



THE MILLER METHOD® NEWSLETTER

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The **Miller Method® Newsletter** is a publication of the Language and Cognitive Development Center (LCDC) of Newton. It seeks to encourage exchanges of information between Miller Method programs and practitioners in the United States and abroad. Certain issues may contain names and phone numbers of parents and professionals who have participated in one of the Center's programs and who would welcome questions from other parents or professionals.

NEW BOOK ON THE MILLER METHOD® RECENTLY PUBLISHED

A new book by Dr. Arnold Miller with Kristina Chretien (an LCDC staff member for over 25 years) has been published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. The book's title is "**The Miller Method®: Developing the Capacities of Children on the Autism Spectrum.**" The book is reader-friendly, presents essential theory and many strategies for helping children on the spectrum. Chapter headings include the following:

Part I – About Children's Systems

- Ch 1: What makes the Miller Method® Unique?
- Ch 2: Children as Victims or Masters of Their Systems
- Ch 3: Searching for Capacity

Part II – Treatment

- Ch 4: Getting Started with the Miller Method®
- Ch 5: Elevating the Special Child: Creating an Enhanced Reality
- Ch 6: Exploiting Systems to Develop Social Capacity
- Ch 7: Prelude to Communication, by Kristina Chretien
- Ch 8: Becoming a Child Who Communicates

Part III – Education

- Ch 9: Teaching the Child to Cope
- Ch 10: Teaching to Children's Reality

Part IV – Research

- Ch 11: Research and Applications of the Miller Method®

- Appendix A: Theory Summary and Glossary
- Appendix B: Miller Diagnostic Survey (MDS) for Children with Developmental Issues
- Appendix C: Sam and the Boys
- Appendix D: The Language and Cognitive Development Center (LCDC)

References

This new Miller Method® book may be ordered at a discount from www.cognitivedesigns.com

Dedication

This first issue of the LCDC Newsletter in three eventful years is dedicated to Eileen Eller-Miller, my wife and colleague for 45 years. Eileen died on June 18, 2004 – 28 months ago -- after a long and courageous battle with colon cancer. She died at home as she wished. Throughout her devastating illness she maintained her optimism and wish to help children with autism achieve a meaningful life. Just weeks before she died -- with barely enough strength to sit up -- she participated in a videoconference with me to help an autistic child and his family.

Eileen asked me to promise that the work of the Center would continue. I gave my promise and know how delighted she would have been to see the Miller Method she helped to develop flourish both in this country and as far away as the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Arnold Miller



Amit, a three year-old autistic boy – taught with the Miller Method® in Israel – produced this cheery figure among his first representational drawings.

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FROM LCDC TO THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN – ACROSS 7 TIME ZONES -- TO HELP AUTISTIC CHILDREN

Recently, LCDC has established a videoconferencing link with the Alia Center for Early Intervention, a school for autistic children, in the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. Through this link, Dr. Arnold Miller is able to work with staff, children and parents on a regular basis. Each parent completes and transmits a Miller Diagnostic Survey so that Dr. Miller has a framework for intervention for each child.

The arrangement with Bahrain came about through the Director, Rania Alkhalifa's Internet research of various programs. Following this, she came to the US to discuss consultation with LCDC. After a year of working out technical issues, the videoconferencing link was finally established. There now have been a half dozen successful videoconference contacts as well as a 4-day training session for Alia Center staff... Fortunately, English is a strong second language for Bahranians. Effective February 1, 2007, videoconferencing sessions will increase to two, one-hour sessions per week.

The only downside – is that Dr. Miller has to be up at 6: 30 AM (our time) to be ready at 8:00 AM in order to work with Bahranian staff and children at 3:00 PM (their time). But the delight he sees in the faces of staff and parents as the children begin to progress on the Elevated Square and on the ground, more than compensates for the early rise.

The Elevated Board System. These systems were developed both as prostheses and as training devices for the children. The Elevated Square, for example, is a prosthesis in that it provides structure and guides the children from place to place in a way unavailable to them on the ground. It is a training procedure in that the children learn how to master detours, cope with obstacles and interact with people first on the elevated structures and then on the ground and in other locations.



