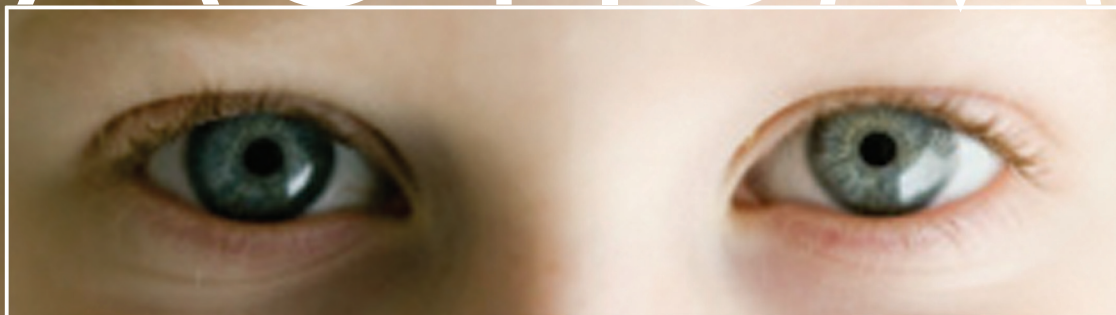


AUTISM



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**LEADERS IN INNOVATIVE TRAINING
FOR THE NEW AUTISM SPECIALISTS**





O V E R V I E W O F

New Jersey has the highest incidence of Autism for any state... 1 of every 94 children diagnosed.

Autism is a serious developmental disorder that affects a child's ability to communicate, form relationships with others, and to respond appropriately to his or her surroundings. **The characteristics of autism typically appear before age 3.** The disorder occurs approximately four times more often in boys than girls. Once believed to be extremely rare, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report that as many as 1 in 150 individuals in the USA may have the disorder. More alarming, however, is that **New Jersey has the highest incidence of autism for any state in the country, with about 1 of every 94 children being diagnosed.**



For many years it was mistakenly believed that autism was caused by emotionally cold parenting. We now know that the cause is most likely genetic in nature (although research continues to search for possible as-yet-undiscovered environmental triggers). Although there is no evidence to suggest that New Jersey's high incidence rate for autism is due to any environmental cause, a number of other factors may be responsible. First, New Jersey leads the country in the frequency of educational assessments conducted for our children, thus promoting earlier and more accurate detection of autism. New Jersey is also home to some of the best autism awareness and advocacy organizations. Finally, some evidence suggests that many parents of children with autism are drawn to the Garden State to enroll their children in the highly regarded schools for autism, perhaps inflating the numbers.

Whatever the cause for the increase in autism, **studies have shown that the earlier autism is detected and treatment is begun, the better the overall outlook for the individual.** With that in mind, there are a number of signs that parents can look for if they suspect there is a problem. If you observe two or more of these characteristics, autism experts recommend that you don't delay speaking with your pediatrician about getting your child screened for autism as soon as possible.

CHARACTERISTICS

OF AUTISM

Difficulties with Communication

Individuals diagnosed with autism may:

- have delayed or absent spoken language
- have unusual tone, pitch, and inflection in speech
- have echolalia, (an immediate or delayed repeating of something the individual previously heard)
- have problems understanding common signals such as another person's body language and facial expression
- fail to point to things to ask for, or to indicate interest in, something in their surroundings

Difficulties with Social Relationships

Individuals diagnosed with autism may:

- not share their experiences or feelings with others
- have difficulty starting and maintaining social interactions
- have problems recognizing and experiencing their emotions
- have difficulty responding appropriately to the thoughts and feelings of others
- avoid eye contact

- show little interest in other children
- fail to respond to his or her name
- show little or no interest in playing peek-a-boo or hide-and-seek
- fail to show another his/her toys
- fail to engage in pretend play



Difficulties Responding Appropriately to Surroundings

Individuals diagnosed with autism may:

- show resistance to changes in routine
- engage in sustained activities such as lining up toys or spinning a top for long periods of time
- make repetitive movements or posturing of body, arms, hands, or fingers, such as flapping
- exhibit a restricted range of interests or hobbies

“My 2-year-old doesn't talk much anymore.”

