In This Issue:

Page 2
• School Consultation Project
• Regional Centers
• Book Review

Insert
• Update: CARD's Diagnostic Assessment Service
• The Meaning Behind a Credential
• Local Upcoming Events
• New CARD Staff

Page 3
• How to Prepare for High-Stakes Testing
• CARD Training Opportunities

Page 4
• Statewide Events Calendar

SAVE THE DATE

8TH ANNUAL STATEWIDE AUTISM CONFERENCE
Friday, April 11, 2014
7:30 am - 3:30 pm

The Oncenter Convention Center – Syracuse, NY

Join the University at Albany’s Center for Autism and Related Disabilities along with experts in the field of autism for a statewide conference in Syracuse, NY. A keynote presentation in the morning will be followed by two afternoon breakout sessions. We welcome parents, school personnel, and community professionals.

Keynote Presentation:
Treating Anxiety in Youth with ASD and Youth without ASD
Philip C. Kendall, Ph.D.
Temple University

Additional topics and speakers:
The Prevention and Treatment of Challenging Behavior
Bridget Taylor, Psy.D., BCBA-D

Embedding Social Instruction Throughout the Curriculum: Moving Beyond the Lunch Bunch
John Molteni, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Discovering Evidence Based Practices: What Does Research Tell Us?
John Molteni, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Teaching to Successful Outcomes: Evidence-Based Supports for Students with ASD
Sanja Cale, Ph.D., BCBA

Supporting Individuals with ASD Through the Transition to the ELA Common Core State Standards – Elementary Skills
Melissa D. Malani, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Enhancing Communication and Learning in Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
Jennifer Abramson, MS, CCC-SLP

Online registration will be available in February 2014
www.albany.edu/autism
School Consultation Project

Does your school district have a Positive Behavior Support Program designed to help decrease challenging behaviors and increase pro-social skills in students with an autism spectrum disorder? CARD Albany will be entering into its 9th year providing the School Consultation Project (SCP), an evidence-based training program designed to build the capacity of school teams throughout New York State to better support students with autism spectrum disorders.

The SCP is a series of trainings developed by educational specialists to provide instruction and resources in evidence-based practices designed to meet the needs of students with autism spectrum disorders. The program assists schools in developing building-wide autism resource teams and offers instruction on how to work as a team to support students with these unique challenges. A student-centered format is used to assist students with autism spectrum disorders from individual school districts in order to design meaningful strategies and interventions to build the capacity of the teams that will be supporting all students with autism spectrum disorders.

CARD Albany is currently accepting applications for the 2014-2015 school year. This program is grant-funded and is provided at no cost to school districts. For more information about the SCP, and to apply, please visit our website: www.albany.edu/autism/scp.php or call us at our toll free number 1-800-442-2574.

Regional Centers for Autism Spectrum Disorders

Six regional centers across New York State share a goal of identifying, disseminating, and assisting in the implementation of evidence-based practices to build capacity to improve services and outcomes for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders.

The University at Albany serves as the headquarters for the statewide network, with partners at the University of Rochester; University at Buffalo, SUNY/Summit Educational Resources, Inc.; New York Medical College/Westchester Institute for Human Development; College at Old Westbury, SUNY; and Queens College - CUNY.

For more information on the centers and to locate one in your area, visit the regional center website at www.albany.edu/autism/nysrcasd.php.

Book Review

The Parent’s Guide to College for Students on the Autism Spectrum
Written by: Jane Thierfeld Brown, Lorraine E. Wolf, Lisa King, and G. Ruth Kukiela Bork

Transitions are often very challenging for students on the autism spectrum and their parents or caregivers, and the transition from high school to college can be overwhelming to students and nerve-wracking for parents. Families who find themselves lost as to how best to prepare their son or daughter for this milestone change should consider a recently-published guide written just for parents of students with ASD.

Jane Thierfeld Brown and her colleagues put their vast experience and knowledge of autism, college student personnel, and vocational rehabilitation to use in writing a thorough but easily read book, The Parent’s Guide to College for Students on the Autism Spectrum. This guide covers all the basics parents and their students should consider and understand before embarking on the college search. Topics covered include important areas such as factors to consider in choosing a college; differences between IDEIA and ADA; applying to schools; working with disability services on campus; housing and residential life; social and extracurricular activities; and laws families need to know. The various chapters include forms and charts that help inform and organize parents and students.

