

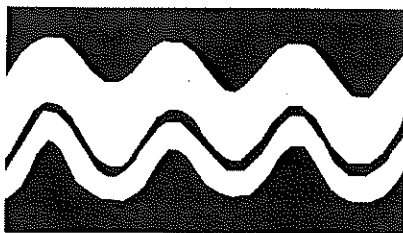
# The Signal



Vol. 7, No. 1

Newsletter of the World Association for Infant Mental Health

January—March 1999



## *Change and Continuity in the Development of Children with Autism*

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*by Marian Sigman, Ph.D.*

The study of psychopathology in children has been based on a variety of conceptualizations and models, many derived from theories and knowledge of adult psychopathology. There is much to be learned using models of adult psychopathology. However, the manifestations and consequences of psychopathology in children ultimately must be viewed in terms of the systematic developmental changes that occur throughout childhood. Although a lifespan approach may be useful for understanding adult disorders, a developmental perspective is absolutely critical for understanding childhood psychopathology. In this paper, I will illustrate the application of the developmental perspective to the investigation of autism. The underlying theme of the paper is that early development has consequences for later development, although each phase of development has its own characteristics and requirements that must be taken into account in planning interventions.

My aim is to summarize what we have learned about social competence in autistic children using the three

developmental approaches. The basis for much of this discussion will be results from a study of 70 children with autism, 93 children with Down syndrome, 59 children with heterogeneous developmental delays, and 108 typically developing children who were recruited and studied when they were between one and five years of age (Sigman & Ruskin, in press). Most of these children were re-evaluated a year later and 64% were observed eight to 12 years later. Observations were carried out in the laboratory, in the school classroom, and on the school playground.

My focus is on social competence because of its importance in the shaping of children's life experiences. Moreover, social competence has been neglected as an area of study and intervention among the developmentally disabled. Early achievements of communicative and representational skills influence later verbal and social capacities of children with autism, suggesting that early interventions should be targeted toward improving these important precursors. At the same time, I will present evidence that the verbal and social development of these

children in the mid-school years is often overlooked, with the implication that interventions need to be continued over long periods of time than is now customary.

### **Deficits and Strengths in Components of Social Competence in Children with Autism**

An important approach in developmental psychopathology is to use what is known about normal development to guide investigations of children with clinical disorders. A predominant symptom of autism is markedly deficient language acquisition so that only about half of autistic individuals develop communicative speech, as Rutter (1978) pointed out in an influential chapter 20 years ago. Even among those individuals with productive speech, prosody and pragmatics are likely to be severely impaired. Research on language acquisition in typically developing children indicates that communicative and representational achievement are important prerequisites for language acquisition (Bruner & Sherwood, 1983; Mundy, Sigman, Ungerer & Sherman, 1986). Thus the fact that autistic children have such difficulty with language suggests that their nonverbal communication and representational play may be similarly impaired.

### **Nonverbal Communication and Representational Play**

Studies of nonverbal communications and representational play confirm this hypothesis. The hypothesis was tested by videotaping and coding the children's behaviors during a structured interaction with an experimenter on the frequency of three mutually exclusive categories:

joint attention, requesting, and social interaction (Bruner & Sherwood, 1983; Seibert, Hogan & Mundy, 1982).

Children with autism initiate and respond to bids for joint attention less than children with Down syndrome, children with heterogeneous developmental delays, and typically developing children (Loveland & Landry, 1986). While they also request objects slightly less than children with developmental delays and typically developing children, the group differences are smaller for joint attention (Sigman & Ruskin, in press). They initiate and respond to social bids as much as the developmentally delayed and typically developing children in this situation.

In addition, children with autism generally engage in less functional and symbolic use of objects during unstructured play situations than matched controls (Riguet, Taylor, Benroya & Klein, 1981; Sigman & Ungerer, 1984a; Wing, Gould, Yeates & Brierly, 1977). Functional play is the conventional use of objects but with toys rather than real objects. Symbolic play is distinguished from functional play in that the child pretends that some object stands for another object, that something actually absent is present, or attributes animacy to a doll or other substitute. Although the play of autistic children improves when their activities are structured by an adult (Lewis & Boucher, 1988), even in these situations children with autism engage in fewer symbolic play acts than children with Down syndrome, children with developmental delays, and typically developing children matched on mental and language ages (Baron-Cohen, 1987; Sigman & Ruskin, in press).

