**14th Annual Local Conference**

**Keynote: The Use of Technology and Visual Supports to Improve Communication and Learning in Individuals with Autism**

Presenter: Howard Shane, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

**Description:**

This session will detail ways to use technology and visual supports to clarify the understanding of spoken language and daily events as well as provide enhanced communication opportunities especially when speech is limited or non-existent. The principal framework for the seminar will be the Visual Immersion System™ an approach developed in the Autism Language Program at Boston Children’s Hospital. Although the use of computer software and mobile device apps will be highlighted, the use of low-tech strategies will not be ignored. Video and visual examples from case studies will be used to demonstrate program implementation and individual outcomes.

**Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to name two display types used in augmentative and alternative communication applications.
2. Participants will be able to identify two prerequisites needed in order to use a scene cue.
3. Participants will be able to list two differences between a static and a dynamic scene cue.

**Target Audience:**

Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists, School Administrators and Speech Language Pathologists

**Biography:**

Dr. Howard Shane is the Director of the Center for Communication Enhancement and the Autism Language Program at Boston Children’s Hospital. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of Otology and Otolaryngology at Harvard Medical School, Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Massachusetts General Hospital Institute for Health Professions, and oversees collaboration between Boston Children’s Hospital and the Monarch School for Children with Autism in Shaker Heights, Ohio.

With over 30 years of clinical and research experience, Dr. Shane is a Fellow of the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) and is a recipient of their Honors of the Association award. In addition, Dr. Shane has received the Goldenson Award for Innovations in
Technology from the United Cerebral Palsy Association. Dr. Shane is world-renowned for his technology developments and has produced over 12 computer applications and holds two US patents.

He is the author of numerous research papers and books on severe speech impairment including Visual Language in Autism and has lecturing throughout the world on the topic. His most recent book, “Enhancing Communication for Individuals with Autism: A Guide to the Visual Immersion System™,” a systematic approach that use technology and visual supports to enhance learning and communication.

**Afternoon Breakout Sessions:**

1-A **New Directions in Understanding and Treating Social Competence in ASD**

**Presenter:** Matthew Lerner, Ph.D.

**Description**

Dr. Lerner will provide a brief history and overview of interventions designed to address social challenges among school-age and teenage youth with ASD. He will introduce and discuss the differences in various models, using these as a way to ask questions about what types of treatments might work better for individuals. Finally, he will summarize research emerging from the Social Competence and Treatment Lab, which aims to advance evidence-based understanding and treatment of social challenges in ASD.

**Objectives:**

1. Develop a basic understanding of the assumptions underlying social competence and interventions for youth with ASD.
2. Discover the distinction between social knowledge and social performance problems and the implications of each for intervention.
3. Learn about emerging research to optimize social competence interventions.

**Target Audience:**

Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, School Administrators, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists

**Biography:**

Matthew D. Lerner, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Psychology, Psychiatry and Pediatrics in the Department of Psychology at Stony Brook University, where he directs the Social Competence and Treatment Lab. He received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the
University of Virginia. He completed his Internship in Child Clinical Psychology at the University of Chicago Medical Center, as well as Fellowships in Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities at the University of Illinois – Chicago, and in Evolutionary and Ontogenetic Dynamics through the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, Germany. He is the founding Director and current Research Director of the Spotlight Program at the Northeast Arc in Massachusetts, a year-round program for social competence and confidence development, serving more than 200 youth annually. He has provided clinical services for children, adolescents, and adults in hospital, clinical, educational, and community settings; he currently supervises clinical psychology Doctoral students seeing child and adolescent cases in the Krasner Psychological Center. He has presented at more than 80 national and international conferences on topics related to social development and developmental disorders.

Dr. Lerner’s research focuses on understanding emergence and “real world” implications of social problems in children and adolescents (especially those with Autism Spectrum Disorders [ASD], as well as development, evaluation, and dissemination of novel, evidence-based approaches for ameliorating those problems. He has published more than 35 peer-reviewed articles and book chapter, and serves on the Editorial Boards of the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* and *Behavior Therapy*, and as Co-Chair of the Autism Spectrum & Developmental Disabilities Special Interest Group at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies. Dr. Lerner has received grants and awards from organizations including the Medical Foundation, the American Psychological Association, and the Association for Academy of Arts & Sciences. Most recently, he received the Young Investigator Award from the International Society for Autism Research, and was a Finalist for the Director’s Early Independence Award at the National Institutes of Health.

1-B Enhancing Student Motivation and Engagement Using CPRT: Part One

Presenter: Janice Chan, M.A., BCBA

Description:

*Classroom Pivotal Response Teaching (CPRT) was developed to adapt the research-supported components of Pivotal Response Training (PRT) to better fit the demands of teaching within a classroom environment. When used in its entirety, CPRT is designed to teach communication, play, social and academic skills and promote generalization and maintenance of skills by keeping student motivation high. Moreover, teachers report that after being trained in CPRT, teaching became more enjoyable and less stressful, and students had fun learning! This session, part 1 of 2, will focus on the antecedent strategies of CPRT, by providing clear definitions and video examples of each component.**

Objectives:
1. Participants will understand the behavioral foundation for and antecedent components of CPRT.
2. Participants will learn strategies for incorporating CPRT into classroom routines and activities.