This book, used in concert with the authors' earlier guide, Students with Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for College Student Personnel, prepares parents to provide their sons and daughters with the practical supports and resources they will need to choose and be successful in their post-secondary environments.
How to Prepare for High-Stakes Testing

A high-stakes test is any test used to make important decisions about students, educators, schools, or districts, most commonly for the purpose of accountability (The Glossary of Education Reform). Whether it be NYS Grades 3-8 Common Core Tests, Regents Exams or college admission exams such as the SAT, high-stakes tests can be anxiety-producing for all students. For children with autism, these tests can be especially difficult due to learning challenges, difficulty with change, social deficits, and an inability to express and manage anxiety and frustration. While for most students these assessments are unavoidable, there are things that can be done to help prepare students to do their best and minimize anxiety.

Parents can talk to their child’s teacher well before the tests. Discuss the content and format of the exam, what accommodations can be used in the exam (not all accommodations on the IEP can be used), and what type of test-taking strategies will be taught to the students in preparation for the tests. Parents can then talk to their child about the tests, discussing the fears and concerns s/he may have and assuring him/her that the only expectation is for him/her to do his/her best. It is helpful to provide students with practice with the format of the tests (multiple choice, written response, listening skills). Reading passages should be short and at the student’s present reading level. The goal of practice is for students to become familiar with the format and practice strategies. This is best done if students do not have to struggle with the reading process also.

Samples of format can be provided by the teacher or can be found at www.engageny.org. For older students, keeping a folder of unit exams, review sheets and vocabulary may be helpful to practice format and help students focus on the most important concepts.

Discuss the location of the test as well as who will proctor the test. Often, taking the test in a room that students are familiar with, as well as having the test administered by someone students have a positive relationship with, will help alleviate anxiety.

Be sure that on test day the student will be as comfortable and prepared as possible. A quality breakfast and a relaxed morning are helpful. Allowing the child to wear his/her most comfortable clothes or bring in a special object may ease some stressors so s/he can focus on the task. This might also be a good time to provide the student with a reinforcement or reward for doing his/her best so s/he has something to look forward to.

Finally, as a parent, keep in mind that the goal of all activities in the school setting, including taking tests, is to help prepare the child for life after s/he leave the supportive setting of the classroom. Students will experience high-stakes activities in their professional and personal lives. Testing in school is an opportunity to teach students strategies to cope with stress and anxiety, to learn that they can get through anxiety-producing tasks, and to be positive and proud that while they may not have done something perfectly, they did their best and that is most important.

CARD Training Opportunities

Distance Education

CARD offers 3 interactive distance learning opportunities for parents and professionals. The topics are:

• Replacing Challenging Behaviors & Improving Quality of Life for Individuals with ASD Through Functional Communication Training
• Promoting Successful Transitions from Secondary School to Post-Secondary School or Employment for Individuals with ASD
• Supporting Students with ASD in the Classroom: A Distance Learning Series for Para-Professionals and Their Supervising Teachers

The sessions are free. For more information, please visit the website at www.albany.edu/autism/nysed_autism_training.php or call us at 1-866-442-2574.

NYSED Required Course

CARD Albany continues to offer the required 3-hour course for all persons applying for a teaching certificate or license as a special education teacher in NYS, “Responding to the Needs of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders”.

For more information, please visit the website at www.albany.edu/autism/33452.php or call us at 1-866-442-2574.
Calendar of Statewide Events

02/13/2014  Professional Development and Parent Seminar: The Radisson, Utica, NY
   Part 1: Helping Students with ASD Overcome Challenging Behavior and Improve Their Quality of Life
   Part 2: Encouraging and Shaping Desired Pro-Social Behavior in Students with ASD

03/06/2014  Professional Development and Parent Seminar: Holiday Inn Wolf Road, Albany, NY

03/12/2014  Professional Development and Parent Seminar: Holiday Inn Westbury, Carle Place, NY

03/13/2014  Professional Development and Parent Seminar: Holiday Inn, Ronkonkoma, NY

03/18/2014  Professional Development and Parent Seminar: Binghamton Double Tree, Binghamton, NY

03/19/2014  Professional Development and Parent Seminar: Great Escape Lodge, Queensbury, NY

For more information or to register online for a seminar, visit the website:
www.albany.edu/autism/pdps.php

04/11/2014  8th Annual Statewide Autism Conference, Syracuse, NY