The deficit in joint attention

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seems particularly important in that the frequencies with which all the children in our study initiated joint attention were concurrently associated with language skills. Thus, the link between joint attention and language, demonstrated for normal children (Bates, Bretherton, Carlson, Carpen, & Marcia, 1979), also was found for children with autism.

Language abilities also were associated with representational play in all the groups of children. Given that joint attention and representational play skills were significantly intercorrelated and both were associated with language abilities in our study, the question arose whether one of these skills was particularly responsible for the associations with language. A series of hierarchical regressions was calculated in which the two joint attention variables (initiates and responds) were entered as a block and the two play variables (number of different functional and symbolic acts) were entered as a block with language as the dependent measure (Sigman & Ruskin, in press). Both joint attention and representational play skills contributed significantly to the hierarchical regression, no matter in what order they were entered, and accounted for 62% of the variance in language scores.

### **Responsiveness to the Facial Expressions of Others**

Representational play may be deficient in children with autism not only because of their deficiencies in symbolic capacities but also because of their social isolation. Most of the themes of children's imaginary play are focused on affectively charged social interactions. In order to pretend, children need to observe the actions and interactions of others, just

as a playwright or comedian needs to be sensitive to interpersonal transactions. Similarly, children with autism may not initiate or respond to bids for joint attention because they do not attend to other people.

In contrast to other children, autistic children look less at another person, whether the person is showing neutral affect, distress after hitting her finger with a toy hammer or her knee on the edge of a table, fear or amusement at the sight of a small moving robot, discomfort, or anger during a pretend telephone call (Corona, Dissanayake, Arbelle, Wellington, & Sigman, in press; Dissanayake, Sigman, & Kasari, 1996; Sigman, Kasari, Kwon, & Yirmiya, 1992). Autistic children also are rated as less empathic or concerned in the presence of a distressed experimenter. The same pattern is observed whether the social partner is an unfamiliar adult or the familiar caregiver. In a study of the verbal responses of high-functioning autistic children to the experimenter recounting a story about losing her wallet, the children with autism were less sympathetic than the developmentally disabled comparison group (Loveland & Tunali, 1991).

One possible explanation for this lack of response to the affects of others would be a limitation in the capacity of the children with autism to differentiate between others' affective expressions. However, the children with autism in our studies seemed to discriminate between emotions in that they attended more and appeared more empathic when an experimenter showed distress than when her affect was more neutral. Another hypothesis is that people with autism do not respond to the emotions of others because these emotions are overly arousing. In a recent investigation of the behaviour and

heart rate responses of a group of young autistic children to an experimenter showing distress after hitting her knee, the children with autism showed no significant change in heart rate compared to baseline (Corona et al., in press). In comparison, children of the same mental and chronological age, with heterogeneous developmental disorders, showed a decrease in heart rate relative to baseline, thereby manifesting a cardiac orienting response. In neither group of children was there an increase in the heart rate compared to baseline, as would be expected if the children were aroused by the situation.

Thus, children with autism seem simply less interested in the responses of others. The deficits in joint attention and representational play may stem from this lack of interest, or, alternatively, they may be less interested in other people because they are born with a disruption in the mechanism underlying attentional and affective sharing (Hobson, 1993) or in understanding meta-representations (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1985; Leslie, 1987). Alternatively, the children may be less able to comprehend the significance of others' reactions because of a more general impairment in processing of relational information (Davies, Bishop, Manstead, & Tantam, 1994).

### **Stability of Development within the Autistic Group**

A second approach to the investigation of developmental processes is to determine the longitudinal stability of characteristics both within the diagnostic groups and within individual children. Many children may outgrow difficulties because they acquire compensatory skills or because environmental requirements change so that previous

limitations may no longer be so handicapping. Alternatively, new developmental stages may stress children's abilities so much that they can no longer cope with the demands of their school and home environments and difficulties may be exacerbated. Longitudinal studies are clearly the only way to investigate individual stability. In terms of group stability, longitudinal studies are preferable to cross-sectional studies of children at different ages since the latter always involve different groups of children. In this section of the paper, I will discuss stability of diagnosis, intelligence, nonverbal and verbal communicative skills, representational play, and responsiveness to the emotions of others in children with autism. Because there have been so few longitudinal studies of the processes of development in children with autism, almost all of the discussion will be based on my own longitudinal study (Sigman & Ruskin, in press).

