



# THE MILLER METHOD<sup>®</sup>

## NEWSLETTER

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The **Miller Method<sup>®</sup> Newsletter** is a publication of the Language and Cognitive Development Center (LCDC) of Boston. It seeks to encourage exchanges of information between Miller Method programs and practitioners in the United States and abroad. Periodically, this newsletter will contain strategies for helping children with autism and pervasive developmental disorders. Certain issues may also 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.

### AMERICAN PUBLIC TELEVISION ACCEPTS "COME BACK JACK" FOR NATIONAL BROADCAST

"Come Back Jack" is a video documentary showing the bumpy road a family went through as they sought help for their son, Jack Parish, who carries a diagnosis in the autism spectrum. The award-winning hour-long film shows the Parish family's arrival at the Language and Cognitive Development Center, the assessment of Jack by Dr. Arnold Miller and Jack's heart-warming progress under the guidance of Eileen Miller and her dedicated staff during his five-month stay. Through interviews with Jack's mother, Diane, the documentary also shows, in intimate detail, what his progress meant to his family.

Jack's father, Robert Parish, is a professional scriptwriter and filmmaker based in Cincinnati, Ohio. He followed his son's progress at LCDC with his camera and assembled the documentary. Recently, he reported that "Come Back Jack" won two prestigious national awards, a Silver Telly and an "AXIEM," which stands for "Absolute Excellence in Electronic Media."

The broadcast premiere of "Come Back Jack" aired on Cincinnati's PBS station, WCET, on June 22, 1999. American Public Television, based in Boston, will feed the program to approximately 90 of their affiliated PBS stations on August 22, 1999. A list of TV stations carrying the program can be found on the "Come Back Jack" website, [www.comebackjack.com](http://www.comebackjack.com). We anticipate that most PBS stations will show "Come Back Jack" during the first three weeks of September, 1999.



### A PLEA FOR A FLEXIBLE POLICY TOWARD MAINSTREAMING

Over the years we have seen both abuses of the inclusion concept and splendid examples of its effectiveness. When inclusion works it truly brings children with autism spectrum disorder into the

social and academic worlds of typical children -- bringing with it significant gains in the richness of their lives. But when it doesn't work it is a disaster because time that could be spent addressing the developmental challenges these children present is spent in a pseudo integration based on the

notion that mere contiguity with typical kids will somehow result in the developmentally challenged child "catching the virus" that results in typical functioning. Some children often become more isolated, aggressive and depressed in a typical classroom than they would be in a special class for children with their developmental issues.

Parents and professionals need to recognize that the typical classroom is *not* designed for the needs of children with autism or related disorders. This means that for inclusion to work in a meaningful way, the child must have the emotional and cognitive tools to "make it" in the world of typical children. For this to happen, the child must be carefully trained in the procedures, rules of the conventional classroom and the child must have reached the stage where he or she is able to model the behavior of typical kids.

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<http://www.millermethod.org>

And it certainly helps if the child has already achieved some academic success in reading or arithmetic that allows him or her to demonstrate competence in these areas.

To avoid inclusion abuses there should be careful assessments of each child candidate to determine when inclusion is likely to succeed and when it is ill-advised. Further, even when inclusion is attempted it should be on a 6 to 8 week provisional basis to determine whether or not a child is gaining from the placement. This is particularly important for children in the 3 to 5 age range who can benefit from intensive intervention in a way they cannot at ages 6 to 8. Needing and not getting intensive intervention specifically related to the child's special needs could easily lead to an irretrievable loss for that child.

Clearly, there is a great need for guidelines to determine when a child should or should not be mainstreamed. The guidelines should include information about whether or not a child demonstrates ability to model the behavior of others as well as the nature of his relationships with others...With such guidelines in place there would be fewer inclusion disasters and more glowing success stories.

### **CERTIFICATES FOR MILLER METHOD® SPECIALISTS AWARDED**

Four professionals at Broadmoor School, Mentor Ohio, have successfully completed the training leading to Certification as Miller Method® Specialists. They are Barbara Broadmoor, speech and language pathologist, Maria Mejia, psychologist, Vicki Vivod, special educator, Amy Waltos, occupational therapist. Two others are currently in training: One, Lisa Hauben, a special educator at Small Wonder Pre-school in Glendale, New York is half through the training; another special educator, Sonia Mastrangelo from All Saints Catholic School in Mississauga, Canada is also part-way through the training. All have received or are receiving their training through Video Conferencing Oversight (VCO) from LCDC.



### **LCDC SCHEDULES FALL OPEN HOUSES**

Because of the growing interest in the Miller Method®, LCDC has scheduled three Open Houses for parents and professionals seeking more information about the program. The first Open House is scheduled for Friday, September 24, 1999, the second is scheduled for October 29, 1999, and the third for December 10, 1999.

