autistic in a full-time gifted program in the Sarasota County School district. Being placed at Pine View was an

opportunity for me to go to a relaxed environment and learn all that I can learn at high school. Pine View, the school district, and advocates for people with Autism started to watch how an autistic student can handle the work of a full-time gifted program. Although some professionals had doubts that I could handle the stress and workload of the school, I have been able to prove their theories incorrect in that I have been able to successfully manage all the work without cutting down on the number of assignments that I do. What really has made me really successful is that after a couple of years I have good supports in place that make things work. Professionals from places like the University of South Florida and the University of Miami have closely been monitoring my progress with these supports in place and they are starting to use some of these supports to help others with autism. Working closely with the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD), I have been able to work with professionals, and speak to parents at conferences, and bring back the tips that will help other people that follow my steps.

Graduating from Pine View with a gifted diploma and attending college will help contribute even more to my cause for it will continue to support the fact that people with autism are capable of higher learning & it will help change the way people view autism as a whole.

—This article has been submitted by Jeffrey Schmidt, a senior in High School living in Sarasota.

School-Age Series at Florida Gulf Coast University Technical Assistance Sessions Involve Families and Professionals in Active Learning

Improving the effectiveness of training for families and professionals is the purpose of piloting technical assistance sessions for the School-Age Series at Florida Gulf Coast University in Southwest Florida. Participants can now register for the traditional educational workshops and, after successfully completing the workshop, register for a series of technical assistance sessions where opportunities for application of the concepts learned in the lecture session are available to focus on an individual child or classroom. The emphasis of the technical assistance sessions is on a strengths-based approach, believing that parents and support personnel are essential to designing and implementing effective interventions for individuals with autism. When parents and support personnel participate in collecting data, analyzing it and solving problems based on evidence gathered, results are often a better contextual fit with how families live, work and play. As a result of the pilot program, CARD-USF hopes to build stronger parent-professional partnerships in planning and providing interventions for children with autism across environments.

Active participation is the key. The new training format includes building the capacity

of parents and teachers to use a variety of tools to assess, plan, implement and monitor interventions for their child or classroom. Reading assignments, gathering information across environments, and analyzing data are among the planned activities. Participants maintain an “active learning log” where activities conducted during the technical assistance sessions are evaluated with hopes of improving future attempts in planning for and supporting individuals with autism. Moreover, participants receive individualized support from support specialists as well as the opportunity to network with other individuals supporting a person with autism. The hope is to build capacity for those supporting individuals with autism while at the same time providing families and support personnel a chance to brainstorm and support each other.

Technical assistance sessions are linked to CARD-USF core trainings in challenging behavior, enhancing communication skills, promoting social skills, teaching independence and creating environmental supports. For example, participants who registered for technical assistance in November and January gathered and reviewed assessment data prior to writing an action plan with goals to enhancing behavior and communication skills of

individuals with autism. Participants applied strategies and techniques to support the development of functional communication and coping skills in everyday environments leading to decreases in challenging behavior and increases in replacement skills. Collecting and sharing data on interventions will help families, as well as teachers, measure success at home and in the classroom. In April 2005, participants interested in using visual supports will write an action plan and then create visual schedules, choice boards, task analysis charts and/or picture communication symbols for their child or classroom. This make-n-take session will provide participants with the opportunity to leave the technical assistance session with ready-to-use materials for the individual they are supporting.

To preview the new training format at Florida Gulf Coast University, see pages 5 & 6 in this newsletter. Core trainings and technical assistance sessions are listed under Lee County. For additional information, call CARD-USF in Fort Myers at (239) 590-7771.

The branch office serves Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties.

Back to the movies...

I am the parent of a sixteen-year-old child with autism. Nine years ago, I took my son to the movies, and he behaved well. At that age, taking my son to the movies was not a major concern of mine due to his size. If he had a tantrum then, it was not so “in your face” as opposed to a tantrum coming from a much bigger, much stronger sixteen-year-old. We haven’t gone back to the movies until recently.

Currently, my son is frequently eating out at restaurants; reading, borrowing and returning books at the library; shopping at malls and supermarkets; having fun on vacations, and much more. Although, he is exposed to many community experiences, I dreaded taking him to the movies. Reasons included sudden mood swings that were triggered by certain sounds and a lack of interest for the television. I feared going to the movies would result in my son and I being the main attraction and not the movie. So, it was my decision, due to his lack of interest in television and the challenging behavior that could occur from

the dynamics of a movie theatre, not to “take on” this endeavor.

