



Teachers' Corner

Irene Meier

Director, Special Education Instruction,
Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools

Collaborative Coaching in Fairfax County Public Schools



Collaboration across medical, educational, and community settings, particularly for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), is a definite need due to the multiple service providers involved and the issue of consistency among these providers (Swiezy, Stuart, & Korzekwa, 2008). According to Ryndak (1996), collaboration affords staff an opportunity to (a) develop mutually agreed upon goals and (b) participate in shared decision-making. Collaborative teaming is considered an indicator of high-quality educational programs for students with severe disabilities, including autism (Browder, Spooner, & Meier, 2011). When done successfully, collaboration results in positive relationships among providers and, ultimately, student success.

Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools serves more than 2,300 students identified with ASD in a continuum of settings. Given this large number of students and the resulting needs of their teachers, the district has developed a collaborative coaching model to provide professional development and in-class support to teachers. This model is delivered by 18 coaches highly trained in applied behavior analysis (ABA), which has a history of 60 years of successful use with students with developmental disabilities (Spooner, Knight, Browder, Jimenez, & DiBiase, in press). They also use the evidence-based practice of *systematic instruction*, which is derived from principles of ABA (Browder, Spooner, & Mims, 2011). The coaches bring together general and special education teachers and paraprofessionals to develop comprehensive, individualized plans for delivering instruction and managing behaviors using systematic instruction. This instruction is not limited to an individualized one-to-one approach or separate autism classrooms; it can also be used in a variety of settings, such as general education classes, small group meetings, and in the community (Browder, Spooner, & Meier, 2011).

In cases where student behaviors impede academic progress and social inclusion, or jeopardize the student's classroom placement, a team of three to four ABA coaches is deployed to a school on a temporary basis. The team works collaboratively with the school staff to (a) conduct a functional behav-

ior analysis (FBA) and (b) develop a comprehensive behavior intervention plan (BIP) to resolve the crisis. A highly trained instructional assistant may be added for 30 to 60 days while the plan is initiated. This plan includes the essential components of a BIP (i.e., proactive and reactive measures, identification of and instruction in replacement behaviors, data collection, reinforcement, and scheduling for the student). It also includes a way to fade the direct support of the temporary instructional assistant as the student demonstrates improvement. The objective eyes of the coaching team and the collaboration between them and school staff has the added benefit of providing critical elements of professional development to teachers as they work through the step-by-step process of data collection, behavior analysis, and plan implementation with on-site coaching support and feedback.

As a result of the collaborative coaching model, teachers have developed a more strategic repertoire of skills while using strategies such as reinforcement, modeling, prompting, and shaping. Through systematic district-wide training in the use of these evidence-based practices via the model, teachers are gaining the requisite skills to provide quality instruction to students with ASD.

References

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Note. This article is based on a presentation at the 2011 CEC Convention in which Irene Meier was one of the recipients of the **DADD Practitioner Presentation Award**.

President's Message

Teresa Doughty



I was recently preparing a lecture for a doctoral seminar focused on college-level teaching when I came across Stephen Covey's (1989) *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. As I read through each of these habits, I immediately noticed the parallels between them and what I consider the characteristics of outstanding special educators. In my 27 years as a special educator, I've had the privilege of observing some truly wonderful teachers in the field. As such, I couldn't resist sharing a few of my observations of those wonderful special educators using Covey's 7 Habits as a guide.

Habit 1: According to Covey (1989), highly effective people are "proactive." More than one outstanding special educator I've observed engaged in proactive practices. To me, this meant they were thoughtful in their planning. They were ready to make accommodations for students who were unable to use materials the same way as others, who might be in need of additional prompting, who might require that information be presented using an alternative method, or might need to communicate their answers using an AAC modality. Planning ahead and being proactive was essential for successfully managing a classroom and meeting the diverse needs of the students. This meant strategically thinking through their lessons and anticipating any foreseeable student needs so that instructional time and student engagement would be maximized.

Habit 2: "Begin with the End in Mind," a habit in which I hope all special educators engage. I interpret this habit as maintaining a focus on students' future and preparing for school to postsecondary transitions. Special educators must always consider the future in which they are readying their students to function. Those I've observed to be outstanding do so with this in mind for every student interaction in which they engage. They maintain high expectations for the outcomes their students will achieve and focus daily on introducing and facilitating skills and behaviors leading to greater autonomous functioning. Even teachers who serve students at the elementary level consider transition outcomes, such as where students will one day live, work, and participate in community-based recreation and leisure activities, and begin building the foundational skills that will lead to greater access and independence.

