



# FEAT-Houston NEWS

1120 Medical Plaza Dr., Suite 100  
The Woodlands, Texas 77380

May 2008  
Amy McIntee, Editor

Phone: 281-348-7067  
www.feathouston.org

## May 2008 FEAT-Houston Meeting

**Date:** Thursday, May 8, 2008

**Time:** 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

**Topic:** ABA & Public Schools  
Round Table Discussion

IDEA 2004, No Child Left Behind, and Texas' Autism Supplement mandate the use of evidence-based practices in public schools.

Parents, teachers, administrators, and ABA providers are invited to participate in a moderated round table discussion about the use of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in public schools. Please come with your questions, ideas, concerns, "best practice" suggestions, and comments about ABA in public schools.

FEAT-Houston advocates the use of ABA in the education of individuals with autism. The feedback from this meeting might be used to inform decisions about how FEAT-Houston can support and promote the use of ABA in public schools.

**Location:** Tracy Gee Center, 3599 Westcenter Drive, Phone: (713) 266-8193.

**Directions:** Take the Richmond exit off Beltway 8. Turn onto Richmond east of the Beltway. The first street you can turn at will be Westcenter. Turn south onto Westcenter and drive only about a block and the Community Center will be on the left.



### FEAT-Houston 2008 Calendar of Events

- May 1 FEAT - Clear Lake Meeting
- May 3 Maximizing Cooperative Behavior - 123's of ABA - Ellen Catoe, M.S., BCBA & David Whitcher, M.A., BCBA \*\*New Location This date only: Graceview Baptist Church on Tomball Parkway
- May 8 FEAT-Houston Meeting
- June 19 FEAT- Ft Bend (Sugar Land)
- June 21 ABC's of ABA - Dr. Gerald Harris, Ph.D., BCBA
- July 10 FEAT-Houston Meeting
- Aug. 21 FEAT- Ft Bend (Sugar Land)
- Sep. 4 FEAT - Clear Lake Meeting
- Sep. 6 ABC's of ABA - Christie Enzinna, M.A., BCBA
- Sep. 11 FEAT-Houston Meeting
- Oct. 4 Maximizing Cooperative Behavior – 123's of ABA - Beth Husband, M.S., BCBA
- Oct. 16 FEAT- Ft Bend (Sugar Land)
- Nov. 6 FEAT - Clear Lake Meeting
- Nov. 13 FEAT-Houston Meeting
- Nov. 15 ABC's of ABA - Kelly Bivens, M.A., BCBA
- Dec. 4 FEAT- Ft Bend (Sugar Land)





# Upcoming Workshops & Events

## Other FEAT-Houston Meetings

### FEAT Clear Lake Meeting "Teaching Language and Communication in the Natural Environment"

**Speaker:** Monica LaBrie MA, BCBA  
**Date:** May 1, 2008  
**Time:** 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
**Location:** United Way Building  
Located at 1300 Bay Area Blvd (corner of Saturn and Bay Area)

Come and Join us for our second meeting at our new location. Monica LaBrie MA, BCBA will be presenting a "How To" on teaching language and communication in the natural environment. She has over 5 years experience with children with Autism and developmental delays in both the clinical and public school setting and is currently working for Fort Bend I.S.D.

### FEAT Fort Bend Meeting

**Date:** June 19, 2008  
**Time:** 7:00 - 9:00 PM  
**Speaker/Topic:** To Be Announced  
**Location:** Sugar Creek Baptist Church, 13333 SW Freeway, Sugar Land, TX 77478

Watch [www.feathouston.org](http://www.feathouston.org) for details.

**Directions:** From Houston take 59 South past the Sam Houston Tollway to Sugar Creek/Dairy Ashford exit, make a U-turn under the SW Fwy. and get back on feeder heading NE, church will be on the right, before Bill Heard Chevrolet. From Richmond/Rosenberg take 59 N past HWY 6 and exit Sugar Creek/Dairy Ashford stay on feeder, church will be on right, before Bill Heard Chevrolet. The meeting will be held in the Adult Chapel. It is the smaller building on the far Southeast corner of the church campus, parking faces Bill Heard Chevrolet.

## Maximizing Cooperative Behavior A Workshop in the 123's of ABA Series

**Presented by:** Ellen Catoe, M.S., BCBA & David Whitcher, M.A., BCBA, Behavior Treatment and Training Center, Rosenberg, TX  
**Date:** Saturday, May 3, 2008  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Graceview Baptist Church  
25510 Tomball Parkway  
Tomball, TX 77375

**Description:** This workshop is for individuals who have some training in basic ABA skills. Previous attendance at an ABC's of ABA workshop is strongly recommended. It is assumed that attendees will be able to demonstrate the technically correct skills of delivering reinforcers, shaping, prompting, errorless learning, fading, chaining, and differential reinforcement, which are covered in the ABC workshop.

This workshop will teach practical applications of ABA techniques for gaining and maintaining an individual's attention. It is very difficult to teach someone anything if they will not attend to you, they actively avoid you, they aggress toward you, or you have trouble just catching them. It is also hard to teach someone when all the teaching interactions are aversive to the instructor and the student.