When I first met Amanda Keating, a CARD support specialist, she suggested taking him back to the movies. With her encouragement and assistance, I decided to give it a try. Much to my surprise, our trip to the movies was a hit. My son enjoyed the movie tremendously. He sat through the whole movie. He ate his popcorn and giggled appropriately at jokes and funny stuff.

Preparation

I believe the success can be attributed to the fact that my child played a major part in the decision making process of the trip. He chose the movie he wanted to see and the snacks he was going to purchase. He also knew where the theatre was and the duration of the movie.

What does it mean to the family?

As a family we were excited that our son experienced the dynamics (darkness, loud sounds, etc) of a movie theatre again, and left that experience happy. We thought



Dexter at the movies

those sensory stimuli (darkness, loud sounds, etc.) would have been an issue for him, but much to our surprise he was okay. Knowing that those stimuli are not triggering his mood swings, as a family, we feel comfortable going to movies again. Moreover, we discovered that going to the movie theatre to watch a movie is of major interest to him. Since our initial trip, we have gone back to the theatre as a family, and it is wonderful to feel comfortable doing so.

— Sabrina Brathwaite

Trainings and Workshops for Families and Professionals

With this newsletter we are introducing our updated series of workshops geared toward supporting specific age groups. These sessions will be offered with an emphasis on practical strategies and tools for you to take with you. You will notice that the training pages have a new look that we hope will make it easier for you to locate the workshop you want in your area. We are also including follow up technical assistance sessions for our trainings in the counties surrounding our Ft. Myers office. In addition to offering these series, CARD is available to do trainings and workshops concerning issues of Autism

and Related Disabilities upon request by parents, agencies, educators, and other organizations. Call or email us to learn more about this service!

If you need to cancel for any reason, please let us know either by phone or email.

For Workshops:

All CARD workshops listed are free and open to parents and professionals.

Registration is required by 5 days prior to the training. (This is needed in order to have sufficient packets for all attending.) Call to inquire about late registration.

Workshops may be cancelled due to low enrollment or other unforeseen circumstances and those registered will be notified.

Registration:

Email: If you register by email please include participant name, workshop title and number, and date for which you are registering. We will confirm by reply email.

Phone: If you register by phone, you will get the voice mail system. Please leave a voice message with the participant name, workshop title and number, and date, plus a phone number and/or email address where you can be reached.

If you live in Desoto, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Manatee, Martin, Okeechobee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, St. Lucie, or Sarasota County, you can register by:

Email: card-usf@fmhi.usf.edu
Phone: 813-974-2532 or
1-800-333-4530 (outside Hillsborough)

If you live in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, or Lee County, you can register by:

Email: cphilbro@fgcu.edu
Phone: 239-590-7771

Remember: If you have not registered, CARD will have no way to let you know if the workshop has been cancelled and you may have wasted a trip. You will also miss out on any handouts for the training!

If you need accommodations, please notify us two weeks prior to the workshop that you plan to attend.

Workshops Being Offered February – July, 2005

The following workshops will be held at the locations below for the Counties of Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota, Polk, Hardee, Desoto, Highlands, Okeechobee, Indian River, St. Lucie, and Martin unless noted otherwise:

Hillsborough area

Children's Board of Hillsborough County
Conference Rooms B&C
1002 E. Palm Ave., Tampa, Fl. 33605

Polk area

FDLRS Training Room
1907 S. Floral Ave., Bartow, Fl 33830

Sarasota area

School Board of Sarasota County
Blue Awning Building
1960 Landings Blvd., Sarasota, Fl. 34321

St. Lucie area

FDLRS, Room 407
4204 Okeechobee Rd., Ft. Pierce, Fl.34947

An Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders

This workshop provides an overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), the history, characteristics, developmental issues, and the research associated with ASD. This workshop is for any family whose child has recently received an ASD diagnosis, as well as those supporting them, or those that need a better understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders. This is being offered at the following locations at the times listed:

Location	Date	Time	Number
Polk	3/09/05	10 -12	1960
Hillsborough	2/15/05	10 -12	1963
Sarasota	2/22/05	10 -12	1962
St Lucie	3/01/05	10:30-12:30	1961

Early Childhood Series

Tips on Toileting

This workshop provides the basics of toilet training with an emphasis on how to help children who seem to be reluctant to participate in the toilet training process. Various data collection tools will be distributed

Location	Date	Time	Number
Polk	3/31/05	6-8pm	1920
Hillsborough	3/03/05	10-12	1896
Sarasota	3/15/05	10:30-12:30	1897
St Lucie	3/22/05	10:30-12:30	1898

Helping Children Communicate

Participants will learn how to facilitate a child's expressive and receptive communication. The workshop will include identifying communication characteristics associated with Autism, identifying functional communication goals, and learning effective strategies for teaching language and communication.