Habit 3: "Put First Things First." Outstanding special educators know how to prioritize! They also recognize the power of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and work with team members to focus on annual goals and objectives considered a priority for students during a given year. They avoid including "everything and the kitchen sink" in the list of short-term objectives and know data must be collected for EVERY objective in an IEP. Concurrently, they also recognize that while students

will likely learn many more skills than those reflected in the IEP during a given year, the priority skills will receive the primary focus and student progress will be monitored through data collection.

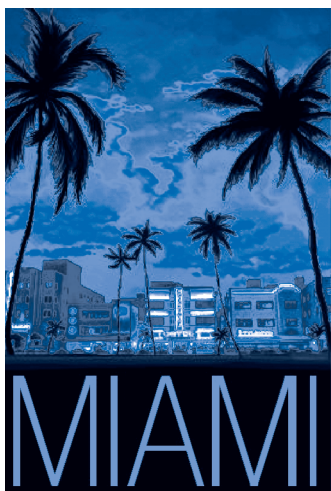
Habit 4: "Think Win/Win." I interpret this as the mindset and practices with which outstanding special educators engage their students. These teachers first maintain high behavioral expectations. They interact with their students as they would any other individual of the same chronological age and immediately correct them when their behavior is not age-appropriate. At the same time, they recognize the power of positive behavior supports and use them to promote ongoing positive interactions, behaviors, and learning within their instructional settings. These educators know students will "rise to the occasion" when treated respectfully and fairly, and when provided with effective instruction and positive supports.

Habit 5: "Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood." To me, this habit pertains not to teaching specific skills but to teaching students. I love when I observe fabulous special educators who recognize that when their students struggle with learning, the fault does not lie with the student but rather with the teacher. They know ALL students can learn and challenge themselves to identify appropriate, effective methods that will facilitate student learning. These outstanding teachers continually investigate multiple instructional methodologies that might be effective with their students and recognize that students with autism, intellectual disability, or developmental disabilities seldom acquire skills through observation alone. They know they must constantly be open to using varied promising and empirically validated strategies for introducing information or for ongoing student supports . . . because they are teaching students.

Habit 6: "Synergize." To me, synergize directly equates to collaboration. Most special educators in today's schools participate in teamwork and interactions with general educators, related service providers, parents, students, administrators, paraeducators, and other relevant stakeholders to effectively serve their students. In other words, they must collaborate with others. Those I consider "outstanding" begin with reflective listening skills and focus on building support teams around students.

Habit 7: Finally, "Sharpen the Saw." Outstanding special educators never stop learning about their profession and students, remain engaged in professional organizations, and continually look for ways to improve their skills. In general, they are professionals!

This is my final President's Message; my term as DADD President is coming to an end. I have been truly honored to serve in this role and wish each of you a wonderful new year. If I don't see you in Miami at the DADD conference in January, I hope to have a conversation with you at our CEC national conference this April in Denver!



13th International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disabilities, & Developmental Disabilities

Research to Practice

*Council for Exceptional Children
Division on Autism & Developmental
Disabilities*

On behalf of the Board of Directors for CEC's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities, may I extend an invitation to join us in **Miami Beach, Florida, January 18-20, 2012**, for a stellar professional learning opportunity!

The 13th International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disabilities and Developmental Disabilities will integrate research and practice, reflecting the need for evidence-based strategies and interventions, within this diverse field. Topical areas include:

- ◆ Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ◆ Assistive Technology/Digital Technology
- ◆ IBI & Other Interventions
- ◆ Intellectual Disabilities
- ◆ Mental Health/Dual Diagnosis
- ◆ Multiple Disabilities
- ◆ Paraprofessionals
- ◆ Parental Engagement/Advocacy
- ◆ Post-Secondary Initiatives
- ◆ Transitions

The program features more than 100 lecture and poster presentations; conference delegates may also attend an in-depth pre-conference training institute on ASD, led by Dr. Brenda Smith Myles.

Our Conference will be held at the historic [Deauville Beach Resort](#), one of the Grande-Dame hotels in Miami Beach.

For further information, please contact:

[Cindy Perras](#)

Conference Co-ordinator

CEC-DADD

cindy.perras@cogeco.ca

www.daddcec.org



DADD Awards: Criteria and CALL for Nominations

John W. Kidd Subdivision Award: May be presented annually to a subdivision that has shown exceptional performance during the past year. *Criteria include:*

- a. Maintains membership integrity during the previous fiscal year;
- b. Engages in innovative programming, evidenced by plans and performance presented at time of application for award; and
- c. Participates actively in DADD activities beyond the subdivision level.