### **Stability of Diagnosis in Children with Autism**

A critical issue is the extent to which children diagnosed with autism remain affected with the disorder throughout their lives. Several investigators have examined a group of autistic children in early childhood and followed them into early or late adolescence (Cantwell, Baker, Rutter & Mawhood, 1989; Chung, Luk, & Lee, 1990; DeMyer et al., 1973; Eisenberg, 1956; Gillberg & Steffenburg, 1987; Kanner, 1971; Lord & Schopler, 1989b; Lotter, 1978; Venter, Lord, & Schopler, 1992). Based on diagnoses made by the same clinician or group of clinicians at two time points or a global classification scheme that categorizes life adjustment from good

to very poor (Lotter, 1978), most individuals with autism in these studies remain as severely affected by the disorder in adolescence as in childhood. Taken together, these studies report that 10-15% of adults with autism have good outcomes; 15-25% have fair outcomes; 15-25% have poor outcomes; and 30-50% have very poor outcomes.

Although these studies show that the life adaptation of most individuals with autism does not improve as they age, there have been few studies of the stability of the diagnosis of autism or of particular symptoms over time. The major reason for the paucity of studies of diagnostic stability is that, until recently, diagnoses were made by clinicians who frequently used varying criteria for the disorder. Even after diagnostic systems had been formulated and circulated, standardized interviews and observations were lacking so that comparability between diagnosed groups could not be assumed. Observational measures, such as the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (Schopler, Reichler, & Renner, 1986) and the Autism Behavior Checklist (Krug, Arick, & Almond, 1980) have not been very widely used. Moreover, these systems are appropriate for the diagnosis of young children and do not apply to many older individuals, particularly those who are autistic but not mentally retarded. The recent creation of the Autism Diagnostic Interview (LeCouteur et al., 1989) and the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (Lord et al., 1989), which are designed for diagnosis across the full range of intellectual and chronological development, should facilitate studies of diagnostic and symptom stability.

In our recent longitudinal follow-up, 51 of these 70 children originally diagnosed with autism at ages 3-5

years, using a variety of procedures, were available for rediagnosis. The Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (Lord, Rutter, & LeCouteur, 1994) was administered to the parents about 8-9 years after the original diagnosis (Sigman & Ruskin, in press). The Autism Diagnostic Interview is designed so that a determination can be made as to whether the individual ever met the criteria for diagnosis as well as whether the individual currently meets this criteria.

These results showed that most children diagnosed with autism between three and five years continued to show all the symptoms of autism later in childhood and adolescence. This was true despite the fact that all the children participated in early intervention programs for at least some period of time. An obvious limitation of this study is that the follow-up diagnosis depended solely on the parental interview. In a few cases, parents were recollecting qualities of their children with whom they no longer lived and saw infrequently. In addition, standardized diagnostic information was only available for part of the sample at intake and the same diagnostic instruments were not used at both intake and follow-up. Furthermore, the results may be generalizable only to children with classical forms of autism, as relatively strict diagnostic standards were used at intake. There may be less continuity among children whose diagnosis is less evident.

Even if children continue to be diagnosed as autistic, the nature of their symptoms may change over time. As an example, some cross-sectional studies suggest that older children show less stereotypic behavior than younger children and this may be particularly true for high-functioning children with autism.

However, one investigation of adults with autism noted a very high rate of stereotyped behavior, with some of the high-functioning subjects inhibiting or disguising these behaviors in public (Rumsey, Rapoport, & Sceery, 1985). If a child develops language, a lack of verbal skills may be replaced by language that is stilted, lacking in prosody, and marked by pronominal reversals (e.g., saying "you," "she," or "he" instead of "I"). Longitudinal studies that measured the same