TREATMENT

FOR AUTISM

When a child receives the diagnosis of autism, parents need to have

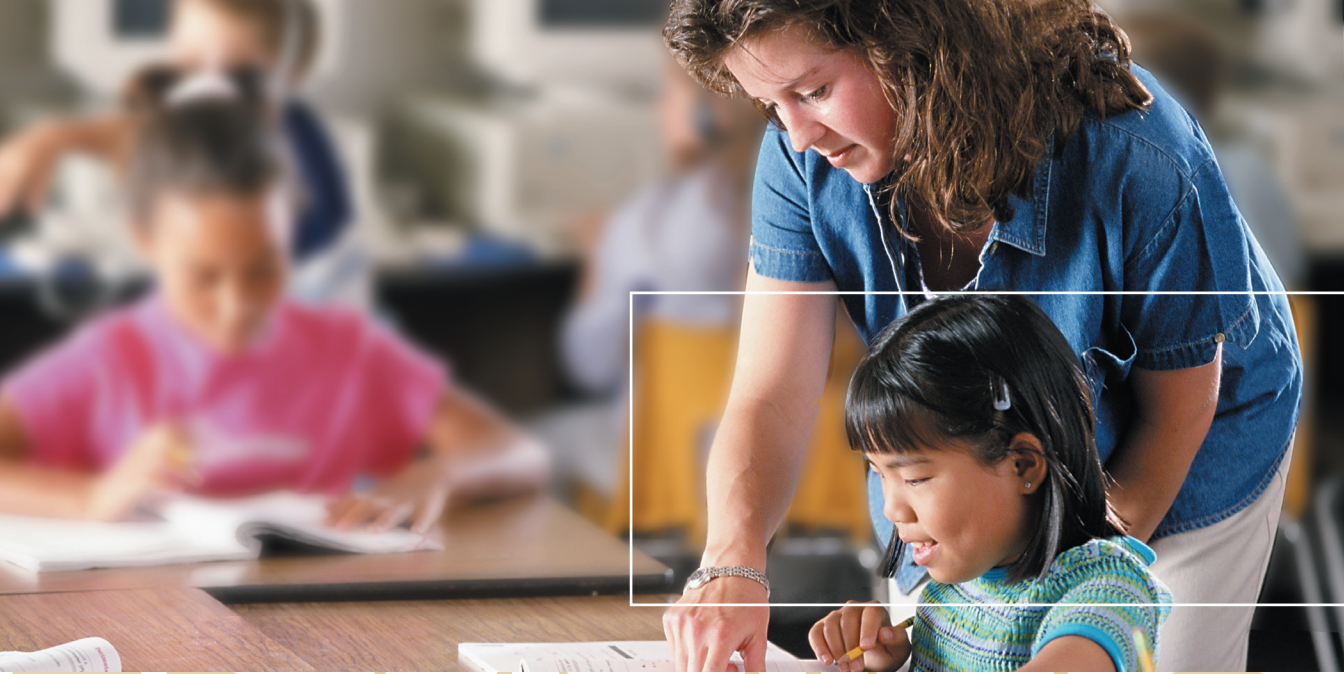
access to accurate information as they encounter the many “therapies” available for treatment. A number of professional organizations have concluded that there is 40 years worth of well-designed, peer-reviewed research studies demonstrating the effectiveness of a science-based approach to learning, known as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), for individuals with autism.

Studies of ABA and autism have shown major gains in social, communication, self-care, leisure, and academic skills, and a reduction in non-functional behaviors. A number of research studies have shown that as much as **50% of children enrolled in a well-designed and intensive ABA program may learn to such an extent that they no longer meet the formal diagnosis of autism.** ABA is tailored to the specific needs of the individual and is delivered in a consistent, comprehensive, and coordinated manner. Trained practitioners of ABA, many of whom are nationally credentialed as Board Certified

Behavior Analysts™ (BCBA), carefully define, observe, and record information about what children can and cannot do to determine appropriate instructional goals. Tasks to be learned are broken down into smaller, more easily learned components. Frequent feedback is given to provide each child with information about his or her progress. **Observations of each child's progress are used to track the effectiveness of the teaching techniques used and the progress made.** Practitioners of ABA use a wide variety of evidenced-based instructional strategies including small group instruction, peer-mediated social skills training, naturalistic teaching, video modeling, activity schedules, discrimination training, motivational systems, script/script fading procedures, self-management strategies, and discrete trial instruction, among others, to achieve goals for learning.

"Our little one has stopped interacting with us."





TRAINING

IN APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

Behavior analysts who work with individuals diagnosed with autism are employed in home, community, and public and private special education school settings, as independent educational specialists or clinicians, as staff trainers, or as directors of programs. Most behavior analysts initially earn a bachelor's degree in either psychology or special education. This is followed by extensive graduate education involving **principles of learning and a demonstrated competence in designing, implementing, and evaluating treatment and educational interventions.** At the present time, there are long waiting lists for ABA services and a shortage of qualified personnel in NJ. As such, there are many employment opportunities for behavior analysts in NJ and in adjoining states. New Jersey is home to some of the most renowned programs employing ABA for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. These include the *Princeton Child Development Institute, Garden Academy, the Alpine Learning Group, REED Academy, the Institute for Educational Achievement, Bancroft NeuroHealth, and the Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center*, among others.



Visit
caldwell.edu
to find out more.



National certification in applied behavior analysis was implemented in 2000 to standardize the minimal qualifications of persons practicing as behavior analysts. To fulfill the requirements to sit for the *Board Certified Behavior Analyst™* (BCBA) exam, an individual must take specific coursework, have earned at least a Master's degree, complete a comprehensive practicum experience, and pass a rigorous professional exam.