Location	Date	Time	Number
Polk	4/21/05	10:30-12:30	1900
Hillsborough*	4/05/05	6-8 pm	1899
Sarasota	4/12/05	6-8 pm	1919
St. Lucie	4/27/05	1-3 pm	1921

*At Shriners Hospital for Children, Board Rm.
12502 N. Pine Dr., Tampa, Fl. 33612

Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior Changes

The process of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) is a research-based method to teach alternative behaviors. Through PBS, participants will learn to determine the function of a child's behavior and effective strategies to promote positive behavior change.

Location	Date	Time	Number
Polk	6/21/05	6-8 pm	1903
Hillsborough	5/12/05	10:30-12:30	1901
Sarasota	5/18/05	10:30-12:30	1902
St. Lucie	6/28/05	10:30-12:30	1922

Adolescent to Adult Training Series (14 years old and above)

This is a three-part series that will provide participants with information about the transition process from school to adult life. Families of younger children are also encouraged to attend and become better informed while thinking about their child's future.

Successful Transition to Adult Life

Participants will learn why planning early is the key to a successful transition from high school to adult life. Topics include transition as outlined in federal law IDEA and the benefits of planning post-school outcomes. Included will be how to conduct an ecological inventory and how to access community-based instruction.

Location	Date	Time	Number
Polk	3/28/05	9-12 pm	1966
Hillsborough	3/04/05	1-4 pm	1964
Sarasota	3/03/05	3-6 pm	1965
St. Lucie	3/10/05	9:30-12:30	1967

An Introduction to the Adult Services System

Participants will gain a basic understanding of the adult service system and how to access adult services. Topics include the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Services Waiver (Med- Waiver) Program, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), third party benefits, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and The Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities, Inc.

Location	Date	Time	Number
Polk	4/04/05	9-12 pm	1969
Hillsborough	3/11/05	1-4 pm	1971
Sarasota	3/31/05	3-6 pm	1970
St. Lucie	4/07/05	9:30-12:30	1968

A Guide to Self-Determination

Making important decisions in life including where to live, where to work and how to spend one's leisure time are choices valued by all individuals. Participants will learn about a person-centered model to empower adults with autism to communicate to their parents and guardians about life decisions — and to achieve their individual dreams.

Location	Date	Time	Number
Polk	5/09/05	9-12 pm	1974
Hillsborough	4/8/05	1-4 pm	1972
Sarasota	4/14/05	3-6 pm	1973
St. Lucie	4/28/05	9:30-12:30	1975

Trainings for the Counties of Charlotte, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Collier

Trainings for this area will be held at the following locations unless noted otherwise:

Hendry County

Barron Library Community Room
461 N. Main St., LaBelle
All Trainings 12-2:30 pm

Collier County

Professional Development Center
615 3rd Ave. South, Naples
All trainings 6-8 pm

Lee County

FGCU
10501 FGCU Blvd. S., Ft. Myers
All trainings from 6-8 pm

Cape Coral Library

921 SW 39th Terrace, Cape Coral
All trainings 10 AM – 12:30 pm

Charlotte County

Port Charlotte Library
2280 Aaron Street, Port Charlotte
All trainings from 3-5 pm

School Age Series

Collaboration and Person-Centered Planning

Collier County – Location: TBA

This step-by-step approach to planning helps the child, parents, extended family members and service providers plan for a child's future.

5/12/05 – #1935

Understanding and Intervening with Challenging Behavior

Collier County – Location: TBA

Learn the fundamentals of positive behavior support, a research-based method of behavior change. Topics include determining the purpose or "function" of a challenging behavior, planning prevention strategies, teaching children alternative behaviors, and ways to respond.

Register for both parts.
Part One: 5/19/05 – #1936
Part Two: 5/26/05 – #1937

Technical Assistance: Understanding and Intervening with Challenging Behavior

Register for all three dates listed below:

06/02/05 - #1938

6/16/05 - #1939

6/23/05 - #1940

Prerequisite: Successfully complete workshops #1936 and #1937

Trainings for the Counties of Charlotte, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Collier (continued from page 5)

Enhancing Communication Skills

Collier County – Location: TBA

Learn practical strategies and techniques that will support the development of functional, as well as spontaneous communication in everyday environments.

Register for both parts:

Part One: 6/30/05 – #194

Part Two: 7/7/05 – #1942

Technical Assistance: Enhancing Communication Skills

Register for all three dates listed below:

7/14/05 – #1943

7/21/05 – #1944

7/28/05 – #1945

Prerequisite: Successfully complete workshops #1941, #1942

Promoting Social Skills

FGCU campus, Ft. Myers. Location: TBA

Understand the social challenges children with autism face and learn practical strategies to promote their social understanding and interaction skills.