This workshop teaches the collection of specific procedures which the Behavior Treatment and Training Center (BTTC) Outreach staff have found to be consistently effective in working with a variety of challenging clients and behaviors. Lecture, video, role-play, and handouts will be used to teach participants the effective use of reinforcement, penny board token systems, activity book programs, and the compliance sequence. Challenges with aggression, maintaining attention, motivation, hyper-activity, and prompt dependence will be addressed. Intervention procedures for initial program start-ups (how to start, selecting initial training objectives, etc.) with children/adults of varying degrees of disabilities will be demonstrated and practiced. The researched procedures of ABA will be presented as they are applicable to the full range of individuals with mental retardation/PDD diagnoses, verbal/non-verbal skills, disruptive and passive behaviors.

A registration form is included in this newsletter. If trying to register late, please contact Carol Sloan at [cysloan@earthlink.net](mailto:cysloan@earthlink.net) to see if there is still space available.

FEAT-Houston Presents:

## **The ABC's of ABA - Essential Skills Workshop**

**Presenter:**

**Gerald Harris, PhD., BCBA  
June 21, 2008, 9am-4pm  
University of Houston-  
Central Campus**

The ABC's of ABA is an introductory workshop for anyone with a desire to learn more about ABA. This workshop isn't just for beginners. It is an excellent review of the basics and an opportunity to see if you really understand the principles involved in training and managing behaviors.

Gerald E. Harris, Ph.D., BCBA, is a Clinical Psychologist, licensed by the State of Texas, and Board Certified Behavior Analyst with extensive experience in the treatment of young children. Dr. Harris teaches at the University of Houston, and is active professionally and politically in the autism community. Dr. Harris is the Executive Director of the Texas Young Autism Project, providing early intervention ABA services through intensive in-home, center-based, and parent-directed programs.

FEAT-Houston offers a few scholarships to public school staff working with children with autism or parents in severe financial need. Please contact Carol Sloan at [cysloan@earthlink.net](mailto:cysloan@earthlink.net) for details.

For Fees and location details, please see the registration form in this newsletter.

**Space is limited, so please register early.  
Discounts available for early registration.**

### **ABA Books Wanted**

If you are ready to part with your ABA related books, consider donating them to FEAT-Houston. FEAT tries to have books at our meetings and workshops to allow parents and teachers an opportunity to peruse them before they invest in buying them. If you are willing to put your old books to good use, contact Carol Sloan, at [cysloan@earthlink.net](mailto:cysloan@earthlink.net), or another board member about donating them.

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## **Spectrum of Hope Workshops**

Presented by Laura Brown Tolliver, BCBA

### **Reinforcement – August 23, 2008**

This workshop on Reinforcement will take an in-depth look at what reinforcers are, how to find reinforcers and when and how to fade reinforcers! Some topics and terminology that will be covered are: Reinforcement (positive and negative), primary and secondary reinforcers, schedules of reinforcement, and stimulus preference assessment. This workshop will be a 4 hour course that includes a presentation, video clips, handouts, role play, and a question and answer session.

### **Challenging Behavior – November 8th**

This workshop will take a look at challenging behaviors, the function of behaviors, how to develop a behavior intervention plan and how to implement the behavior intervention plan! Some topics that will be covered: ABC charts, functions of behavior, functional analysis, functional behavior assessment, reinforcement, punishment, behavior intervention plans and data collection. This workshop will be a 6 hour course that includes a presentation, video clips, handouts, role play, and a question and answer session.

Please visit [www.spectrumofhope.com](http://www.spectrumofhope.com) and click on "News" for descriptions and costs, call 281/894-1423 or email [kkw625@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kkw625@sbcglobal.net).

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### **Save the Date! Puberty Workshop**

Date: Saturday, Sept13th, 9am-4pm

Topic: adolescence, transition, social skills, sexuality and quality of life

Speaker: Peter Gerhardt

Location: Woodlands United Methodist Church

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November 11-12, 2008

Mark your calendar for a conference brought to you by The Learning Lane, featuring Mark Sundberg, Ph.D., BCBA

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# Classifieds

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Including Kids, Inc. Community Outreach Program, located in Humble, presents monthly workshops for parents and educators on various topics related to autism and ABA Therapy. They also host monthly Sibling Club events for kids (ages 6-14) who have a brother or sister with developmental delays. Workshops and SibClub events are open to the public for a nominal fee. Please contact Elizabeth Gregory for more information at [inkidsoutreach@earthlink.net](mailto:inkidsoutreach@earthlink.net).

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Central Texas Autism Center, Austin, TX  
**Summer Institute for Teachers**  
June 23-27, 2008, and July 21-25, 2008

Two separate week long courses of intensive training for teachers of students with Autism and other developmental disabilities are being offered that will include a half day of lecture/presentations and a half day of hands on working with children and their therapists. The workshop is geared towards teachers of Early Childhood, Elementary and Middle School. Each session will have a maximum of 10 participants who will receive an ABLLS-R, manual and data sheets. Email [ctac@ctac1.com](mailto:ctac@ctac1.com) for information.