Each Open House will begin at 9:00 AM and end around 12:00 noon. It will begin with a brief presentation by Arnold and Eileen Miller, founders of the Center and its programs, followed by tours of the Center and opportunity to view classes and individual sessions through one-way mirrors. Guides from LCDC staff will explain various interventions and answer questions. On returning to the Heinz Werner Conference Room there will be a video "Where is Angela?" documenting a child's progress over a 5-month period. There will then be further opportunity for questions and answers by the Millers as well as by Dr. Paul Callahan and Center staff. Individuals with more detailed questions can also schedule private meetings with Center staff at that time.

Refreshments will be served. Those parents and professionals who are planning to attend one of the Open Houses should contact Dr. Paul Callahan at (800) 218-5232 or (617) 522-5434. Advance notice is requested as our space is limited.

### **MILLERS INVITED TO ISRAEL FOR MILLER METHOD® WORKSHOP**

David Chen, Ph.D. Dean of the School of Education, University of Tel Aviv, Israel has invited Arnold and Eileen Miller to conduct a 2-day workshop titled "The Miller Method® with Children Having Autism Spectrum Disorders." The Millers have accepted the invitation and plan to conduct the workshop during March, 2000. Since there are already six Miller Method programs in Israel an audience of between 200-300 professionals and parents are expected.

## LCDC EXPANDS ITS VCO CAPABILITY

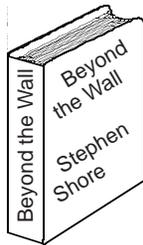
Because of the increasing demand for videoconferencing oversight (VCO), LCDC has expanded its capability by introducing a third set of ISDN lines and new video conferencing equipment which enables staff at LCDC to control (pan, tilt and zoom) cameras at remote sites making it unnecessary to allocate a person at the remote site to guide the camera during cognitive-developmental (C-D) sessions. LCDC has also trained a new staff person, Celina Meilak, to serve as VCO consultant. Currently, VCO personnel include Arnold Miller, Eileen Eller-Miller, Christine Chretien, Paul Callahan and Celina Meilak.



## BODY AWARENESS AND BICYCLES

By Stephen Shore

As indicated in the last Miller Method Newsletter, the author of this article has personal experience with autism and is nearing completion of an autobiography detailing his life and work with children on the autism spectrum. Currently, he is working on a doctorate in special education at Boston University. Following, is an excerpt from his book, [Beyond the Wall: Personal Experiences with Autism.](#)



As I neared age six I had yet to master the two wheeled bicycle. I had difficulty learning to ride on the street so my parents put the bicycle and me on the grass in the front yard. Perhaps they felt I was afraid of falling. It worked. I could ride on the grass but not the street. Possibly it was the bumpiness of the lawn that forced me to be more aware of my body which in turn enabled me to keep balanced on the bicycle. By six years of age I had learned to ride on smooth pavement. Bicycles eventually became one of my many special interests.

I have always liked climbing trees. There was a Maple tree in our yard that I would climb to the height of the second story window and I would sit there for extended periods of time. Often I would climb a particularly tall tree in my neighborhood to the height of about 40 feet. I could look down on the tops of the telephone posts and the trunk was about 2 inches thick at this point. The wind would gust, and the tree and I would sway what I

estimated was an arc of 7 to 10 feet. Although I knew the top wouldn't break off, I would remain there, swinging, utterly terrified. It made me feel more aware. My brother would sometimes join me in climbing that tree. One day he fell off from a height of about 20 feet. He was OK, and I didn't climb that tree much anymore. Perhaps it was the "edge experience" I was looking for. Maybe it's the same thing people look for when they skydive.

As an elementary student I learned the wonders of the swing set. I would pump the swing as high as I could and jump off at a specific, calculated time. Jumping off too low and too soon would result in getting catapulted forward. Launching off the swing too late would result in a painful landing on my feet. Choosing the "sweet spot" between the two would result in a long arc with a smooth landing.

During my bicycle special interest phase in Middle and High School, I would pedal my bicycle as fast as I could into snow banks in order to enjoy the feeling of flight as I launched over the handlebars -- and the thud of returning to earth on the cushioning snow. Later on, as I prepared for a bicycle trip to Montreal with an American Youth Hostel group, I learned how to jump both wheels of the bicycle at the same time. I now was able to jump over holes, railroad tracks and occasionally up curbs.

Looking back at my early behaviors and having a theory to guide me makes the need I had to accent my body experience much more understandable. The commonality of swaying in the tree, jumping off the swing, and catapulting over the handlebars may have to do with a need to experience my body more vividly. Activities that involved undergoing the peril of being at high elevation or being in flight seemed to increase my body awareness. The swing and the catapulting also resulted in a sudden stopping of motion which helped me experience the contrast between my body and the immediate surroundings.