Fig. 1. Child coping with elevated "Swiss Cheese" board.

Videoconferencing Oversight (VCO). Although the Center works directly with a number of children on the autism spectrum in its special clinic, the impact of the Miller Method® extends far beyond these children. This is because of the use of videoconferencing with schools, clinics and families. Finding that there were many children remote from LCDC who needed access to effective strategies, the Center introduced the VCO program. This program entails live contact with professionals and parents working with a child on the autism spectrum in such a way that senior consultants at LCDC can see, hear and guide the work. Videoconferencing even permits LCDC consultants to control the camera at the remote site so that they can pan, tilt and zoom in when necessary. The VCO system also permits regularly scheduled face to face exchanges with groups of parents seeking help in various schools which have VCO arrangements with LCDC. See Page 6 for a list of parents whose children have participated in a Miller Method® Program and wish to share their experience with other parents or professionals.

WHAT DOES A MM VIDEOCONFERENCING (VCO) SESSION LOOK LIKE?

Since words do not adequately describe the dynamics involved in working with an autistic child on an Elevated Square. LCDC has arranged with webmaster Steve Curd to include an 8 minute videotape excerpt of work with a 4 year old autistic boy, his therapists and family, on our website. This excerpt now appears under What's New and Distance Consultation, on our website www.millermethod.org.

Miller Method Program Options for Parents

There are now several different options for parents of special children at the Language and Cognitive Development Center in Boston. These are as follows:

1. Miller Umwelt Assessment\$1000
(2 hrs., written report, recommendations)
2. Parent-Child Training\$2750
(Umwelt Assessment and trial interventions, 18 hrs., over 3 days)
3. Videoconferencing Oversight (VCO)\$250
(Fee includes e-mail and phone consultation during the week)
4. One hour Individual (Face to Face) Therapy Sessions\$150

For further information contact Dr. Paul Callahan at (800) 218-5232

LCDC's MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT WITH THE NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Early in 2006 LCDC received an RFP (Request for Proposal) from the New York City Board of Education to provide Miller Method® services via videoconferencing technology to New York City public schools serving autistic children. Dr. Paul Callahan in close consultation with Doris Mainville, LCDC Business Manager completed the proposal and sent it in. (Dr. Miller during that period was immersed in completing his new book.)

In July 2006 the NYC Board of Education officials requested a phone conference with Drs. Miller and Callahan. After learning of LCDC's effectiveness working with nonverbal and limited verbal children and -- after asking questions about who would deliver the services -- they informed us that our proposal had been accepted. To our query about how many schools they were interested in our serving, there response was "As many as you can handle."

To date NYC Board of Education has interim funded videoconference work with one school (PS 37, Staten Island). We have been informed that once the contract has gone through their legal department, full funding will be made available over a 3-4 year period.

Given the anticipated increase in videoconference work, LCDC is making plans to add to the number of senior staff competent to conduct videoconference work. We look forward to the challenge of working with New York City children and will report on progress in the next newsletter.

RECENT MILLER METHOD® ARTICLES: PUBLISHED AND PENDING

Miller, A. (October 2006) Teaching to Children's Reality. *Autism Spectrum Quarterly*.

Miller, A. (January 2007) Coping with Tantrums and the 'Beached Whale' Syndrome. *The Autism Perspective*.

Miller, A. (February 2007) Transforming Compulsive Rituals into Interactive Play. *Autism Spectrum Quarterly*.

STEPHEN SHORE: RISING STAR IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY OF AUTISM

I had no idea -- some eight years ago -- when I invited a nervous Stephen Shore to talk about his experience emerging from autism, that I was laying the groundwork for a formidable presence in the field of autism. During the years that followed -- while our friendship deepened -- Stephen has written or coauthored 3 books and has given hundreds talks and/or workshops on six continents. But now, I would like Stephen to describe his metamorphosis from struggling music student to his present eminence.