Burton Blatt Humanitarian Award: May be presented annually to an individual who (a) reflects the ideals of the Division and (b) has made significant contributions to the field of intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism. *Criteria include:*

- a. Exceptional effort exerted and involvement in furthering the cause of persons with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism; and
- b. Membership in DADD.

Legislative Award: May be presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated leadership in the area of legislation. *Criteria include:*

terion: Individual has been involved in the development, support, and/or enactment of legislation designed to meet needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism.

Research Award: May be presented annually to an individual who reflects the ideals of the Division and who has made significant contributions to the field of autism and developmental disabilities through research. *Criteria include:*

- a. Exceptional effort exerted and involvement in furthering the cause of persons with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism through research; and
- b. Membership in DADD.

All nominations for these awards must be made in writing to the DADD Awards Committee Chairperson by FEBRUARY 1, 2012.

Toni Fuller Merfeld, *Awards Committee Chairperson*
(toni@metrowestkids.net); 515-205-6861

More about the DADD Research Award

The **DADD Research Award** is to be given annually to an individual, or group of individuals, in recognition of outstanding basic and/or applied research in the area of developmental disabilities. Selection criteria:

- a. The research for which the nomination is made has been published within a peer-refereed journal during the 2 years prior to the year in which the award is being given. No "in press" articles will be considered.
- b. The article will be a primary research report (reflecting any research methodology), a meta-analysis, or a research review. It may not be a theoretical paper, a position or issue statement, or a chapter.
- c. The article will have broad implications for practice that are likely to impact the field of developmental disabilities.

To nominate an individual or self-nominate for this award, submit the following materials to the chair of the DADD Awards Committee by **February 1st** of each year:

1. Three clear copies of the photocopied article from the journal in which it appeared;

2. Letter of nomination in which nominator provides an assessment of how the study extends the knowledge base in the field of autism and/or developmental disabilities, how the research can lead to research-based practices, and/or how the research supports evidenced based practices in autism and/or developmental disabilities (letter not to exceed 3 pages);
3. Complete name, title, address, e-mail address, and telephone information for nominee(s); and
4. Complete name, title, address, e-mail address, and telephone information for the person making the nomination.

A three-person subcommittee of the DADD Awards Committee will review all articles submitted to determine if the nomination is in accordance with the award guidelines. The subcommittee will then screen the pool of articles submitted and create a short list. Evaluations of the selected articles will be solicited from appropriate scholars in the field. A summary of findings and recommendations will be transmitted to the DADD Awards Committee, which will make the award decision.

Students' Corner

Jordan Shurr
Student Governor



Would Somebody Please Write Me?

Most of you know that life in graduate school can be extremely challenging in many ways—long days, never-ending projects, competing deadlines—not to mention various overlapping responsibilities. Those of us with families may add to the list changing diapers and finding a pad of paper that hasn't yet been scribbled in. But, you may want to sit down for this, from what I've heard, very little changes once you become a professor or enter another special education-related profession. Now, I'll let that sink in a little before moving on. Once you obtain the dream job and move out of your shared closet of an office, once you have the extra initials and the tassel to prove it, then the real job begins. What has been a period of preparation and transformation becomes a chance to get to work.

So, why then am I begging for emails and contacts? Well, as I head out to conferences and have the chance to meet with more and more people in the field, I am beginning to recognize the importance of relationships and connections for the work of the special education professional. Connections can lead to joint projects, mutual support, and improved personal work. If you have been to a CEC conference, you have likely noticed that together, professionals in special education make a sizeable group. However, once spread out in our respective jobs and communities, it is quite the opposite. And, if you haven't already

discovered, it may be difficult to elicit the same excitement from your next-door neighbor on the system of least prompts or the dignity of risk, as with your professional peers. Creating and sustaining relationships with other people in similar occupations is critical for obtaining advice and support in your research and practice issues as well as your overarching professional development. Establishing these relationships prior to the looming data or deadline crises can help you in some cases to avoid these headaches in the first place, and in most other cases to endure and overcome them.

While I will gladly set aside my to-do list to read and respond to any emails that I receive as a result of my plea, I encourage you to continue (or start) to build those deliberate connections with your peer pre-professionals. Continue to share the load through collaborative projects, shared editing, and group brainstorming so that your own work and the work of your peers can continue to add to the strong, vibrant future of special education for students with autism and developmental disabilities.