The following objectives will be covered:

- Functional Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans
- Choosing a Response Form for Non-Vocal Children
- Using a Criterion referenced assessment and curriculum guide, the ABLLS-R, to assess and write IEP objectives
- Using Skinner's Analysis of Verbal Behavior for language intervention
- Using teaching procedures from the science of ABA to establish instructional control and increase acquisition rate and fluency of skills
- How to teach language skills to the Early, Intermediate and Advanced Learner
- How to use Direct Instruction Curriculums to teach reading and advanced language concepts
- How to develop Program books, schedules, data collection systems and organization of materials in your classrooms
- Hands on practice taking data, assessing and implementing procedures with children with Autism

Please note that FEAT-Houston does not in any way screen families, therapists, or organizations that place ads. **Inclusion in the "Classifieds" in no way implies an endorsement or certification by FEAT-Houston.** If you would like to have your ad considered for placement in our Classifieds email the text to Carol Sloan at [cysloan@earthlink.net](mailto:cysloan@earthlink.net). There is no charge for this service but there are some restrictions.

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**FORT BEND PLAYGROUP for Children with AUTISM** for Toddlers Age 1 – 5yrs & Students in Grades K-5th.

The purpose of this playgroup is to create social opportunities for children with Autism & their families while building a support network in Fort Bend County. Participants include residents & non-residents of Fort Bend County who have a family member age 1yr to 12 yrs with a diagnosis somewhere on the Autism Spectrum. No age restriction on the sibling participation. The PlayGroup will meet the 2nd Saturday of every Month in Fort Bend County –exact location will vary. Most outings will be free yet some will require minimal cost per person depending on event.

**PLAY GROUP Play Dates:**

**SATURDAY, May 10, 2008** from 10:00am-12:00noon at Sugar Land City Park located at 225 Seventh Str -Sugar Land

**SATURDAY, June 14, 2008** from 10:00am-12:00noon at Kitty Hollow Park located at 9995 Hwy 6 South -Missouri City

**RSVP Required:** Contact Susan Garczynski at [susanbgar@earthlink.net](mailto:susanbgar@earthlink.net) cell 281-726-2665

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**ABA Therapist in Katy area.** I currently am a speech language pathologist licensed assistant working with children who have Autism in an area school district. I am available for work on Friday evenings and weekends. Call at (832) 798-8019

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## Classifieds, cont'd...

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**Tutors needed** - I am seeking two people to work as "tutors" with each my boys. One is age 13 1/2 (Asperger's and ADHD) and the other is almost 10 (PDD-NOS). Job responsibilities will include assisting with homework, working on targeted academic areas, and working on social skills for 5 - 5 1/2 hours a week. Some sessions may be facilitated play dates with a typically developing peer at a location other than my home, such as a park or community pool. Hours may be after school, early evening and/or some weekends. This is a short-term, four month long opportunity, with the possibility of sporadic hours on an on-going basis. Experience using ABA techniques helpful, but, not required. Training will be provided for the right people. Candidates must be at least 18 years old, have reliable transportation and preferably live in the Kingwood/Atascocita/Humble area. If interested, please contact Amy by email at: [amy@redmarketrealty.com](mailto:amy@redmarketrealty.com) or call 281-312-4467.

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**Looking for individual in The Woodlands to work with 2 boys** ages 8 and 10 from 3:15 - 5:15 M-F. Assist 10 year old with homework and work on academic goals with 8 year old. Behavioral therapy experience is helpful, but not required. Will provide training and assistance as needed. Located near Ride Elem. Competitive salary. Please e-mail for more information: [angiefryar@gmail.com](mailto:angiefryar@gmail.com)

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**ABA therapist needed** to work with nine year old son in our home program in The Woodlands. Experience is helpful but not necessary. Students and those interested in the field, please inquire. Professional training and oversight will be provided by BCBA. After school and weekend hours available. Additional hours in summer. To discuss in more detail, please call Cynthia at 281.465.0737 or email at [tahoe0680@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tahoe0680@sbcglobal.net)

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Behavior Treatment and Training Center (BTTC) Day Treatment program has immediate **openings for ABA therapists**. Pay \$21,000 - \$28,000 annual depending on experience and education. Excellent benefits with a well-established, large organization, Texana Center. Contact [peter.fonseca@texanacenter.com](mailto:peter.fonseca@texanacenter.com) , 281-239-1420. [www.bttcdaytreatment.com](http://www.bttcdaytreatment.com)

Behavior Treatment and Training Center (BTTC) Day Treatment program has immediate **opening for BCABA**. \$40,000 annual salary with excellent benefits through Texana Center, a well-established, large organization. Contact [Christie.Enzinna@texanacenter.com](mailto:Christie.Enzinna@texanacenter.com) , 281-239-1424. [www.bttcdaytreatment.com](http://www.bttcdaytreatment.com)

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**ABA therapist with more than 10 years experience**. Available in The Woodlands in the early afternoons on Monday through Thursday. Will gladly supply contact numbers for references. Call Kathy at (936)443-1092.

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**THERAPIST FOR ADULT WITH AUTISM** - ABA/Lifeskills/Social Skills training for adult in River Oaks. Recently added biological treatments through D.A.N. doctor. Hours are Tuesday and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to noon - and possible respite hours nights/weekends. Training provided. Pleasant working conditions. Entire third floor devoted to training room/quarters for client. All the Little Things Count is HCS provider. Pay starts \$12.50/hr. Contact Carole Keeney Harrington, 713-851-3069 (cell) or 713-520-7075 (evenings).

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**Looking for someone to provide ABA in home therapy for child and parent**. Child is a high functioning five year old boy diagnosed with PDD-NOS in the Huffman area. Expertise in feeding disorders which seem to be behavioral in nature is particularly helpful. Child has Texas Star Medicaid Insurance which would cover therapy as they have a waiting list. Please contact Michelle at 832-283-9614 or email [RMGarcia10@aol.com](mailto:RMGarcia10@aol.com) .