Indeed it was a nervous experience presenting for the first time for a collection of teachers, therapists, aides, the executive director of a center, which has generated an important approach (the Miller Method®) for autistic children. Encouraged by Dr. Miller, who promised to assist with any questions that seemed to personal the presentation was a success and I have presented at a number of Miller Method® seminars ever since.

At that time I was Chair of Theater, Art, and Music as part of my duties of a music professor at a local college. Although I was well-liked by my students and most of the administration, probably due to lack of sufficient awareness of the subtle social interactions of office politics, that job ended after five years.

Additionally I was experiencing difficulties in obtaining accommodations for a doctoral qualifier exam in music theory in order to move on to writing my dissertation.

These two events combined with my growing interest in researching into and helping children on the autism spectrum led me to "defect" to studies in education at Boston University where I am finishing doctoral dissertation on examining five well-established approaches (Miller Method® included, of course) to start research towards best matching intervention to the child's needs.

The journey of self-discovery, researching into autism, making new friends, and helping people with autism to lead fulfilling and productive lives has been a long and interesting one that I outline in my book *Beyond the wall: Personal experiences with autism and Asperger Syndrome*. Areas that I will explore in future Miller Method® Newsletters include using Miller Method® concepts and theory to teach music to children on the autism spectrum as well as consulting, presenting, and holding teacher inservices around the world.

See you in the next issue!

Stephen Shore

THE PARENTS' CORNER

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT MILLER METHOD® INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES

Each Newsletter will include a section to help resolve an autistic child's developmental challenge. This issue – from our new book “The Miller Method®: Developing the Capacities of Children on the Autism Spectrum (pp 78-79) -- addresses “Giving an object on request.”

While typical infants learn to give an object on request as early as 9 or 10 months of age, many special children become so involved in their repetitive systems that they fail to do so even when the requested object is right next to them and the parent or therapist is tapping an outstretched palm and saying “Give!” The following strategy is effective in helping children like Damon respond to such requests.

The first step is to have the child throw the object with which he is involved in a box. With a child like Damon this can be done by the therapist starting vigorously to throw blocks in the box and then giving him blocks to throw. Continue giving him blocks until it is clear that he is now deeply involved with the throwing-blocks-in-box system. At that point, abruptly interpose your hand so that as the child drops the block in the box you catch it momentarily and then immediately flick it into the box.

At times the child will try to avoid your hand so he can put the block directly into the box himself. If so, allow him to throw a few blocks before again interposing (interrupting) by placing your hand in his path. After a few trials during which you say “Give!” while you tap your outstretched palm with your other hand, the child will accept your hand on top of the box and begin to place the block in your hand instead of trying to avoid it. When this happens immediately drop the block into the box so that the child can experience your action as an extension of his.

When the child can do this, start to push the box out of his reach while placing your extended hand in front of the box while continuing to tap your hand and saying “Give!... Give!” When you get the block immediately dump it in the box that is now out of the child's reach. On subsequent trials, move your hand progressively away from the box,

so that it is clear to the child than when you say, “Give!” he is to put the block in your hand no matter what its position is relative to the box.

Expansions. Once you have succeeded in establishing “Give!” as an imperative term, it is important that the child learn to give objects to any one requesting them from him. After several persons have succeeded with him, then it is important to perform the same task with different objects (pegs, cars, trains, balls, etc.) at home and elsewhere.

Summary for establishing “giving an object on request”

1. Establish a repetitive throwing/dropping block-in-box system.
2. Interpose and tap outstretched hand in front of box while urgently saying “Give!”
3. If child avoids hand allow him to do so for a few trials before again interposing hand.
4. When you receive the block immediately drop it in the box.
5. Push box out of child's reach while your hand remains where the box was as you continue to tap your hand while saying, “Give!... Give!”
6. Once this succeeds, change position of your hand with respect to the box so that the child gives you blocks no matter what position your hand is in.
7. Periodically, allow the child to drop block in without you intervening.
8. Continue same procedure with other objects and with different people in other locations.