Register for both parts:

Part One: 2/03/05 – #1817

Part Two: 2/10/05 – #1818

Technical Assistance: Promoting Social Skills

Register for all three dates listed below:

2/17/05 – #1819

2/24/05 – #1820

3/03/05 – #1850

Prerequisite: Successfully complete workshops #1817, #1818

Teaching Independence in Daily Living Skills

FGCU campus, Ft. Myers: Location TBA

Discuss practical strategies for teaching children how to function more independently. The focus will be using systematic instruction and visual supports to teach daily living skills.

3/17/05 – #1851

Technical Assistance: Teaching Independence in Daily Living Skills

Register for all three dates listed below:

3/24/05 – #1852

3/31/05 – #1853

4/07/05 – #1854

Prerequisite: Successfully complete workshop #1851

Creating Environmental Supports to Promote Structure and Consistency

FGCU campus, Ft. Myers, Location: TBA

Explore strategies that focus on the use of visual supports to help children anticipate and predict what is expected during daily routines and new situations.

4/14/05 - #1855

Technical Assistance: Creating Visual Supports

Register for both dates listed:

4/23/05 – #1856 (90-minute individualized session with a support specialist at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2 p.m. or 3:30 p.m.)

5/05/05 – #1857

Prerequisite: Successfully complete workshop #1855

Early Childhood Series

An Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders

This workshop provides an overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), the history, characteristics, developmental issues, and the research associated with ASD. This workshop is for any family whose child has recently received an ASD diagnosis, as well as those supporting them, or those that need a better understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Collier: 4/04/05 – #1925

Charlotte: 6/27/05 – #1889

Getting What You Need for Your Child

In this workshop, families will be provided information on the services, supports, strategies and programs they can access to support their young child with pervasive developmental disorders or autism.

Collier: 5/23/05 – #1929

Charlotte: 7/11/05/05 – #1890

How to Teach New Skills

This presentation will show families how to identify skills to teach in home and community settings, how to identify the optimal time to teach, and how to teach using research-based instructional strategies.

Ft. Myers: 3/07/05 – #1909

Collier: 6/20/05 – #1931

Toilet Training

This workshop provides the basics of toilet training with an emphasis on how to help children who seem to be reluctant to participate.

Collier: 5/16/05 – # 1928

Helping Children Learn to Communicate

Families will learn techniques and strategies to facilitate their child's communication and understanding of other people's communication to them.

Ft. Myers: 2/21/05 – #1908

Collier: 6/06/05 – #1930

Support Strategies for Your Child's Transition to a New Classroom

Change is very difficult! In this workshop, families will learn about ways to support their child as he or she begins school or moves to a new classroom.

Ft. Myers: 3/21/05 – #1910

Collier: 4/18/05 – #1926

Charlotte: 7/25/05 – #1891

Understanding and Intervening with Challenging Behavior of Young Children

In this workshop, families will be taught the process of positive behavior support. This research-based method of behavior management is highly effective in reducing problem behavior and providing children with alternative skills to communicate their needs.

Ft. Myers: 2/07/05 – #1907

Collier: 5/02/05 – #1927

Adolescent to Adult Training Series (14 years old and above)

Introduction to the Adult Service System

Participants will gain a basic understanding of the adult service system and how to access adult services. Topics include the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Services Waiver (Med- Waiver) Program, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), third party benefits, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and The Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities, Inc.

Cape Coral: 5/04/05 – #1874

Community Living

Families and professionals will learn about the various options for residential living and the supports that are available to help guide individuals with developmental disabilities in making decisions about community living.

Cape Coral: 6/08/05 – #1875

Guardianship and Estate Planning

Parents, guardians, grandparents and adult siblings are encouraged to attend this session. Participants will learn more about federal and state assistance programs, guardianship decisions, wills and trusts. Participants will hear how establishing a special needs trust protects the present and future income, assets and inheritances of the adult child with autism. This workshop is targeted for all ages.

Cape Coral: 7/13/05 – #1876

Self-Determination

Making important decisions in life including where to live, where to work and how to spend one's leisure time are choices valued by all individuals. Participants will learn about a person-centered model to empower adults with autism to communicate to their parents and guardians about life decisions— and to achieve their individual dreams.

Hendry: 2/09/05 – #1778

Successful Transition—School to Adult Life

Participants will learn why planning early is the key to a successful transition from high school to adult life. Topics include transition as outlined in federal law IDEA and the benefits of planning post-school outcomes. Included will be how to conduct an ecological inventory and how to access community-based instruction.

