

DIFFERENT ROADS  
TO LEARNING

Autism  
Spectrum  
Disorders

Lester B. Pearson  
School Board



Commission Scolaire  
Lester-B.-Pearson

Autism Spectrum Disorder Newsletter  
Volume 3, Number 2  
January 10, 2003

Lester B. Pearson School Board

## Mark is in High School Now!

### A case study.

"Mark" arrived at his high school with very limited information on his abilities. His mother did indicate he had been diagnosed with autism and prior to arriving at the school had been in a special class in another school board. The challenge for his new high school was to put together as much information as quickly as possible, identify his needs, and develop an IEP that would complement those findings. Mark appeared to have a wide range of academic skills so that the focus of his IEP was to develop those skills further. Problems developed after a few months when Mark became increasingly resistant and unpredictable with academic demands. Flapping hands and echolalia increased. Classroom behavior became more disruptive and thus disturbing to others. Eventually he hit his aide for what appeared to be no reason. The school was at a loss as to what to do with Mark at this point. By February the staff was wary of Mark and his outbursts. Something had to be done!

The second half of the year saw Mark's case discussed at the Ad Hoc/Resource Team meeting. A plan was developed where a.

Mark's homeroom teacher would begin logging his behavior more regularly, b. the school psychologist would contact the doctor treating Mark to see if any added information would be helpful and c. the principal would contact the special needs consultant at the School Board to help modify Mark's program.

This coordination brought about a dramatic change to not only Mark's erratic behavior but also his day at school. The teacher began to identify pressure points in Mark's day through her daily log. The psychologist discovered that Mark was being treated for severe constipation that is not uncommon in autism. She was also informed that it could make him quite irritable. The special needs consultant developed a plan with the school based on the new information.

Mark had a much more active daily schedule. His academics were condensed into shorter periods so he would have the opportunity to get up and move around the school in order to decrease his physical distress. An extra gym class was built into his schedule. Mark was encouraged to carry a water bottle and to drink from it regularly. The aide working with Mark collaborated with

his teachers in order to provide a challenging daily schedule.

By June the school was able to see the progress Mark had made.

Moreover, they also learned that students with autism can require unique learning situations. A high school can deliver that type of program. Finally, they appreciated the power of teamwork. Using available resources, they found a program for Mark that would enable him to continue to be viable part of their school community.

### Table of Contents

A Case Study  
Quote  
Occupational therapy  
Corner  
Extinction  
ASD Website  
Speech and Language Tip  
of the Month  
Library  
C of E Team

### QUOTE

Parents, teachers, or others who involve themselves with people with autism need to realize that you cannot turn a non-social animal into a social one. Your focus should be teaching people with autism to adapt to the social world around them, while still retaining the essence of who they are, including their autism.

Temple Grandin

## Occupational therapy Corner

Sensory Integration is a neurological process whereby sensory information, (touch, muscular activity, movement, visual and auditory input, smell, taste) is registered, processed and organized by the brain, so that it becomes "meaningful" to us and allows us to respond automatically, efficiently and comfortably to particular situations and environmental demands. Individuals with an ASD may present a variety of sensory processing dysfunctions. Some are under or over responsive to particular input (touch, sound, movement). A mixed picture of over and under responsiveness can also be present. Alternately, difficulty to filter irrelevant/meaningless sensations to maintain optimal alertness is often observed with students with an ASD. A qualified Occupational Therapist can help you identify sensory issues, as well as prevention and intervention strategies appropriate for your specific student.

### Extinction

**Q. What is extinction?**

**A. The term refers to eliminating or decreasing a behavior by removing reinforcement from it.**

**Next time:** What is functional analysis of behavior?

### Coming Soon...

Kevin Baskerville from the Geneva Centre for Autism will be coming to Lester B. Pearson to speak on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Kevin will be presenting *Helping Individuals with Autism/PDD Develop Social Skills*. Stay tuned for more details on how to attend.

On January 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003, four members from the Autism Team and four school psychologists will be attending PEP-R (Psycho Educational Profile) training. This training will allow us to assess student skills and make recommendations based on our results.

### ASD Website

Visit our Website at [www.lbpsb.qc.ca](http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca) and scroll down to visit old web page. Then scroll down to Autism Spectrum Disorders Network. Click on the Contact page to see the Centre of Excellence team of professionals who are available for consultation via phone, e-mail or school visits. Click on Links for access to numerous English- and French language sites.

### Library

We have been accumulating many new books. The following are new ones that are available to you by contacting one of the ASD Team members.

- 1) *A Guide Related to Support Workers, and Your Individual With Exceptionalities.*
  - 2) *Autism-PDD: Introducing Strategies for Parents and Professionals.*
  - 3) *My Brother Sammy.*
  - 4) *Asperger's... What Does It Mean To Me?*
  - 5) *I Openers. Parents Ask Questions About Sexuality and Children with Developmental Disabilities.*
  - 6) *Understanding the Nature of Autism.*
  - 7) *A Picture's Worth: PECS and Other Visual Strategies.*
- We have also accumulated a substantial number of articles and games on specialized topics, such as, sex education, social skills and language development.

### Speech and Language tip of the month.

Observe the types of verbal prompts you give your student throughout the day. (e.g. take off your shoes, get your boots, take out your book, hang up your back pack) Are your students waiting for those prompts before they will perform a task? You may have created a "turn taking" script. That is, your student may believe that your verbal directions are part of the task. Instead of giving verbal directions try:

- **Waiting** for the student to perform the necessary task. (Yes, it may take awhile) Look at the student expectantly throughout the wait.
- Refrain from asking "what do you do next?" Again, this may become part of the script.
- Use visual pictures (you can download some free from [www.usevisualstrategies.com](http://www.usevisualstrategies.com)) that can replace your verbal prompts.
- Use gestures. These are easier to fade than verbal prompts.

### Centre of Excellence Team

Holly Barlow,  
Consultant, Autism  
514-422-3000, Ext. 4446  
Phil Clavel,  
Consultant, Special Needs  
514-422-3000, Ext. 4436  
Joelle Hadaya,  
Occupational Therapist  
514-422-3000, Ext. 4439  
Jade Lawsane  
Consultant, Autism  
514-422-3000 Ext.4407  
Helene Packman,  
Speech - Language Pathologist  
514-422-3000, Ext. 4404  
Karen Zey,  
Consultant, Special Needs  
514-422-3000, Ext. 4437