We welcome responses from parents and professionals who have applied this strategy with their special children. You may contact Dr. Miller directly at ArnMill@aol.com

Websites Relevant to the Miller Method®

Visit the following websites for more information on the Miller Method® and for products being distributed commercially:

www.millermethod.org (for information)

www.cognitivedesigns.com (for the distribution of Miller Method® products).

LETTER FROM A PARENT WHOSE CHILD ATTENDED LCDC

My name is Janet Abramson. I have a son who is autistic. His name is Jonny. He is now 12 years old and doing well. This is due, in my opinion to LCDC. Let me back up and tell you a bit about my son. Jonny was diagnosed with autism at 2 years and three months of age. As any parent knows, the news is devastating. I live in Toronto, Canada, and back then there was nobody in my neighborhood/area who had a child who was autistic. Jonny, from one week old, screamed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There was nothing that I could do to make him happy. He could not speak, and he did not seem to understand me. It was like he was in his own "little world."

One day, when Jonny was 3 years old, my brother suggested I call a man named Dr. Arnold Miller, who had an article in the Toronto Star, our newspaper, advertising a seminar describing his approach for helping autistic kids.

I immediately signed up. The seminar sounded so promising I moved with my son to Boston, to a city where I knew no one, left my 5 year old daughter with her father and Jonny began the program.

Keep in mind, my child could not communicate with me and only screamed!!! After the first month, Jonny learned how to "sign" (sign language). This was the first time in his short life he could communicate. Guess what? He STOPPED screaming. What a pleasure it was to be able to understand what my child wanted.

I then decided that since there was nothing like this program in Toronto, Canada, I could not take my son home and leave things as they were. What would happen to him without LCDC? I worried that he would regress if I went back to Toronto. As all parents know, we are selfish for our children and want more and more for them, and only the best. I ended up living in Boston for a full year while Jonny attended LCDC. Being apart from my family was very hard on all of us. But you do what you have to do for your child.

Approximately, four months after Jonny started the school year, he started to speak. What a feeling it was to hear my child's voice!!!! I cried when I heard him saying his first several words in speech therapy. I then realized that Jonny knew so many words and phrases and understood so much, but he just couldn't verbalize them. The words began to literally fall out of his mouth. It was the most amazing time in my

life. Jonny continued to progress with individual cognitive-developmental therapy, speech work, wood working and classroom time. He even started to read a little.

Unfortunately, the year was coming to an end and I had to take him home. I could not be away from my daughter any longer.

I did find Jonny a private school in Toronto, and he has been going there ever since. It is a good school and Jonny has continued to progress. Of course, he is behind in his language and academics, but I believe with all the hard work that he does, he will eventually catch up.

In closing, in my heart, I know that if did not bring Jonny to LCDC he may have never learned to talk and may still be screaming today. Thank you Dr. Miller for a wonderful year at LCDC and for helping me and my son. I only wish that LCDC could have been moved to Toronto!!

All the best,

Janet

NEW BOOK IN PREPARATION FOR CLASSROOM APPLICATION OF THE MILLER METHOD®

Although there are now two published books on the Miller Method®, Dr. Miller feels that there has been insufficient attention to the application of the Method in classrooms of special children. To remedy this gap, Dr. Miller and Carol Hilliard (a gifted former LCDC teacher) are collaborating on a new book, tentatively titled "The Miller Method®: Application to Classrooms of Special Children." The new book will show how the method applies to a class of six non or limited verbal autistic children in the 3 to 6 year age range.

Problems addressed will include how to work when there are children on two different levels of functioning in the class, establishing bonds between teachers and children and between children. How to exploit the environment for developmental gain and, of course, developing functional communication and representation (drawing, numbers, symbolic play, reading). Careful attention will be given to recording progress in the different areas. We estimate it will take 12 to 18 months to complete.

**FOR PROFESSIONALS SEEKING TRAINING
IN THE MILLER METHOD®**

INTENSIVE 4-DAY MILLER METHOD® COURSE LISTINGS

All workshops are conducted by Arnold Miller, Ph.D. with senior LCDC staff. Stephen Shore is scheduled as a guest speaker.