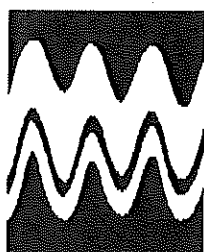
children with autism because of difficulties with maintaining their attention and assessing their responses. In order to address this issue, one-year repeat reliability was evaluated in groups of three to five-year-old children (Sigman & Ruskin, in press). Most of the children were tested with the Cattell Developmental Scale except for the small number of children who had sufficient skills to be assessed with the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test. One-year test-

retest reliability was similar for the children with autism and those with

as high for autistic children as for typically developing, behaviorally disordered, and mentally handicapped groups of children (DeMeyer et al., 1974; Freeman et al., 1985; Lockyer & Rutter, 1969; Lord & Schopler, 1989a,b; Mittler, Gilles, & Jukes, 1966). In our longitudinal study (Sigman and Ruskin, in press), stability was somewhat lower ( $r = .44$ ) than that reported in the previous studies ( $r$ s range from .58 to .79), probably due to the earlier age of intake in our study. Lord and Schopler (1989a) have shown that stability is lower in children followed from younger ages. In addition, the length of follow-up was longer in our study than some of the previous studies, which may also account for the lower stability over time.

Like other studies, there was little change in mean IQ scores for the autistic group or the developmentally delayed group. Mean IQ scores decreased only two to three points for the children with autism and developmental delays. In contrast to the stability in group means, individual children with autism showed great change in their intelligence scores. The intelligence test scores of about half the children with autism (22 of 43) and developmental delays (14 of 32) increased markedly while the other half declined. For the children who gained in intelligence scores, the mean increase was 22.38 points for the children with autism and 17.21 points for the children with developmental delays. For the children who decline in intelligence scores, the mean loss was 23 points for both groups.

The most hopeful result of this investigation was that a surprising number of children with autism who tested in the mentally retarded range at intake had scores above that range at follow-up some eight to nine years



*Even if children continue to be diagnosed as autistic, the nature of their symptoms may change over time.*

symptoms over time are needed to determine how much change there is in the symptoms shown by children as they develop.

### **Stability of Intelligence Test Scores in Children with Autism**

A second critical issue for those concerned with autistic children is whether their level of tested intelligence alters as they age. About 75-80% of individuals with autism are mentally retarded so that they score more than 2 SDs below the mean on general intelligence tests that assess verbal and performance skills. Individuals with autism who score higher have more interactive social relationships and are more capable of independent functioning at all ages than lower-scoring individuals with autism.

One preliminary question is whether intelligence tests can be administered accurately to young

developmental delays,  $r(21) = .62$  and  $r(28) = .66$ , respectively, and slightly lower than for the children with Down syndrome and the typically developing children,  $r(42) = .76$  and  $r(21) = .75$ , respectively. These results show that test-retest reliability is not so different across groups.

Because of their particular problem with language development, samples of autistic individuals often have higher scores on measures of performance abilities than verbal abilities. Investigators have varied as to whether they have used measures of performance IQ, verbal IQ, or general IQ, and the consistency of this use. However, the results have been similar in the studies that have compared the stability of performance and verbal IQs or items (Freeman, Ritvo, Needleman, & Yokota, 1985; Lockyer & Rutter, 1969; Lord & Schopler, 1989a,b).

The results of these studies suggest that the stability of IQ scores as measured by correlations is about

later. Thus, 11 children with autism who had scored in the mentally retarded range on the developmental scale (below an IQ of 70) were in the borderline to average range (above an IQ of 70) on the follow-up IQ test. Only one child with autism had an IQ test score that declined from above 70 to below 70. In the developmentally delayed group, some of whose members had language delays but were not mentally retarded, an equivalent number of children moved in ( $N = 4$ ) and out ( $N = 5$ ) of the mentally retarded range. The improvement in intellectual performance in our group of children with autism is greater than that of previous studies, most of which followed children from older ages. Lord and Schopler (1989a) did report as much change in IQ scores in a sample of comparable age, with 35% of their sample moving from mild retardation to the nonretarded classification.

### Stability of Communication Skills in Children with Autism

#### Nonverbal Communication

In order to determine the extent of stability in nonverbal communication skills, a revised version of the original assessment measure was administered to the children at follow-up. The Early Social Communication Scale (Seibert et al., 1982) was slightly modified so that the activities and toys were more appropriate for older children. This was done because, in our pilot work for the follow-up study, we realized that some of the materials we had used when the children were younger seemed too immature to some of the subjects tested at older ages. Moreover, parents and caregivers who were

encouraging their children to maintain more mature behavior patterns were often uncomfortable with toys designed for infants. The administration of the scales was videotaped and the child's nonverbal responses were coded in the same way as had been done earlier. We did not attempt to elicit or code the initiation or



*... the autistic children who were more emotionally responsive at age three to five years were also more responsive later.*

response to social interaction but limited the coding to the frequency of initiation of joint attention and requesting and responses to bids for joint attention, recorded as percentage scores.