\* Miller, A. & Eller-Miller, E. (1973) "Cognitive-Developmental Training With Elevated Boards and Sign Language," *Journal of Autism and Childhood Schizophrenia*, p. 65-85.

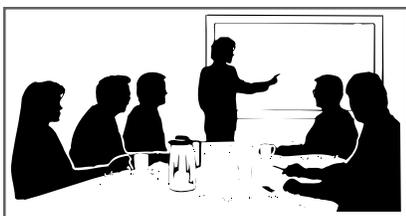
## LCDC's SUMMER '99 PROGRAM

This year, families from Italy, Canada and the United States have brought 10 children in the autism spectrum ranging in age from 3 to 7 years of age to participate in LCDC's six week summer program. As the children enter the fourth week of the program many of the parents are reporting improvement in eye contact, in understanding and use of signs and spoken words and in improved social contact. Families that applied too late to be accepted have been promised a place for their child in LCDC's Variable Duration Placement Program in the Fall.

The program carried through during the summer has all the hallmarks of the regular LCDC program. These include small classes (no more than six children) with a head teacher and two assistants for each class; regular use of elevated board systems, sign and spoken language training as well as cognitive-developmental, speech language, movement therapies as well as adaptive physical education and manual arts (shop work). LCDC's unique Symbol Accentuation Reading Program as well as its Drawing Program are also introduced. In addition, parents have opportunity to participate in a regular Parents' Group conducted by Social Worker Feiga Connors and Education Director Eileen Eller-Miller.

### BASIC AND ADVANCED COURSE LISTINGS

LCDC, in response to many requests, now offers — in addition to its Basic 5-Day Workshop on the Miller Method® — an Advanced 5-Day Workshop. The Advanced 5-Day Miller Method Workshop® is open only to those who have either taken the Basic Workshop or who have had substantial exposure to the Miller Method in their workplace. All 5-day workshops are limited to 20 people and are credited toward certification as a Miller Method Specialist.



The schedules for Basic and Advanced 5-Day Workshops are listed below:

### Basic 5-Day Workshops

October 18-22, 1999; December 13-17, 1999; February 7-11, 2000; April 10-14, 2000; June 5-9, 2000; July 17-21, 2000.

### Advanced 5-Day Workshops

To be scheduled as demand arises.

**Location:** All 5-Day workshops are located at the Language and Cognitive Development Center, Boston, MA

**Tuition:** \$975. Contact Dr. Paul Callahan at (800) 218-5232 to register or for further information about the workshops.

### PARENT-CHILD TRAINING

There are now several different Parent-Child Training options 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 ..... \$2500  
(Assessment plus 8 hrs. Training over 3-4 days)
3. Six-Week Summer Session ..... \$6000  
with Assessment
4. Variable Duration Placement at LCDC ..... \$2500  
(from 2 months to a year) per mo.
5. Videoconference Oversight (VCO) ..... \$2000  
approx. 8 (1 hr.) sessions/month per mo.

\* Rates are subject to change

**Parents and Professionals Listing**

The parents and professionals listed below have given their permission to have their names and phone numbers included in this newsletter so that they may share their first hand LCDC experience with other parents and professionals seeking an effective, developmentally oriented program.

- occupational therapists
- pediatric nurses
- physical therapists
- psychiatrists
- social workers
- special educators
- speech and language pathologists

**Some Parents Whose Children Have Participated in an LCDC Program**

Maryann Adamic .....	(440) 953-1396*
Ms. Kristina Bogus .....	(905) 450-8790*
Dr. and Mrs. David Grossman .....	(610) 430-0690*
Barbara and Jack Hitchcock .....	(508) 376-5365
Ms. Sherry Hoty .....	(216) 967-3291*
Dr. and Mrs. Stephen Kastl .....	(919) 510-8184
Maria Mejia .....	(440) 951-6759*
Betsy Newman .....	(440) 639-1547*
Diane and Robert Parish .....	(513) 248-8868
Mrs. Kelly Pinhey .....	(613) 258-3322
Ms. Lynn Thompson .....	(410) 295-7219
Dr. and Mrs. Charles Tucker .....	(502) 753-7463

\* Participation through Video Conferencing Oversight

**Some Professionals Who Have Participated in a Five Day Miller Method Workshop®**

Dr. Steve Buttrum .....	(905) 828-6348	clinical psychologist
Dr. Christine Cook .....	(216) 736-2928	early education supervisor
Lisa Hauben .....	(718) 849-3002	special educator
Susan Henry .....	(519) 453-4400	speech and language pathologist
Dr. Brenda McGuinness .....	(905) 372-6871	speech and language
Dr. Margaret Quell .....	(440) 942-0260	principal-special educator
Stephen Shore .....	(617) 277-9653	music specialist
Amy Waltos .....	(440) 942-0260	occupational therapist

**MILLER METHOD® CERTIFICATION**

To qualify for certification as a Miller Method® Specialist a professional must meet criteria related to their discipline, participation in 5-day training workshops at LCDC, hours of supervision, cases covered and written examination.