Target Audience:

Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists

Biography:

Janice Chan, M.A., BCBA has 10 years’ experience working with children with autism and developmental disabilities. She has worked directly with children with autism aged 3-12 in a variety of settings, including public schools, in the home and overseas residential autism programs. Having obtained a moderate/severe teaching credential, Masters in special education with a specialization in autism and certification as a BCBA, she now trains and supervises teachers in San Diego, Albania and China. Janice’s interests lie in dissemination of naturalistic, evidence-based practices working directly with children with autism.

1-C Transition Planning for Adulthood: Targeting Essential Skills for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Presenter: Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D.

Description:

Under IDEA, transition services are expected to result in “the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment); continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.” Unfortunately, this is often not the case, leaving a generation of individuals with autism and their families in a programmatic, financial, and personal limbo. This presentation will provide an overview of effective transition programming – at any age – with the ultimate goal being a life of competence, and quality. Particular attention will be paid to the development of an effective and appropriate transition plan. Issues related to assessment, the provision of community-based instruction, and employment development will be discussed. In addition, the potential implications of the ADA and reasonable accommodation will be discussed.

Objectives:

1. The unnecessary limitations and restrictions that we, as parents and professionals, often place on individuals on the autism spectrum.
2. The importance of comprehensive transition planning at any age.
3. What, if anything, might be considered a “curb out” for adults with ASD in employment and in the community.

Target Audience:
Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, School Administrators, School Psychologists, BCBA

Biography:

Peter F. Gerhardt, Ed.D. is currently serving as Executive Director of The EPIC School in Paramus, NJ. Dr. Gerhardt has more than 30 years’ experience utilizing the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis in support of adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders in educational, employment, residential and community-based settings. He has authored and coauthored articles and book chapters on the needs of adolescents and adults with ASD and has presented nationally and internationally on this topic. Dr. Gerhardt serves as Chairman of the Scientific Council for the Organization for Autism Research, is on the Editorial Board of Behavior Analysis in Practice and on numerous professional advisory boards. He received his doctorate from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey’s Graduate School of Education.

1-D Promoting Positive Adaptation to School: The Importance of Student-Teacher Relationships in the Social, Behavioral, and Academic Experiences of Children with ASD.

Presenter: Abby Eisenhower, Ph.D.

Description:

The quality of relationships with teachers is a vital aspect of school adjustment during the early school years, and one that has implications for children’s long-term social, behavioral, and academic experiences in school. This session will examine research on the role of student-teacher relationships for children with ASD, with the aim of highlighting ways in which teachers and other professionals can enhance early school relationships.

Objectives:

1. Describe the nature and quality of student-teacher relationships as experienced by elementary-aged children with ASD.
2. Identify aspects of school functioning – including challenging behaviors, social acceptance, and literacy skills – that may be particularly influenced by student-teacher relationship quality.
3. Identify other challenges and areas of strength facing children with ASD during the early school years.
4. Identify strategies that may be utilized by teachers, parents, policy-makers, and other stakeholders to improve relational and academic outcomes for children with ASD.

Target Audience:

Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, School Administrators, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists

Biography:

Dr. Abbey Eisenhower is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research interests include: the transition to school for young children with developmental, behavioral, or socioeconomic risk factors; relationships between parents and school personnel that facilitate positive school outcomes; the development of interventions to improve school relationships and reduce behavior problems; and parent and family well-being in the context of raising a child with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Dr. Eisenhower has two primary current research studies. The Smooth Sailing Study is a longitudinal study of the development of student-teacher relationships, literacy skills, and socio-emotional functioning among children with ASD during the early school years. The ABCD Early Screening Project is a community-based study aimed at improving rates and ages of early detection of ASD, among young children ages 1-3, with the goal of reducing linguistic, race-related, and income-related disparities in access to diagnosis and treatment.

2-A Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Inclusive Settings

Presenter: Kathleen Feeley, Ph.D., BCBA

Description:

This session will begin with an overview of rationales for inclusive educational programming for students with autism spectrum disorders. This will be followed by a series of strategies that address both the social and academic inclusion of students. Several examples of accommodations will be provided and organized in a template that can be used for planning an individual student’s accommodations. The session will wrap up with several resources that can be used by participants to enhance their support of students in inclusive settings.

Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to describe rationales for inclusive practices.
2. Participants will be able to describe procedures for strategies that enhance the social inclusion of learners with autism spectrum disorders.
3. Participants will be able to describe procedures for strategies that enhance the academic performance of learners with autism spectrum disorders in inclusive placements.

4. Participants will be able to organize an individual student’s accommodations according to preparatory, in-class, and review strategies.