As DADD student governor, I am happy to announce that we will begin making peer networking and collaboration among our student members easier at both our division conference and the annual CEC conference. This January, at the DADD conference in Miami, we will be holding an event specifically targeted to increase the input and involvement of our student members as well as to provide an opportunity for students from our broad membership base to connect with one another. If you have any specific ideas for these networking and collaborative student meetings, please send me an email (jshurr@purdue.edu). I look forward to hearing from you!

DADD Election Results!

DADD is proud to announce the results of its election for board members starting in January 2012; congratulations to those elected and thank you to everyone who ran for office. Also, thank you to all members who voted in this year's online election.

Vice President – [Amanda Boutot](#)

Treasurer – [Gardner Umbarger](#)

Canadian Regional Representative – [Beth Kavanagh](#)

See the next issue of the *DADD Express* for more information about our newly elected board members.

Publication Committee Report

Michael Wehmeyer
Chairperson



Educating Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Research-Based Principles and Practices

The importance of using research and evidence-based practices in the education of students with autism and developmental disabilities will be a familiar issue for DADD members. In June 2011, Routledge published a new text, edited by DADD members **Dianne Zager**, **Michael Wehmeyer**, and **Richard Simpson**, titled *Educating Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Research-Based Principles and Practices*. Similar to a handbook in its description of the theory and re-

search supporting current practices in the education of students with autism spectrum disorders, this comprehensive in scope, cross-disciplinary, and research-based text shows how the existing knowledge base can be used to explore promising new possibilities related to the field's many unanswered questions. Each chapter's authors are nationally recognized for their work on the topic being addressed. In fact, virtually all of the text's authors are members of DADD, and the royalties from the text will be donated to DADD to further the division's mission. The book is appropriate for practicing professionals in education and psychology and for speech/language therapists and other clinicians, as well as for use by students at a graduate level in those fields. DADD members will want the volume on their shelves both as a timely, relevant resource and to benefit DADD!

Ordering information can be found at <http://www.taylorandfrancis.com/books/details/9780415877572/>

DADD Dues Election Results

The DADD Board of Directors proposal to increase annual dues from \$25 to \$30 for regular members and \$8 to \$15 for students overwhelmingly passed in the online vote. The increased dues will take effect **January 1, 2012**.

To recap, the reasons for the proposed increase were:

- Current dues for regular members in other divisions range from \$20 to \$60. Student member dues range from \$5 to \$30.

- DADD is the only division that provides members with two premier journals—*Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities* and *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*. The cost of these journals is approximately \$27.50 per member, meaning that the current division membership fees do not even cover the cost of journals.

Thank you to everyone who voted.

Editor's Note . . .

Darlene Perner



On behalf of DADD, I would like to thank all our contributors to this issue and past issues. My previous Editor's Notes (although written) never got published because of space limitations, so my thanks to the following individuals are belated. Thank you **Tina Taylor Dyches**, DADD Dolly Gray Literature Award Chairperson, for your contributions, and congratulations to our 2011 DADD Awards' recipients, **Jordan Obrecht**, **Heidi Hyte**, **Irene Meier**, and **Grace Francis**. At this time I also want to thank **Robert Sandieson** for taking photos

at our DADD events; his assistance has been invaluable. Great photos, Bob!

Please get involved with DADD! One of the best ways to start is by joining a DADD committee. Also, join us at the DADD Conference this January in Miami and at CEC this April in Denver. Check our website (www.daddcec.org) for more DADD news and information. If you have any questions, please contact me (dperner@bloomu.edu) or Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, Department of Exceptionality Programs, 400 E. 2nd St., Bloomsburg, PA 17815. (Please notify CEC if you have a change of address.)

Membership and Unit Development Committee News



Debora Wichmanowski
Chairperson

Our division continues an upward swing, and we have remained the #1 growing division in CEC. In fact, we have had the largest growth in membership every month for well over a year (as of July 31, 2011, DADD had 3,937 members). Congratulations! At the end of July, we ranked third in membership among all CEC divisions. At the same time in 2010, we were ranked fifth largest out of 17 divisions. Becoming the largest division in CEC is definitely obtainable, but we need your help!

We are very close to reaching this year's goal of 4,000 members. Please help us bring more members to our division by getting the word out to your friends, colleagues, and college students about DADD and the benefits of becoming a member. Some important information you may want to share:

- Dues may be paid in 3 easy installments from your credit card.
- Members receive four issues of the journal *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities (ETADD)*.
- Members receive four issues of the journal *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*.
- Members receive the *DADD Express* newsletter four times per year.
- Members have access to Position Papers developed by DADD.
- Members have access to networking and conferences.