Because of changes in the procedures, neither mean differences nor individual differences in scores could be compared over time. However, stability of group differences and of individual behaviors could be evaluated. The results of the group comparisons were similar to the results when the children were younger; there were significant group differences in the frequency of initiating joint attention and behavior regulation and the percentage of responding to bids for joint attention. The children with autism initiated fewer bids for joint attention and requested objects or assistance with objects less than the children with Down syndrome and the children with developmental delays. The children with autism also responded to bids for joint attention less than the developmentally delayed group, but did not differ from the children with Down syndrome. Therefore, at follow-up,

the children with autism were somewhat more deficient in behavior regulation and somewhat less deficient in the capacity to respond to bids for joint attention than at intake.

In terms of individual stability, the extent to which the children with autism and the children with developmental delays initiated joint attention was significantly correlated across the two time points, but this was not true for their frequency of initiating behavior regulation or responding to joint attention. Thus, there was stability at both the group and individual level among children with autism in nonverbal communication behaviors.

#### Language Skills

The methods for assessing language skills changed over time, as was the case for the assessments of intelligence and nonverbal communication skills. Although the majority of the children were tested with the Reynell Scales at both age points, the language abilities of some children improved enough that a more advanced language assessment was required. However, because all language scales are standardized for age, it was possible to assign language ages to all the children at both points in time.

In terms of change over time, all the groups showed increases in mean language ages, although very much less than would be expected for typically developing children. At follow-up, some eight to nine years after intake, the mean gain in language age was 28 months for the children with autism, 23 months for the children with Down syndrome, and 36 months for the children with developmental delays. A comparison of the gain in language skills across time

showed that the amount of gain made by the developmentally delayed children was significantly higher than for the other two groups.

Correlations between initial and follow-up language ages were calculated for the three groups of children. As would be expected, early language age predicted later language age. The correlations (with initial chronological age covaried) are  $r(39) = .56$ ,  $r(59) = .49$ , and  $r(29) = .71$  for the children with autism, Down syndrome, and developmental delay, respectively.

Lord and Schopler (1989b) have examined the continuity of language skills in children with autism by defining the criterion for the beginning of language understanding as a receptive language age equivalent to that of a two-year-old. Using the same criterion as Lord and Schopler, we found that 23% of the children with autism demonstrated a two-year level of understanding of language at recruitment and follow-up, 56% of the children did not understand language at this level at recruitment but did so at follow-up, and 23% of the children never demonstrated a two-year level of understanding verbal labels. The children with autism in our study who gained this level of understanding of language did not differ in initial intelligence, measured by the Cattell Developmental Scale or the Stanford-Binet, from the children who never came to understand language. Thus, the early assessment of intelligence was not predictive of later language skills in children with autism.

In contrast, the improvement in intelligence over time was accompanied by a marked increase in language skills. Only one of the eleven children whose intelligence scores moved out of the mentally retarded range started this study with receptive

language capacities better than the two-year level but all eventually developed receptive language capacities equivalent to those of six to nine-year-old children. The mean gain in language age was 66 months for these 11 children whereas it was 11 months for the children who remained in the mentally retarded range of functioning.

### **Stability of Representational Play in Children with Autism**

In typically developing children, solitary pretend play is replaced by group play. At the mental age at which these children were seen at follow-up, typically developing children are constructing elaborate social games in which they take dramatic pretend roles. Our intention was to assess pretend play in the school playground, since this seemed more appropriate than in a structured situation with the experimenter. In fact, none of the developmentally disabled children spent much time in the pretend games with their peers. This may have been due to the lack of toys available on the school playground, although typically developing children engage in pretend play in the absence of props. Because there was no follow-up data concerning representational play, stability of group deficits in representational play and of individual tendencies to engage in such play could not be examined.