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## Classifieds, cont'd...

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MHMRA of Harris County is **seeking a BCBA** to provide and supervise the provision of applied behavior analysis services to persons with mental retardation/developmental disabilities who exhibit challenging behavior. Duties include functional behavior assessments, development, implementation and evaluation interventions and consultation to schools, families and programs. Position may require flexible hours and travel to community providers/consumers' homes. Requires experience demonstrating proficiency in utilizing ABA skills and basic techniques. Masters in Behavior Analysis or Psychology and Behavior Analysis Board Certification are musts. Salary to \$60K plus excellent benefits. To apply send CV to [charlotte.simmons@mhmrharris.org](mailto:charlotte.simmons@mhmrharris.org) or visit our website at [www.mhmrharris.org](http://www.mhmrharris.org) and complete the on-line application.

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**Part-time Attendant Needed in Spring for nonverbal Autistic boy.** Must have reliable transportation. Some duties include: shopping, light housework, toileting, etc. Flexible week day evening and week end day schedules. Also occasional respite. Ideal position for PT/SP/OT college student. Please contact Robyn at 281-770-9584 or e-mail her at [tigerpal72@yahoo.com](mailto:tigerpal72@yahoo.com) with subject as **NV** Autism Attendant.

**Part-time attendant Needed in Spring for High-Functioning Autistic boy.** Must have reliable transportation. Some duties include shopping, light housework, grooming, etc. Flexible week day evening and week end day schedules. Also occasional respite. Ideal position for college student. Please contact Robyn at 281-770-9584 or e-mail her at [tigerpal72@yahoo.com](mailto:tigerpal72@yahoo.com) with subject as **HF** Autism Attendant.

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Condit Elementary in Bellaire needs a **teacher** for the self-contained autism class (HISD). There are **also two aide positions** open in this classroom. Aides must have a minimum of an associate's degree. Autism experience is a plus. If you would like to apply for these positions, please e-mail your resume to Condit Elementary Principal Fred Bowyer, [fbowyer@houstonisd.org](mailto:fbowyer@houstonisd.org) or to Special Education Coordinator Fern Bryan, [fbryan@houstonisd.org](mailto:fbryan@houstonisd.org)  
Website: <http://es.houstonisd.org/ConditES>

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**A homeschooling mom needs help with tutoring, caring, and supervision** of my 10-year old, special-need child. You must be energetic, creative, patient, fast learner, in excellent health, non-smoker, have own transportation, at least 21 years old, can legally work in the US, no criminal background, and speaks fluent English. This is a great learning opportunity for college/graduate students in the department of Psychology, Special-Need education, Nursing, Speech therapy, Occupational therapy, or other similar fields. Special-education teachers may apply as well. The location is in NW Houston, Eldridge-Clay area. Previous experience working with children with Autism using Verbal Behavior/ABA is highly desirable, but not required. Training will be provided. 20-30 hours/wk. Excellent pay. Send resume to [ginaam@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ginaam@sbcglobal.net).

I am looking for a **special-education consultant or BCBA** for my 10 year old home-schooled son with Autism. Need help in designing, planning and directing my son's program in the areas of academics, reading, speech/language, and life skills. My approach is based on Verbal Behavior and ABA principles teaching both in a structured and natural environments. You must have extensive and solid experience in working/consulting in programs for older children with Autism, especially non-verbal ones. West/Northwest Houston (Eldridge/Clay) area. Email [ginaam@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ginaam@sbcglobal.net)

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## TARGETING SKILLS FOR SOCIAL SUCCESS --- SUMMER CAMP

Camp is open to students between the ages of 4 and 9 years. The social skills curriculum will be taught in a 3 to 1 group setting with similar aged peers. Our trained teachers will provide structured, cognitive – behavioral lessons, activities, and games.

Camp held Monday and Wednesday mornings from 9:15–11:45am at our Sugar Land, Tomball, and Katy clinics.  
Session One: June 23rd –July 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Session Two: July 28th – August 27th

Tuition: \$1250 for each 5 week camp = 25 hours of social skills.

Early Registration and Open House:  
Wednesday May 7th at 6pm at our Museum District Location. Please email Erin Webb LMFT at [erin@shapeofbehavior.com](mailto:erin@shapeofbehavior.com) to reserve a space for you and your camper that night. For clinic addresses, visit us at [www.shapeofbehavior.com](http://www.shapeofbehavior.com)

## TARGETING SKILLS FOR SOCIAL SUCCESS - IN THE COMMUNITY ADVANCED SUMMER CLASS

The group is open to students between the ages of 10 and 14 years who can participate in cognitive-behavioral social lessons and not exhibit harmful behaviors toward themselves or others. Curriculum: Erin Webb LMFT will focus on problem solving, communication skills, conflict resolution, and bullying prevention.

Classes will be held Tuesday June 3<sup>rd</sup>– Thursday July 24<sup>th</sup> on Tuesday and Thursday Mornings from 10-11:30 am in The Northwest, Spring and Woodlands Areas – Exact locations TBD.

Tuition: \$850 for the 8 week course = 24 total hours of instruction.

Please contact Erin Webb, M.A., LMFT at (713) 480-8294 or email [erin@shapeofbehavior.com](mailto:erin@shapeofbehavior.com).