Hendry: 3/23/05 – #1774

Cape Coral: 4/06/05 – #1873

Other Trainings:

Overview of Asperger's Syndrome

This workshop provides an overview of Asperger's Syndrome, the history, characteristics, developmental issues, and the research associated with it.

Ft. Myers: 4/19/05, 6:30 to 8:30pm – #1863

Check our Website for additional trainings throughout the year!

Autism Support

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Concerned Parents of Autistic Children
Meetings are held on last Sunday of the month
Time: 3:00 - 5:00 pm
For information contact Dr. Housam Moursi
Email: hmoursi@hotmail.com or call 813-643-9393

KIDDs (Keys for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities)
When: 2nd Thursday of November, February, and April
Time and Location will be provided when you RSVP
To RSVP contact one of the following individuals
Kris Zak via email at krizak@earthling.net
Phyllis Guthman via email at pguthman@fmhi.usf.edu
To leave a voice message, please call 813-837-7735.

LEE COUNTY

Adonis Autism Center of Southwest Florida
Time: 2nd Tuesday (monthly), 7:00 p.m.
Place: Bashaw home, 1456 Lynwood Avenue, Ft. Myers
Contact: Maureen Bashaw, 239-332-5395
Website: <http://www.adonisautismflorida.com>
ASD to ADHD Support Group
Time: 2nd Thursday (Monthly) 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Location: Covenant Presbyterian Church
MacGregor Blvd., room F204, Ft. Myers
Contact: Carol Simontacchi Email: csimontacchi@cs.com

Autism Done a New Way (Diet/Biomedical emphasis)
Time: 3rd Sunday (monthly), 6:00 p.m.
Place: Royal Palm Corporate Center, Royal Palm Sq. Blvd.
Summerlin and Colonial past Publix
Contact: Stacy Alvarez, 239-549-2633

Florida Autistic Society
Time: Group meets informally. Call for meeting times.
Place: Ft. Myers area.
Contact: Kate Cullen, 239-433-4929

Southwest Florida ASA Chapter #555
Contact: Fran Swanson, 239-768-0723
Please call for meeting times.
Respite provided while parents attend meeting.

Support Group (ASD to ADHD)
Time: 2nd Thursday (Monthly) 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Location: Covenant Presbyterian Church
MacGregor Blvd., Room F204, Ft. Myers
Contact: Carol Simontacchi; Email: csimontacchi@cs.com

PASCO (NORTH) COUNTY

(Hernando County has the closest support group)
Hernando Autism Parenting & Personal Experience Network (HAPPEN)
Time: 3rd Wednesday (monthly), 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Place: Pediatric Therapy Works
Contact: Leslie Bolen at 352-683-0209 for directions

PINELLAS COUNTY

Gulf Coast ASA Chapter #134
Time: 2nd Wednesday (monthly), 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Place: Abilities in Clearwater
2735 Whitney Rd., Clearwater
Contact: Filomena MacDonald, 727-789-0082

POLK COUNTY

Parental Encouragement for Autistic Children Everywhere (PEACE)
Time: 1st Tuesday (Monthly) 6:00 - 8:00 pm
Place: Achievement Academy
716 Bella Vista Street, Lakeland
Contact: Nicole: 863-686-2494 or email
Nikki731370@aol.com
Sabra: 863-688-4836 or email Sabrasm@msn.com

SARASOTA COUNTY

Manasota ASA Chapter #535
Time: 1st Thurs. (monthly Sept-May), 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Place: Oak Park School, 7285 Proctor Road, Sarasota
Chapter email: manasotaautism@msn.com
Chapter Contacts: Day time - Julie 941-426-9059.
Evenings or Spanish speakers contact Alicia 941-377-0959
Website: <http://www.manasotaautism.com>

Biological Interventions for Autistic Spectrum Disorders (BIASD)
When: 2nd Wed. of each month from 7:00-9:00 p.m.
First hour will be structured, social hour follows
Place: Waldemere Medical Plaza, Magnolia Room (2nd floor)
(Next to Sarasota Memorial Hospital)
Contact: Dianna at 941-341-9922 or
Michelle at 941-266-7326
By email at biasdsarasota@earthlink.net
Website: <http://home.earthlink.net/~biasdsarasota/>

Please contact CARD-USF with changes or additions.

*Support Group listings are provided as a service
and are not an endorsement by CARD-USF.*

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For more information contact:

Tim Knoster at 570-389-4081
tknoster@bloomu.edu
<http://www.apbs.org>



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