### **Stability of Response to the Distress of Others in Children with Autism**

The children's response to the experimenter's distress was observed using a procedure modified from that used at intake. Rather than hitting her finger with a small hammer as

occurred at intake, the experimenter pretended to bump his or her knee on the table, exclaimed loudly, and feigned pain through facial expressions and body movements for 30 seconds. The experimenter then reassured the child that the knee felt better and showed neutral affect for ten seconds. The child and experimenter were videotaped.

The children looked at the experimenter's face for a much longer time period when they were older than when they were younger. However, the children with autism continued to look at the experimenter's face a smaller percentage of the time than the other groups of children, as had been true when the children were younger. This cannot really be called avoidance as the groups of children did not differ in the proportion of time that they oriented their bodies away from the experimenter. The children with autism were rated as less concerned that the other two groups of children. Although they looked less, their facial expressions were not rated as less interested. Thus, the children with autism were somewhat engaged by the distress of the experimenter but they looked less at the experimenter's face and seemed less concerned.

With a behavioral coding system similar to the one used at intake, total duration of looking to the experimenter and empathy scores during the experimenter distress procedure predicted empathy scores in the follow-up distress procedure for the children with autism (Dissanayake et al., 1996). This association remains significant even when intake mental age was covaried. There was no stability in responsiveness to the emotions of others in the other developmentally disabled groups. Thus, the autistic children who were more emotionally responsive at age

three to five years were also more responsive later.

### **Nonverbal Communication and Play as Predictors of Later Abilities and Characteristics**

#### ***Prediction of Short-term and Long-term Gains in Language***

The hypothesis that nonverbal communication and representational play skills would predict gains in language over time has strong theoretical and empirical support. Given the theory that master of procedures for joint action provides the precursors for the child's grasp of initial grammatical forms, children who are more engaged in joint attention would have more of a structure on which to model language. As Bruner and Sherwood (1983) point out, a great deal of prelinguistic communication is devoted to the achievement of a joint attentional focus and the elaboration of this focus is in the form of joint topic-comment structures. Moreover, children exploit attention in order to assign novel words to meanings quickly (Baldwin, 1991; Tomasello, 1995). Thus, children with autism who were participating in these prelinguistic activities would be expected to learn to communicate verbally in a way not possible for autistic children who did not participate in communicative reciprocal activities.

Similarly, autistic children who used objects in functional and symbolic ways during play demonstrate a conceptual understanding of these objects that seems missing in those children who only shake objects or stack one on another. Both pretend play and language require the capacity for representation, and possibly metarepresentation (Leslie, 1987;

Piaget, 1954). The functional and symbolic use of objects in play is an early marker of the conceptual understanding necessary for the understanding and use of language.

Given these theoretical considerations and the evidence in typically developing children that communicative and play skills are precursors of verbal abilities, it was not surprising that the language skills of the children with autism were concurrently associated with their nonverbal communication and pretend play, as discussed above. In fact, all the nonverbal communication behaviors except the frequency of initiating social interaction (and none of the play behaviors) were predictors of the gain in language skills over the course of the children's next year of life. Long-term gains in language skills eight to nine years later were predicted by both the children's responsiveness to others' bids for joint attention as well as their diverse use of functional play acts. Thus, early nonverbal communication and representational play may be necessary not only for the acquisition of language but also for the consolidation of language skills (Sigman & Ruskin, in press).

#### ***Prediction of Long-term Change in Intelligence Scores***

As discussed above, 11 children in the autistic group had intelligence test scores in the mentally retarded range at intake but not at follow-up. A comparison of the nonverbal communication and play behaviors of these children with those of children who remained in the mentally retarded range showed that the former group was more responsive to the bids of others for joint attention, made more requests, and used a greater number of functional play acts. Even when initial intelligence test scores were statisti-

cally constrained, nonverbal communication behaviors differentiated the two groups.

#### ***Prediction of Prosocial Behaviors, Social Understanding, and Interpersonal Relationships***

Prosocial behaviors are critical for children's relationships as they mature. Children who do not cooperate with others, assist others when they need help, or share with others are unlikely to have friends or even sustained interactions with peers. Most studies of prosocial behaviors in individuals with autism have focused on increasing specific prosocial behaviours through interventions (Egan, Zlomke, & Bush, 1993; Redeker & Goodman, 1993). There have been very few studies comparing the prosocial behaviors of autistic children to those of developmentally delayed children. In our longitudinal study, during the serving of refreshments, the children with autism helped the experimenter find room on a small table for a tray, and shared food that was out of the experimenters' reach, less than the other developmentally disabled children did.