## Donate to FEAT-Houston while Shopping – Watch for Coming Updates !

Every quarter, FEAT-Houston receives a check through the community service programs of Randall's and Kroger. By making FEAT-Houston your charity of choice at these stores, you are making a contribution to FEAT and helping to support this newsletter and our phone line.

At Randall's, stop by the customer service center ONE TIME and designate FEAT-Houston, number **2510** as your choice in their "Good Neighbor" program.

Kroger has recently changed their program. Their new program will be called "Neighbor to Neighbor". FEAT-Houston will soon be sending out a letter with a new FEAT barcode that should be presented to a cashier only once a year instead of each time you shop. Watch for the announcement of this new program soon!

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Partners Resource Network is offering self-guided online courses to help parents and caregivers become advocates for their children. Below is a list of available online courses. To register for a course, go to: <http://www.partnerstx.org/courses/index.htm>

1. **[IDEA 2004](#)** -. This course will look at the key elements and processes of the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) regulations that parents and those working with parents and schools need to know.

2. **[Partners in Education](#)** - This three hour self-directed course was created to help parents of children with developmental disabilities understand and maximize the special education system..

3. **[Making Your Case](#)** - Helps participants understand the legislative process, the essential elements of good advocacy, identify and research personal issues, then advocate for systems change as individuals and as part of larger community efforts.

## UH-Clear Lake Offers Services for Children with Autism

Parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders between the ages of 3- and 8-years-old now have more resources for treatment through the University of Houston-Clear Lake Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities. Beginning May 1, faculty and students within the university's applied behavior analysis program will provide individualized services at no cost to families. The services, provided in partnership with the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority (MHMRA) of Harris County, are being funded through a grant awarded by The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

Center Director and Professor of Psychology Dorothea Lerman will oversee graduate students as they provide interventions to assist the children. Children will receive individualized training that is designed to reduce problem behaviors and to develop age-appropriate social, self-help, school readiness and language skills. Family members and caregivers will also benefit by learning how to continue the training methods at home.

To find out more about the center and these new services for children with autism, call 281-283-3437, or e-mail [lerman@uhcl.edu](mailto:lerman@uhcl.edu). To request services, contact MHMRA Program Manager **Melinda B. Benjumea at 713-970-8241**.

### [www.feathouston.org](http://www.feathouston.org)

features a bi-monthly newsletter, local resource contact information, and many links such as the following:

[HB 1919 - Insurance Coverage of Autism](#)

[FEAT-Houston Scholarship Information](#)

["ABCs of ABA" DVD in Spanish](#)

[Houston Area Certificant Registry for Certification in Behavior Analysis](#)

[Information on Graduate/Undergraduate Programs in Behavior Analysis](#)

## BTTC Children's Comprehensive Day Treatment Program Accepting Applications for Students and Staff

Thanks to a \$1.25 million grant from the Department of Assistance and Rehabilitation (DARS), the Behavior Treatment and Training Center (BTTC) has been able to expand and upgrade their Day Treatment Program which has been successfully in operation for the past 4 years under the direction of Kelly Bivens, BCBA. The children within the ages of 3-8 years are being enrolled in the Children's Comprehensive Day Treatment Program which provides four BCBA's to serve 25 children enrolled at one time, projecting to serve 40 children over the 17 month grant period. Two clinical BCBA's will conduct the daily program development with 13/12 children each, assisted by two BCABA's. A third BCBA will be responsible for on-going, daily staff supervision and training, while a fourth BCBA will be responsible for generalization activities, transitioning the children into other programs, and parent training with an emphasis on in-home/community application of the skills the children are learning. The grant also allowed for creation of additional bachelor's level hands-on staff. This is an amazing opportunity for the children and families to receive a comprehensive ABA program with maximum amount of daily BCBA contact.

For information on enrollment or employment opportunities contact: Peter Fonseca, 281-239-1420, or [peter.fonseca@texanacenter.com](mailto:peter.fonseca@texanacenter.com). Please read more about our program at [www.btctdaytreatment.com](http://www.btctdaytreatment.com)

### Websites of Interest:

[www.marksundberg.com](http://www.marksundberg.com) For many interesting downloads of presentations, Data Sheets and Papers, Articles, and more.

[www.behavior.org](http://www.behavior.org) This website is full of great information about behavior analysis and has a special section on autism.

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## Educating Students with Autism: A Quick Start Manual

Available from Pro-ED, 2008;  
Author: Dr. Jo Ann Webber  
<http://www.proedinc.com>

Succinct and organized, this “quick start” manual provides immediate, practical assistance about how to plan, organize, implement, coordinate, and monitor an educational program. It is written for teachers, administrators, related service personnel, parents, and persons who are responsible for teaching children and youth with autism and cognitive delays. Many of its recommended strategies may also be adapted for those with Asperger’s Syndrome or High Functioning Autism (HFA). This book has 16 informative chapters – complete with examples, forms, and sample materials; four appendices; and a glossary of terms.

### Features include:

- **At-A-Glance** – concise lists, brief descriptions, examples, or other material to illustrate concepts and skills described in the text.
- **Focus Here** – in-depth coverage of concepts introduced in the text. These include detailed instructions or guidelines for using various techniques presented in the text, explanations of concepts, descriptions of programs, or other material that provides readers with more specific information about the skills and concepts presented.
- **Figures** – offers many examples of the forms used for teaching students with autism, assessment, progress monitoring, and other teaching needs.
- **Resources** – lists of materials, programs, support services, organizations, and other information that is helpful for teachers and others who are responsible for educational planning for students with autism.