Caldwell College offers three different graduate programs that focus on the advanced methods, principles, and procedures of basic and applied behavior analysis practice and research, and its application in complex environments (i.e., home, school, work, other community settings, and institutional settings). The core of each program consists of coursework that has been approved by the *Behavior Analyst Certification Board* as meeting the academic requirements to sit for the *Board Certified Behavior Analyst™* (BCBA) exam. **The Caldwell College graduate programs in ABA were designed to prepare students for high-level employment within the fields where there are growing**

demands for competent professionals with expertise in applied behavior analysis: namely, developmental disabilities services, special education, and mental health. The Post-Masters Certificate program is intended for those who already hold a Masters degree and wish to take coursework in ABA required to sit for certification as a *Board Certified Behavior Analyst™* (BCBA). The Master of Arts in ABA is intended for those individuals with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, General or Special Education, Speech Pathology, or a related field, who wish to pursue more advanced training in ABA. Caldwell College was the first to offer such a degree program in the state of New Jersey. Our newest program, the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in ABA, is set to launch in Fall 2009 (pending state approval). This program will provide higher level training in designing, implementing, and carrying out ABA programs. *Information regarding Caldwell College's graduate ABA programs can be found at www.caldwell.edu/graduate or through email inquiry to the Applied Behavior Analysis Graduate Programs Coordinator, Dr. Sharon A. Reeve, BCBA, at sreeve@caldwell.edu.*



HOW YOU CAN HELP

The dramatic rise in the number of children with autism has created an urgent regional and national need for qualified professionals in this area. As the first College in New Jersey with a **Master's Program in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)**, Caldwell College is well positioned to respond to these urgent needs. Its proposed Ph.D. program will complete the continuum of educational preparation and training for professionals at the highest levels.

Caldwell College's **proposed on-campus Autism Clinic** will allow the College to reach out to caregivers who must often learn new skills of advocacy as they interact with school districts, insurance companies and government agencies. **The clinic will give parents and family members skills and expertise to teach their child with autism and will serve as a demonstration classroom for Caldwell College students and other teachers from public and private school across New Jersey** to learn new techniques and practices of ABA to take back to their own classrooms.

By making a tax deductible gift to Caldwell College's ABA program, you can make a direct impact that will positively affect many people. The start-up costs of the Ph.D. program and clinic run close to \$2 million and while the College is seeking government funding and private funding from corporations and foundations, more is needed. Every gift, regardless of its size, is appreciated and will be used directly to offset costs of this program and help the thousands of families and children in need. Gifts can be made by check, credit card or transfer of stock. *Please call the Institutional Advancement Office at Caldwell College for more information at 973-618-3204.*

TO CALDWELL COLLEGE



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Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General

www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/chapter3/sec6.html#autism

Two federal agencies, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), collaborated on this report to describe best practices for numerous mental health concerns. The report states that well designed research has demonstrated the efficacy of ABA in teaching functional skills and reducing non-functional behavior in individuals with autism.

Exploring Autism

www.exploringautism.org

This website, sponsored by the National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR), describes research pertaining to the role of genetics in autism.

Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)

www.firstsigns.org

This simple autism screening tool for children between 16-30 months of age is typically completed by parents in the waiting room of the pediatrician's office. It is available for free download for clinical, research, and educational purposes.

First Signs

www.firstsigns.org

This webpage provides resources pertaining to the early identification of and intervention for children with autism and other related disorders. It includes a downloadable version of the M-CHAT.

First Words Project

www.firstwords.fsu.edu

This is a model early identification program that provides educational materials and technical support to increase the capacity of families and service providers to enhance early communication in young children.

**Find out more about Caldwell
College's ABA Programs and
fundraising opportunities by
visiting www.caldwell.edu**

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RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

Autism New Jersey (formerly The New Jersey Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community [COSAC])

www.njcosac.org

Autism New Jersey, a nonprofit agency providing information and advocacy, services, family and professional education, and consultation, is dedicated to ensuring that all people with autism receive appropriate, effective services to maximize their growth potential and to enhancing the general public's overall awareness of autism.

The Association for Science in Autism Treatment

www.asatonline.org

ASAT is a not-for-profit organization of parents and professionals committed to improving the education and care of people with autism. ASAT believes that every person with autism has the right to appropriate education and care, and promotes evidence-based interventions based on sound scientific research as the best means of achieving that goal.

American Academy of Pediatrics Reports

www.aap.org/pressroom/issuekitfiles/IDandEvaluationofChildrenwithASD.pdf

www.aap.org/pressroom/issuekitfiles/ManagementofChildrenwithASD.pdf

These reports provide information pertaining to the identification and diagnosis of autism, and to evidence-based interventions, such as applied behavior analysis.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV, TR)

www.psychiatryonline.com

Published by the American Psychiatric Association, this manual is used by clinicians and psychiatrists to diagnose psychiatric illnesses. Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified are described under the umbrella diagnostic category Pervasive Developmental Disorders.

The Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC) Autism Task Force Report

www.madsec.org/docs/ATFReport.pdf

This report was developed by a multi-disciplinary group of autism treatment experts. It outlines the evidence for different autism treatments and recommends ABA as the treatment of choice.

New York State Department of Health's Early Intervention Program Clinical Practice Guideline for Autism / Pervasive Developmental Disorders

www.health.state.ny.us/community/infants_children/early_intervention/autism/index.htm

This clinical practice guideline for autism was developed by an independent panel of professionals and parents. It outlines the evidence for different autism treatments and recommends ABA as the treatment of choice.