Early interest and skills in communicating with others and responsiveness to the emotions of others would seem to be important for the later prosocial behaviors and, in fact, this was true. Children with autism who initiated social interaction and responded to bids for social interaction and joint attention more at intake were more helpful to the experimenter at follow-up than were children with autism who showed fewer of these communicative acts. Furthermore, preschool children with autism who were rated as more empathic used more prosocial behaviors during a snack with the experimenter during the mid-school



years than did autistic children who had been rated as less empathic.

Given the difficulties shown by young children with autism in nonverbal communication, pretend play, and reactions to the emotions of others, one would expect that their relationships with others would suffer. Although anecdotal evidence seems to support this, there is a dearth of studies on the interpersonal relationships of individuals with autism. This is a serious omission in that we tend to make judgements based on anecdotal and clinical evidence that are not always valid.

A striking example concerns the ability of children with autism to form attachments with others. For many years, the claim was made in the literature that children with autism were unable to form such attachments (Cohen, Paul, & Volkmar, 1987). However, the empirical evidence contradicts this claim. Several studies have shown that young children with autism use their caregivers as a secure base, sometimes becoming distressed when the caregiver leaves them alone in an unfamiliar room and almost always showing either increased verbal or physical contact at reunion (Dissanayake & Crossley, 1997; Rogers, Ozonoff, & Maslin-Cole, 1991; Shapiro, Sherman, Calamari, & Kock, 1987; Sigman & Mundy, 1989; Sigman & Ungerer, 1984b). The reactions of the children with autism as a group do not differ from those of other developmentally delayed children of equivalent mental and chronological age, although they do differ from those of typically developing children who have

equivalent mental abilities but are, perforce, much younger and thereby less experienced with separations. Moreover, a proportion of children with autism are even judged to be securely attached to their caregivers, using somewhat modified strange situation procedure and scoring techniques (Capps, Sigman, & Mundy, 1994; Rogers et al., 1991; Shapiro et al., 1987). Although no one would claim that the attachments of autistic children are entirely the same as those of other children, empirical



*Children with autism who had some contact during the school day with typically developing children were more socially engaged than those who did not.*

evidence was necessary to elucidate what had been taken for granted in the clinical literature.

Interactions of autistic children with peers have been investigated somewhat more than other relationships. Developmentally disabled children have been observed to spend the vast majority of their time in school playing on their own (Guralnick & Groom, 1985; Strain, 1995). Hauck, Fein, Waterhouse, and Feinstein (1995) reported that children with autism initiated peer interactions much less frequently than did language-matched children with developmental delays. The children with autism tended to greet or give information whereas the children with developmental delays made bids to enter into play or seek information. In a study by Stone and Caro-Martinez (1990), children with autism only communicated spontaneously about three to four times per hour during unstructured situations in school.

The social isolation of the children with autism seems to be of their own doing in that they initiated fewer social bids and rejected more of the bids directed to them than did the other children. They were not more rejected than the other children in that an equivalent number of social bids were directed to them and their bids were accepted as much as those of other children. Thus, the children with autism were not as socially engaged as we had hoped nor as socially rejected as we had feared.

Most striking in these school observations was the scarcity of social initiations made by all the developmentally disabled children, teachers, and teachers' aides both in the classroom and on the playground. Peers

initiated interactions with each other about one to four percent of the time and adults initiated interactions about five to six percent of the time. Although this may be understandable in the classroom, the children seem to be very isolated from both themselves and the adults even on the playground.

The level of social engagement of the autistic children was a function of their school environment and their own characteristics. Children with autism who had some contact during the school day with typically developing children were more socially engaged than those who did not. Furthermore, the extent to which the children helped the experimenter during the laboratory snack and showed concern for her when she hit her knee was concurrently associated with peer engagement. Finally, early levels of nonverbal communication, representational play, and emotional responsiveness were predictors of amount of peer engagement at school.

Amount of peer social interaction was predicted by the frequency with which the preschool autistic children initiated joint attention and used functional play acts as well as by their empathy ratings, even when early intelligence scores were statistically constrained.