Dr. Webber is a past president of the International Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, a subdivision of the Council for Exceptional Children. She has been a faculty member at Texas State University since 1986, and currently is the Associate Dean for Research & Development for the College of Education. Dr. Webber consults with school districts regarding behavior management, autism, emotional disturbance, and teacher education.

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## FEAT-Houston Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Gifts:

### *In Honor of Geraldine Bliss' Birthday* by

Andrew & Cynthia Rowe  
Dave & Sheri Saunders  
Suzanne & Brian Williams  
Paul Bliss  
Landon, Chandler & Paula White  
Cynthia Bigelow  
Bob & Christy Crane  
Steve & Mary Logan  
Buzz & Gay Jehle  
Keith & Cathy Stubbs  
Chris & Whitney Gowan  
Jeff & Jill Eschman  
Scott & Alisa Stafford  
Christie & Jeff Enzinna

### *In Memory of Mrs. Patricia Gruber* by

Cynthia & Scott Singleton

### *In Memory of Wanda Morgan & in honor of her grandson, James Wood* by

William Haines  
Jada & Gregory Kellison  
Robert & Evelyn Cook  
Brian Pace & fraternity brothers  
Stephen and Alice Agapion  
Thomas & Elizabeth Rohweder  
George & Claudia Wilson  
The Goldenberg Family  
Kerrick & Catherine Wilson  
Sue & Billy Jones

### *In Honor of Samantha Alonso* by

Tom & Carol Sloan

FEAT-Houston is forming a Website Committee to meet and evaluate and update our website. If you are interested in participating on the committee, please contact Geraldine Bliss at [gbliss1@comcast.net](mailto:gbliss1@comcast.net). We would especially welcome participants who have backgrounds in website design or assessment.

(Ed. Note: This article taken from the OARacle, the E-Newsletter of the Organization for Autism Research (OAR). Go to [www.researchautism.org](http://www.researchautism.org) to subscribe.)

## Social Safety Issues on the Spectrum: Why Social Skills Training Alone Isn't Enough

**Zosia Zaks**

*Zosia Zaks is the author of Life and Love: Positive Strategies for Autistic Adults. She consults with parents and families of autistic loved ones, speaks and writes about issues of importance to the autism community, and is pursuing licensure as a rehabilitation counselor. She also works as a heavy equipment operator and manages her online business, Intelligirl Jewelry Maker. You can read her writings on autism and self-advocacy at [www.zaksfamily.com/autism.html](http://www.zaksfamily.com/autism.html).*

We all know this rule: Don't go anywhere with a stranger.

But let's say you meet a cute guy at the movies. The two of you chat for a few minutes while you're waiting to buy popcorn. Then he asks you if you want to walk around before the movie starts. How would you react?

Most adults recognize the potential danger and generalize from the macro rule to the micro situation: *Don't talk to strangers* also includes this unique situation because *even though you've talked for a few minutes, you still don't know this guy*. But for those of us on the spectrum, this protective cognitive process is neither easy nor automatic. After all, if you've talked to someone, then he's no longer a stranger, right?

A group of researchers based at the University of Indiana just published a meta-analysis of research studies on the efficacy rates of social skills classes. The data indicate that social skills training programs are fairly ineffective. Why?

While the study suggests that intensity and implementation of the classes plus identification of deficits are factors, the answer is also at least partially because autism is neurological. We can usually remember the lessons, rules, facts, and values we are taught. But the cognitive, social, and linguistic challenges just do not go away, making it difficult to distill social information, manage and complete social decisions, make social judgments, and protect ourselves during the myriad moment-by-moment fluctuations that are an inherent aspect of human interaction.

Specifically, it is hard for us to generalize rules to situations that in our mind are unique or specific. We also have a strong tendency to miss nonverbal clues like tone of voice or body posture that could forewarn of trouble.

We understand language so concretely that the subtle meaning of social information may escape us. One young woman on the spectrum told me she didn't need to use birth control because her sexual education teacher, her mother, and her priest all had told her, "You can't have children until you're married."

Additionally, social situations are fairly open-ended. If we can't see specific reasons for picking one course of action over another, we may lack the ability to make adept choices. In the social world, it is impossible to predict outcomes, come to sure conclusions, or chart a fixed course. Many of us have trouble enough picking what to eat from a menu.

Furthermore, we often have only a vague idea of how we feel. We do not know how to use this self-knowledge in decision making. A lack of emotional facility results in slow or out-of-proportion responses and inadvertent advertising of our vulnerabilities.

Lastly, many of us experience face blindness. We can't recognize someone who teased, bullied, or attacked us in the past.

Professionals, parents, and teachers need to keep in mind that while it is not impossible for those of us on the spectrum to improve

our social skills over time, each social moment is still new, singular, and met with our unique autistic profile. This point is paramount when designing and delivering social, sexual, and relationship education for those on the spectrum. Besides providing a standard curriculum, I always tell professionals, advocates, and loved ones to add another lesson: getting help.

No matter how many social skills we have practiced, no matter how confident we are in factual knowledge, and no matter how many discussions we have had about what is socially healthy and appropriate, we must learn to identify at least one trustworthy person and then learn how to turn to this designated person for guidance each and every time we are at a social crossroad.