5. Participants will be able to identify resources that facilitate inclusive educational programs for learners with autism spectrum disorders.

Target Audience:

Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, and Paraprofessionals

Biography:

Dr. Kathleen Feeley is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, an Associate Professor at Long Island University Post Campus, the founding director of the Center for Community Inclusion, and the Executive Director of the New York State Department of Education funded Long Island Parent Center. Her research focuses on developing effective interventions to address the communicative needs of young children with developmental disabilities including autism and Down syndrome. In addition, she is a proponent of inclusive education and provides ongoing technical assistance to several school districts across New York State as they provide inclusive services for young children with intellectual disabilities.

2-B Enhancing Student Motivation and Engagement Using CPRT: Part Two

Presenter: Janice Chan, MA, BCBA

Description:

Classroom Pivotal Response Training (CPRT), was developed to adapt the research-supported components of Pivotal Response Training (PRT) to better fit the demands of teaching within a classroom environment. When used in its entirety, CPRT is designed to teach communication, play, social and academic skills and promote generalization and maintenance of skills by keeping student motivation high. Moreover, teachers report that after being trained in CPRT, teaching became more enjoyable and less stressful, and students had fun learning! This session, part 2 of 2, will focus on the consequence strategies of CPRT, by providing clear definitions and video examples of each component.

Objectives:

1. Participants will understand the behavioral foundation for and consequence components of CPRT.

2. Participants will learn strategies for incorporating CPRT into classroom routines and activities
Target Audience:

Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists

Biography:

Janice Chan, M.A., BCBA has 10 years’ experience working with children with autism and developmental disabilities. She has worked directly with children with autism aged 3-12 in a variety of settings, including public schools, in the home and overseas residential autism programs. Having obtained a moderate/severe teaching credential, Masters in special education with a specialization in autism and certification as a BCBA, she now trains and supervises teachers in San Diego, Albania and China. Janice’s interests lie in dissemination of naturalistic, evidence-based practices working directly with children with autism.

2-C Evidence-Based Practice, Adaptive Behavior, and Quality of Life for Adolescents and Adults with ASD.

Presenter: Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D.

Description:

The past decade has seen a dramatic increase in the prevalence in the diagnosis of autism and related disorders (ASD) resulting in steadily growing numbers of adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum. Subsequently, there is an increased demand for appropriate and effective services for adolescents and young adults with ASD. This presentation will provide an overview of the current literature on supporting adolescents and adults, of what constitutes evidence-based practice, and the relevance of applied behavior analysis to improving individual’s quality of life.

Objectives:

1. Identify the difference between evidence-based practice and evidence-based intervention.
2. Discuss the components of quality of life in adolescence and beyond.
3. Discuss the implications of inadequate adaptive behavior intervention relative to community living.

Target Audience:
Parents, Special Education Teachers, School Administrators, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists, BCBA

Biography:

Peter F. Gerhardt, Ed.D. is currently serving as Executive Director of The EPIC School in Paramus, NJ. Dr. Gerhardt has more than 30 years’ experience utilizing the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis in support of adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders in educational, employment, residential and community-based settings. He has authored and coauthored articles and book chapters on the needs of adolescents and adults with ASD and has presented nationally and internationally on this topic. Dr. Gerhardt serves as Chairman of the Scientific Council for the Organization for Autism Research, is on the Editorial Board of Behavior Analysis in Practice and on numerous professional advisory boards. He received his doctorate from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey’s Graduate School of Education.

2-D Practical Skill Building Strategies for Reducing Challenging Behaviors at Home and School

Presenter: David Meichenbaum, Ph.D.

Description:

This presentation goes beyond determining what is causing challenging behaviors to examine how many conventional ways of responding to difficult behavior contribute to the persistence of challenges. Practical evidence-based strategies to decrease maladaptive behaviors, increase adaptive alternative behaviors, and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention plans will be offered. Attendees will consider whether their current means of responding to challenging behavior include the necessary elements to build skills and curtail future problematic behaviors. Case examples will be provided.

Objectives:

1. To identify the limitations of many conventional behavioral approaches in reducing challenging behaviors for children with developmental disabilities.
2. To learn practical evidence-based strategies that can reduce problematic behaviors and build adaptive alternative behaviors.
3. To identify components needed in developing a comprehensive behavior intervention plan, including means for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of behavior plans.

Target Audience:
Biography:

Dr. David Meichenbaum, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist. He serves as both the Clinical Director of the Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic and the Director of Community Consulting and Clinical Services at The Summit Center in Amherst, NY. Dr. Meichenbaum further serves as faculty with the Western New York Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Meichenbaum conducts diagnostic evaluations, provides outpatient psychological services, and offers consultative support and training to school districts across Western New York. His consultation and trainings focus on the facilitation of academic, social, emotional, adaptive, and behavioral development of students with autism spectrum and disruptive behavior disorders. Dr. Meichenbaum graduated with a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo and he completed his clinical internship at Duke University Medical Center.