If you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact your 2012 Regional Membership Representative:

Representative	Region	States & Provinces
Beth Kavanagh	Canada	Any Canadian province or territory
Dianne Zager	NE	CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT
Debbie Wichmanowski	SE	AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV
Mark Francis	MW	IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI
Debra Cote	FW	AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

Finally, one additional area in which we have shown growth over the past few years is the amount of state subdivisions we have established. We are always looking to start new or restart dormant subdivisions in states currently without one. Please contact me (dwichman@pasco.k12.fl.us) if you are interested in starting a subdivision.

2012 CEC DADD Program Update – Denver, Colorado

The Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities will have an especially strong presence at this year's annual convention. More than 25 presentations on ASD will be complemented by 24 poster sessions. Likewise, the field of developmental disabilities will have 20 presentations as well as 9 poster sessions. Our sessions will be throughout the day on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, April 12–14.

The **DADD Showcase Session**, a 2-hour presentation, will address the topic of "Social and Academic Interventions in Autism." The panel of experts will feature **Dianne Zager**, **Amanda Boutot**, **Gary Mesibov**, **Brenda Smith Myles**, and **Tippy Gilbert**. This is one presentation you do not want to miss. Scheduled for Thursday, April 12, in the morning.

We are very fortunate to have **Ann Turnbull** from the Beach Center on Disability at the University of Kansas to give the **DADD Invited Address**. Dr. Turnbull, along with her colleagues, will present "From Good Intentions to Family Support: A Process for Family Needs Assessment." Scheduled for Thursday, April 12, in the afternoon.

The Division's business meeting, as well as the President's Reception, will be on Thursday, April 12th. Please check the convention program for additional details.

I look forward to seeing you all in the Mile High City.

Richard M. Gargiulo
President-Elect

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY to Start Thinking About the CEC Convention in San Antonio 2013

The 2013 CEC Annual Convention & Expo in San Antonio, Texas, should be another interesting and exciting conference for DADD members. We strongly encourage all members to consider submitting a proposal (**proposal submission deadline: May 2012**) and sharing your innovative practices, ideas, and research in the areas of autism and developmental disabilities. Session presentations by students and practitioners have been well attended at past conventions, and attendees have appreciated hearing about innovative practices from their peers.

Proposals accepted for the 2013 Convention may be considered for the CEC-DADD Practitioner and Student Awards. Student and practitioner presentation proposals relevant to the field of autism, intellectual disabilities, and other developmental disabilities, and accepted for the CEC Annual Conventions in 2013, will be reviewed by the DADD conference program chairs and then submitted (with the permission of the author[s]) to the DADD Awards Committee for consideration for two distinct awards: the Herbert J. Prehm Student Presentation Award and the Practitioner Presentation Award. The committee may



then select one presentation proposal from each category. A DADD Award Certificate, along with a financial award, will be given to the recipients of each award at the DADD General Business Meeting during the CEC Convention.

We hope you will start thinking now about writing a presentation proposal for the 2013 CEC convention. *For more information about these and other DADD awards, contact Toni Merfeld (toni@metrowestkids.net).* See you in San Antonio!



Executive Director's Corner

Tom E. C. Smith

Keep Up the Momentum

Another school year has begun, and children with disabilities are receiving special education services from a wide range of teachers and other professionals. Many of these children have been classified as having intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders (ASD), or other developmental disabilities. For the most part, they are receiving special education services and supports in general classroom settings. DADD can be proud of its long history of supporting the provision of appropriate services for this group of students in inclusive settings. When inclusion as a service delivery model was beginning to take hold, the division called for its application not only in public school settings but also for adults with disabilities. Inclusion is definitely a philosophy that



has been embraced by much of our society. Still, there are pockets of resistance. Some members of our community are not supportive of supported employment, supported living, or inclusive education. While much progress has been made, much work remains to be done. DADD has emerged as a leader for individuals with ASD, intellectual disorders, and other developmental disabilities. As we grow in numbers, we must continue to grow in our influence; we must continue to conduct and disseminate research and advocate for our target population. If you are interested in working more closely with DADD, at either the national or state level, please contact me. The board is interested in starting new DADD subdivisions and strengthening existing subdivisions. We are interested in expanding our membership and influence and welcome your involvement. For those of you already involved, thank you. For those of you wanting to get more involved, please let us know (tecsmith@uark.edu).