The workshop introduces theory and practice of the Miller Method and provides opportunity for “hands-on” training. Professionals planning to continue toward certification as a Miller Method® Specialist or Therapist are required to complete a “take home” examination. Parents of special children who take the training are not expected to do so.

**4-Day Miller Method® Workshop Schedule
Through July 2007**

Unless otherwise stated all workshops are conducted at the Language and Cognitive Development Center, (LCDC) of Newton

- Scheduled Workshops.** March 2 – 5, 2007
 May 4 – 7, 2007
 July 13 – 16, 2007

Tuition. The tuition for professionals attending each workshop is \$975.00 per person. The tuition for parents of a special child is \$450.00. A copy of Dr. Miller’s new book *The Miller Method®: Developing the Capacities of Children on the Autism Spectrum* is included in the tuition. Contact Dr. Paul Callahan at (800) 218-5232 to register or for further information.

**Professionals Wishing to Share Their
Experience of a Miller Method® Workshop**

- Maureen Boland** - Early Child Educator... (216) 736-4319
Barbara Broad - Speech & Language..... (440) 602-1000
Dr. Christine Cook - Early Ed. Supervisor. (216) 736-2928
Lisa Hauben - Special Educator (718) 849-3002
Tracy Lyndon - Occupational Therapist.... (847) 573-9236
Sonia Mastrangelo - Special Educator..... (905) 828-6348
Dr. Brenda McGuinness - Spch & Lang... (905) 372-6871
Maria Mejia - Psychologist (440) 951-6759
Vicki Presnell - Occupational Therapist..... (216) 736-8391
Stephen Shore - Doctoral Candidate..... (617) 277-9653
Barbara Taylor - Early Child. Educ..... (216) 736-4316

**CERTIFICATION AS A MILLER METHOD
THERAPIST OR SPECIALIST**

To become certified as a Miller Method® Therapist or Specialist with the right to present yourself to the public as competent to use this approach, professionals must meet the following requirements:

Basic 4-Day Miller Method® Workshop. Participation and successful completion of the workshop and the “take home” examination.

Supervision. The candidate for certification has his or her work with three children (2 nonverbal and one limited verbal) on the autism spectrum supervised for 50 hours *or its equivalent.* by a senior staff person from LCDC.

Modes of Supervision. Supervision may be provided by videoconferencing (**VCO**) or by telephone consultation supplemented by videotapes (**TCO**).

Those taking the Advanced Miller Method® Workshop reduce required hours of supervision from 50 to 44. Those taking the 6-weeks summer internship reduce required hours from 50 to 35.

Other Requirements. Candidates for certification must demonstrate ability to conduct an Umwelt Assessment and write a report on their 3 cases. They must also complete a written examination covering the theory and practice of the method as it relates to their three cases. Finally, they must critique their own performance. On successful completion of all requirements, certification as Miller Method® Therapist or Specialist is awarded by the Language and Cognitive Development Center.

**Parents Whose Children Have Participated
in a Miller Method® Program and Wish to
Share Their Experience**

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| *Professor Bruce Auerbach | (860) 637-1179 |
| *Dr. Teresa Auerbach | (860) 637-1179 |
| *Tami and Randy Barmache | (818) 347 9727 |
| *Ms. Kristina Bogus | (905) 450-8790 |
| Ms. Louisa Diamond (Great Britain) | 01978 311 235 |
| Ms. Jeanie Earl | (403) 208-8444 |
| Violet and Rick Gulack | (509) 276-8757 |
| Barbara and Jack Hitchcock | (508) 376-5365 |
| Ms. Jennifer Lopes | (508) 336-3753 |
| *Ms. Maria Mejia | (440) 951-6759 |
| *Ms. Rebecca Sperber | (310) 396 1076 |
| Ms. Lynn Thompson | (410) 295-7219 |
| Dr. and Mrs. Charles Tucker | (502) 753-7463 |

Parents with asterisks next to their names have had their special children participate in videoconference sessions conducted by LCDC senior staff.