When I conduct workshops on dating, relationships, and sexuality at autism conferences, I ask attendees, "What is the first thing you do if you like someone romantically?" They inevitably supply me with decent answers: start a conversation, find out his name, ask him to do an activity together, see if a friend or sibling knows her. These answers are not wrong *per se*. But I teach them that actually the very first thing we must do is go talk to someone trustworthy, not because we are stupid or immature, but because we have autistic challenges that make it difficult for us to pick up social nuances, contextual details, and hidden innuendo.

We must teach everyone on the spectrum that consulting with a trustworthy confidant is always the first step in any social move. This is just a fact of autistic life and nothing to be ashamed about. Lisa Lieberman, author of *A "Stranger" Among Us: Hiring In-Home Support for a Child with Autism Spectrum Disorders or Other Neurological Differences* (AAPC 2005) and mother of an autistic son, emphasizes the need for our community to shift our focus from independence to interdependence. "All of us, whether neurotypical or ASD, have been erroneously taught to value and strive for independence... Learning to reach out for help is just as essential a life skill to master." Accepting the fact that even neurotypicals do not get through life alone is part of

making interdependence a vital and expected aspect living in the world.

I also teach specific safety strategies that can be used to reduce the risk of social danger. No single strategy can prevent all danger, but we must be proactive. My most popular strategy is the Safe Activities List, a list of activities predetermined to be totally safe. Youth and adults are taught to steer social invitations away from the unknown possibilities and subtle peculiarities of the moment toward those on the list.

Next, I teach strategies to increase emotional facility. Many of us on the autism spectrum do not intrinsically recognize our emotions or know how to use our feelings to make wise social discriminations. This may seem unusual to neurotypicals (those not on the spectrum) because non-autistic people appear born wired to understand their feelings and how to skillfully use emotional indicators to steer themselves through life.

But those of us on the spectrum must learn step-by-step that if your heart is racing and your stomach "drops" when somebody you just met asks you to walk around the movie theater, these are nervous signals and this feeling is a useful clue or tool for picking a course of appropriate and potentially life-saving action. If you are nervous, it may be time to leave the situation, use your Safe Activities List, or in a worst-case scenario, summon emergency assistance. When we do learn through effort and practice how to notice our emotional signals, how to identify our feelings, and how to accurately scale the "amount" of emotion we are experiencing, we can more confidently know what to do.

In her book *Asperger Syndrome and Adolescence: Helping Preteens and Teens Get Ready for the Real World*, Dr. Teresa Bolick explains how to make and use a feelings chart, an important visual aid and tool. Though some of her books are geared toward children, all of Kari Dunn-Buron's books are useful for teaching autistic adults how to scale emotions and tailor reactions adeptly, thereby improving communication and engagement success.

Is my emphasis on safety strategies and help systems overbearing? After all, we are talking about adults. Shouldn't autistic adults be free to do whatever they want, with whomever they choose? Shouldn't adults make their own decisions without interference?

We do not have to violate the rights of adults to make their own way in life, disabled or not, but we must face the truth: Even articulate and educated autistic adults can experience difficulty protecting ourselves and making appropriate social choices. What we are realizing is that straight social skills training just isn't enough.

We have a responsibility as a community to provide autistic teens and adults with the tools and cognitive flexibility to navigate social life with less danger and more confidence. Needing rules about asking for help, visual aids, and safety strategies is a simple fact of autistic reality. We can't just say, "You are adults. Do whatever you want." We must endeavor to teach ways of dealing with autistic challenges and augmenting autistic strengths. Autism organizations have a particular responsibility to make judgments about what is safe, what is healthy, and what choices and activities are in line with "best practices" for those loving, feeling, thinking, and living with an autistic brain.

In summary, when preparing our sons and daughters, loved ones, students, and clients for the social world, we must consider how autistic people hear and process information, deal with emotion and choice, and struggle to communicate and socialize. We must take issues of social safety and social health seriously. It is imperative that we provide support and direct guidance, beyond basic skills training and factual knowledge, in order to promote the healthiest and least risky paths to friendship, outreach, and love.

Bellini, S., et. al. (2007). A Meta-analysis of school-based social skills interventions for children with autism spectrum disorders, *Journal of Remedial and Special Education*, 28(3).

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Dunn-Buron, K. (2004). *The Incredible Five-Point Scale: Assisting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Understanding Social Interactions and Controlling Their Emotional Responses*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Dunn-Buron, K. (2007). *The A Five Could Make Me Lose Control! Activity Book*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Dunn-Buron, K. (2007). *A Five Is Against the Law!* Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Nadel, J. et al. (2000). Do children with autism have expectancies about the social behaviour of unfamiliar people? A pilot study using the still face paradigm. *Autism*, 4(2).

Rogers, M. F., & Myles, B. S. (2001). Using social stories and comic strip conversations to interpret social situations for an adolescent with Asperger Syndrome. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 36(5).

Zaks, Z. (2006). *Life and Love: Positive Strategies for Autistic Adults*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

### Help FEAT-Houston Save Money!

Do we have your correct mailing address or are you willing to receive the email only version of the FEAT-Houston newsletter? If there are errors in your mailing address or if you elect to receive the email version of our newsletter rather than the paper version, please contact Carol Sloan at [cysloan@earthlink.net](mailto:cysloan@earthlink.net) or call the FEAT phone line at 281-348-7067 and leave a message for us. This will help us save money and use our funds in more productive ways.