**Professional Disciplines**

Among the appropriate candidates for training and certification include:

- clinical and developmental psychologists
- music and movement therapists

**Five Day Miller Method Workshops**

Participation in the Basic Five-Day Miller Method Workshop is mandatory; currently, participation in the Advanced Five-Day Miller Method Workshop is optional -- although recommended. Those who participate in the Advanced Workshop reduce their needed weeks of supervision from 50 to 44.

**Supervision**

A total of 50 weeks of supervision (1 hour per week) is required unless the advanced workshop is taken. Supervision may be taken either at LCDC, via videoconferencing oversight (VCO) or via teleconferencing oversight (TCO) supplemented by monthly analysis of videotapes.

**Cases**

Each trainee selects 3 children -- two nonverbal and one limited verbal with autism or PDD or severe communication disorder -- as the group on which they will be supervised. On a quarterly basis copies of notes on each child are sent to their supervisor. In the course of the year, each trainee conducts an Umwelt Assessment on each child, works out a treatment/education plan for each child and conducts treatment sessions. Those with VCO will have opportunity to have some of their sessions supervised while they are conducting them; those with TCO will have a monthly videotape of their sessions analyzed and discussed over the telephone.

**Written Examination**

At the end of the 50 sessions, each trainee is given a series of searching questions about the children with whom they have worked. On successful completion of the examination, certification as Miller Method Specialist is awarded by the Language and Cognitive Development Center.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A MOTHER'S THANKS

My 12 year old son is a very loving and affectionate young man. He is a mother's delight. Most people look at him and think that he is "normal" but in fact he has autism and is severely mentally challenged. He has behaviors that can cause embarrassment and language that can make this mother blush.

Since this very special young man came into our lives almost 7 years ago, he has made many strides in his development. I knew nothing about autism when he came to live with us and many days were filled with frustration and anguish. I had a sense that there was more to Scott than meets the eye and yet I had "professionals" telling me that we should not expect too much from him and he would not amount to much. My mother's instinct told me otherwise and so I began my quest to find a solution to help Scott be all that he could be. I knew he would not be a brain surgeon, but I also knew he was capable of much more than the "experts" were giving him credit for.

Scott shows signs of intelligence beyond what I was told he was capable of, however his temper tantrums and his self abusive behaviors caused me great concern. He would scream, yell, headbutt and bite if he did not get what he wanted or did not want to do what was being requested of him. It was a constant battle to avoid these confrontations and to help him get beyond them.

I discovered the Miller Method® on the Internet, then arranged to come to Boston for an Umwelt Assessment. We were greeted warmly by the staff. Then Dr. Callahan and Dr. Miller took us into this room where Scott was first allowed to roam at will. (I later learned that they were observing Scott for any organized "systems" that he had that they might build on.) Then, they started a sequence in which "rough and tumble" activity with Scott was interspersed with demands for performance from him...At the end of the session we were all amazed -- except Drs. Miller and Callahan -- that there had been

no temper tantrums. Dr. Miller explained why Scott had been able to accept their demands...I saw my son behave in a way that pleased me and made me extremely hopeful for his future.

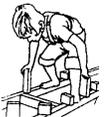
A week later I went to the training that the Millers offer. I sat through many video tapes and watched kids in therapy at the center. I was amazed at what these wonderful people have done for kids with autism. I have such a high regards for the Millers and I know that my son's future is brighter because of their work and dedication to these kids. My son now does chores willingly, he is productive and helps around the house like any other member of our family. It is so wonderful to see the temper tantrum decrease to the point of barely being a part of his life. His language is increasing and he is able to get his wants and desires met without tantrumming.

There is not enough I can say about these wonderful people that have virtually saved my son from a life of mere existence to one of meaning and purpose. They have given us some awesome tools to work with. Scott and I are planning to attend a week of parent/child training with the Millers, which will enhance our lives even more than it already has been. I look forward to getting this program into the state where I live. So many children can be helped. This program should be considered by all people in all fields of life, because somewhere, there is someone who needs to know about this method. It works. It is not a behavior modification program. It is a way of life.

Thank you Dr. and Mrs. Miller. Thank you Dr. Callahan. You are lifesavers for sure.

Shirley Simmons, Maine

A range of devices and programs -- including the Sign and Spoken Language and Symbol Accentuation Reading Programs -- used at the Language and Cognitive Development Center, are distributed by Cognitive Designs, Inc., Box 151, Waban, MA 02468 and may also be ordered from website <<http://www.cognitivedesigns.com>>



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