

# It is Autism: Now what?

## Supporting Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their Families

Krestin J. Radonovich, Ph.D.

*University of Florida*

*Center for Autism and Related Disabilities*

*kradonov@ufl.edu*



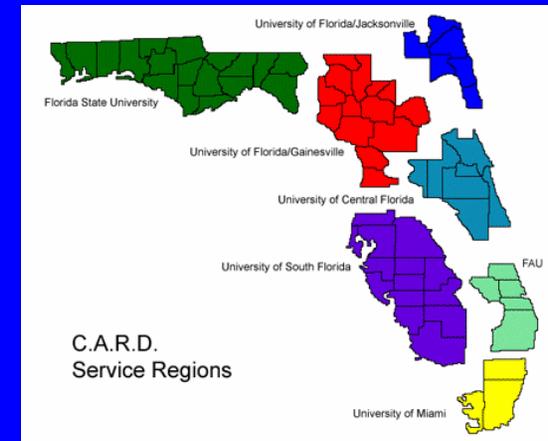
# Outline



- Helping parents find information
  - CARD
  - Autism Speaks 100 Day Kit
- Helping parents evaluate treatment options
  - National Research Council
  - American Academy of Pediatrics
- Select review of Treatment Options
  - [www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2007-2362](http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2007-2362)

# Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)

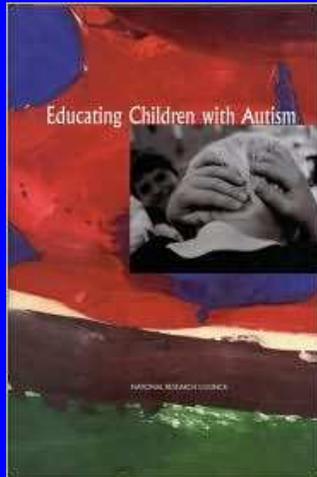
- Outreach and support program for families and professionals
- Funded by the Florida Legislature through the State Department of Education



# Autism Speaks 100 Day Kit

- A week by week plan for newly diagnosed families created by professionals and parents
- [http://www.autismspeaks.org/community/family\\_services/100\\_day\\_kit.php](http://www.autismspeaks.org/community/family_services/100_day_kit.php)





## National Research Council (2001) Educating Children with Autism

• *Six kinds of instruction should take priority for individuals with ASD:*

- (a) functional, spontaneous communication;
- (b) social instruction in various settings throughout the day;
- (c) play skills with a focus on play with peers & peer interaction;
- (d) new skill acquisition & generalization and maintenance in natural contexts;
- (e) functional assessment & positive behavior support to address problem behaviors; &
- (f) functional academic skills when appropriate

American Academy of Pediatrics (2008)  
Autism - Caring for Children with Autism Spectrum  
Disorders: A Resource Toolkit for Clinicians

- Clinical Report: Management of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders
  - Review research supporting Educational Interventions (Behavior Analytic, Developmental, Structured Teaching)
  - Medical Management
  - Family Support

# Social Communication, Emotional Regulation & Transactional Support (SCERTS)

- Developed by Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, & Laurent, 2006
- Comprehensive, educational approach
- Multidisciplinary framework
- Implemented in social context of every day activities and experiences

# Social Communication, Emotional Regulation & Transactional Support (SCERTS)

- Focused on three developmental dimensions
  - 1) developing spontaneous, functional communication and secure, trusting relationships with children and adults (Social Communication),
  - 2) enhancing the ability to maintain a well-regulated emotional state for learning and interacting (Emotional Regulation), and
  - 3) supporting children, their families, and professionals to maximize positive social experiences across home, school and community settings (Transactional Support)

# Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

- Research began in the 1960s with studies by Ferster, Lovaas, Wolf and Risley
- Behavior is assessed through observations that focus on *exactly*
  - what the person does,
  - when the person does it,
  - at what rate,
  - what happens before (antecedents) and
  - what happens after behavior (consequences)
- Different forms of ABA include Discrete Trial Training (Lovaas), Pivotal Response Treatment (Koegel & Koegel), and Verbal Behavior (Skinner)

# Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

- Skills are then broken down into three small steps (ABCs) and taught explicitly
  - A:** give a clear instruction, provide assistance in following the instruction (for example "prompt" by demonstration or physical guidance), and use materials that are at the person's level
  - B:** get a correct response
  - C:** give a positive reinforcer (a consequence that will lead the person to do the behavior again in the future)

# Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped Children (TEACCH)

- Established in the early 1970s by Schopler, Mesibov, and colleagues at the University of North Carolina
- TEACCH uses the intervention approach called “Structured Teaching” :
  - Understanding the culture of autism
  - Developing an individualized person and family-centered plan for each client or student, rather than using a standard curriculum
  - Structuring the physical environment
  - Using visual supports to make the sequence of daily activities predictable and understandable
  - Using visual supports to make individual tasks understandable

## Developmental, Individual-Difference, Relationship Model (DIR) /Floortime

- Developed by Stanley Greenspan in the 1980s
  - Every back and forth interaction between parent and child helps to build skills
  - Involves meeting a child's developmental level
  - Capitalizes on the child's motivation by following his/her lead in play-based activities
  - Using warm but persistent attempts to engage child's attention
  - Tuning in to his/her interests and desires in interactions.

# Relationship Development Intervention (RDI)

- Intensive parent education program developed by Gutstein (2002)
- Goal is to develop a high quality of life in all activities and relationships
- Certified consultant works with families
  - to give parents the tools to effectively motivate their child and teach Dynamic Intelligence skills (e.g., flexible thinking, processing visual and auditory information simultaneously, taking different perspectives), and
  - to focus first on building the motivations so that skills will be used & generalized; followed by carefully and systematically building the skills for competence and fulfillment in a complex world.

## More than Words (MTW)

- Intensive parent education program developed at the Hanen Centre by Sussman, 2007
- Parents attend eight 2.5 hour small group lessons and receive 3 individualized home coaching sessions
- Family-focused program using every day contexts for learning to communicate
- Four major goals
  - Improved two-way interaction
  - More advanced and conventional ways of communicating
  - Better skills in communicating for social purposes
  - An improved understanding of language

# Augmentative and Alternative Communication Modalities (AAC)

- e.g., Gestures, Sign Language, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS, Bondy & Frost, 1985), Voice Output Devices
- promote communication and do not interfere with learning to talk

# Summary

- Treatment options for ASD are not limited to, but include: SCERTS, ABA, TEACCH, MTW, DIR, RDI, AAC
- See NRC and AAP for guidelines / research summaries that can help families make treatment choices