FEAT-Houston is pleased to present:  
**The ABCs of ABA - Essential Skills**

Presented by: Gerald Harris, Ph.D., BCBA  
Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Date: Saturday, June 21, 2008  
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Registration: 8:30 am

Location: University of Houston Central Campus, the Heyne Building, H-Building 534, room 135, auditorium

Directions: Take I-45 South (if coming from downtown area) to Cullen Exit. Turn right on Cullen. Before you get to Wheeler, the Heyne Building is the last building on the left. Turn left into the front of the building and the parking lot is immediately on the right, entrance 13. Parking lot gate should be up to allow free admission for those attending the TxABA Autism SIG workshop. Follow the signs inside the building. Map available at [http://www.uh.edu/campus\\_map/buildings/H.html](http://www.uh.edu/campus_map/buildings/H.html)

Description: This workshop is an introduction to the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). It is an excellent starting point for parents, therapists, teachers, case workers, family and friends! Whether you are just starting a program, or if you have a program in place but need training for additional therapists or family members, you will come away from this workshop with a better understanding of how to teach effectively. Workshops are intended to help parents with the ongoing problem of hiring and training therapists and to provide an introduction to persons with a desire to work as therapists and teachers. Workshops are open to anyone with a desire to learn more about ABA. No prior experience is necessary. Lecture, video, and handouts may be used. Box lunch provided but no child care is available.  
**Space is limited so register early!**

**Registration and Fees: Register by June 11<sup>th</sup> to save!**

Individual \$50.00 (\$40 if before 6/11) Student \$25.00 (with documentation)  
Married Couple \$75.00 (\$65 if before 6/11)

Groups of 5 or more \$35/attendee (deduct \$10 per group before 6/11)

There are a limited number of scholarships/reduced rates available for families experiencing financial hardship or for teachers who have students with autism/pdd. Email Carol Sloan (below) to inquire.

Please send check made out to **FEAT-Houston** to: Carol Sloan  
22 Silverstrand Place  
The Woodlands, TX 77381

Confirmation of receipt of payment will be sent via e-mail.

Questions may be sent to: Carol Sloan at [cysloan@earthlink.net](mailto:cysloan@earthlink.net)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you new to ABA? \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Therapist \_\_\_\_\_ Other? \_\_\_\_\_

Total Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Others Attending: (Please note category: Parent, Teacher, Therapist etc.)

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**FEAT-Houston is pleased to present:**

# Maximizing Cooperative Behavior

A Workshop in the 123's of ABA Series presented by the TxABA Autism SIG

Presented by: Ellen Catoe, M.S., BCBA & David Whitcher, M.A., BCBA, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Behavior Treatment and Training Center, Rosenberg, Texas  
Date: Saturday, May 3, 2008  
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Registration: 8:30 am  
Location: Graceview Baptist Church 25510 Tomball Parkway Tomball, TX 77375  
North Campus Education Building - Youth Assembly Room  
Directions: Call church at 281-351-4979, or visit [www.graceview.org/AreaMap.htm](http://www.graceview.org/AreaMap.htm)

Description: This workshop is for individuals who have some training in basic ABA skills. Previous attendance at an ABC's of ABA workshop is strongly recommended. It is assumed that attendees will be able to demonstrate the technically correct skills of delivering reinforcers, shaping, prompting, errorless learning, fading, chaining, and differential reinforcement, which are covered in the ABC workshop. This workshop will teach practical applications of ABA techniques for gaining and maintaining an individual's attention. It is very difficult to teach someone anything if they will not attend to you, they actively avoid you, they aggress toward you, or you have trouble just catching them. It is also hard to teach someone when all the teaching interactions are aversive to the instructor and the student. This workshop teaches the collection of specific procedures which the Behavior Treatment and Training Center (BTTC) Outreach staff have found to be consistently effective in working with a variety of challenging clients and behaviors. Lecture, video, role-play, and handouts will be used to teach participants the effective use of reinforcement, penny board token systems, activity book programs, and the compliance sequence. Challenges with aggression, maintaining attention, motivation, hyper-activity, and prompt dependence will be addressed. Intervention procedures for initial program start-ups (how to start, selecting initial training objectives, etc.) with children/adults of varying degrees of disabilities will be demonstrated and practiced. The researched procedures of ABA will be presented as they are applicable to the full range of individuals with mental retardation/PDD diagnoses, verbal/non-verbal skills, disruptive and passive behaviors. **Space is limited, so register early!** No childcare is available.

## Registration and Fees: Register by April 23<sup>rd</sup> to save!

Individual -- \$50.00 (\$40 if before 4/23) Student -- \$25.00 (with documentation)

Married Couple -- \$75.00 (\$65 if before 4/23)

Groups of 5 or more -- \$35/person (deduct \$10 per group if before 4/23)

There are a limited number of scholarships/reduced rates available for families experiencing financial hardship or for teachers who have students with autism/pdd. Email Carol Sloan (below) to inquire.

Please send check made out to **FEAT-Houston** to: Carol Sloan  
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you new to ABA? \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Therapist \_\_\_\_\_ Other? \_\_\_\_\_

Total Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Others Attending: (Please note category: Parent, Teacher, Therapist etc.)

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