### **Differentiation Between Children with Autism and Children with Down Syndrome**

The patterns of results are very different in our studies for children with Down syndrome. Individuals with Down syndrome also have severe

delayed children, but this difference was not maintained over time. The children with Down syndrome were similar to the other developmentally delayed children in their prosocial behaviors and their peer interactions.

In terms of stability, the children with Down syndrome did not show individual stability in their nonverbal communication behaviors and responsiveness to the distress of others. Moreover, the children with Down syndrome showed the marked decline in intelligence test scores and the leveling off of language gains that have been described in many studies (Piper, Gendron, & Mazer, 1986; Rauh et al., 1991; Wishart & Duffy,

group. Children with Down syndrome in our follow-up did not have the same degree of language difficulty as many of the low-functioning children with autism. Children with Down syndrome appear to have the communication and representational play skills necessary to understand language and use speech. Non-verbal communication and play skills may be necessary but not sufficient for acquiring advanced language skills. Children with Down syndrome may be deficient in some other way that handicaps their language development. One possibility is that the limited short-term auditory memory observed in children with Down syndrome (Wang & Bellugi, 1994) may contribute to their problem in language development.



*The differences in predictive patterns for the children with autism and those with Down syndrome may be due to a difference in the severity of language problems within each group.*

problems with language development (Fowler, 1995; Miller & Chapman, 1984) although a much smaller proportion lack functional speech than is true for the autistic group. However, children with Down syndrome show no deficits in nonverbal communication, representational play, and responsiveness to other emotions in comparison to mental age matched developmentally delayed or typically developing children. Although children with Down syndrome request objects and assistance with objects less than typically developing children, this is true for all the developmentally disabled children. Surprisingly, at intake, the children with Down syndrome were rated as somewhat less empathic to the experimenter's distress than the developmentally

1990). This pattern cannot be attributed to individual deficiencies in nonverbal communication and play skills. Although these functions are associated with concurrent language skills, they account for much less of the variance than is true for the children with autism and the children with developmental delays. There is some continuity in the development of the children with Down syndrome in that those preschool children who initiate social interactions with the experimenter also initiate interactions more with their peers in elementary school and also make slightly larger gains in expressive language.

The differences in predictive patterns for the children with autism and those with Down syndrome may be due to a difference in the severity of language problems within each

### **Research and Clinical Implications**

Given the links between early and later achievements in children with autism, the identification of the roots of these early achievements is important. The determination of those characteristics in the child and the environment that foster the development of nonverbal communication and play skills could be useful in planning interventions targeted at improving the quality of life of children with autism. For this reason, my colleagues and I at UCLA are now beginning an investigation of the characteristics of the home and school environments of autistic children that are associated with gains in the development of joint attention and pretend play over the course of a year. In conjunction, Connie Kasari and her students are conducting an experimental intervention directed at increasing the children's capacity for joint attention with others. With this two-pronged approach, we aim to

identify the most effective ways of changing the early communicative and representational abilities of children with autism. Of course, it is possible that these functions are immutable in autistic children. Teaching children to think in a radically different way may be impossible, as the studies aiming to accelerate understanding of conservation in the 1960s and 1970s largely showed (Piaget, 1964). However, without empirical investigations, there is no way to know the extent of plasticity in these systems in autistic children.

Early interventions are not the only entry point in improving the lives of developmentally disabled children; there needs to be more focus on the development of social competence in the mid-school years. For example, the school playground would seem to be an excellent place to help developmentally disabled children, including those with autism, acquire skills for entering and maintaining play interactions. However, with some exceptions, the teachers and teachers' aides whom we observed on the playgrounds made few attempts to foster peer engagement. This may be because of a tendency to overlook the importance that social capacities and involvement have for these children and see school solely as a place to learn academic skills. The opportunities afforded by school experience need to be used to accomplish social learning. Moreover, the observations of interactions between autistic children and their siblings (Knott, Lewis, & Williams, 1995) suggests that other social relationships should also be fostered. In addition, intensive language interventions need to be continued beyond the preschool period. The plateau reached in language after an initial period of growth, in both low-functioning autistic children and children with

Down syndrome, may be due to the cessation of language interventions that often occurs in the mid-school years.

Finally, our understanding of the deficits in nonverbal communication, representational play, and emotional responsiveness needs to be amplified. We need to pinpoint the early forms of these difficulties, and the early diagnosis projects (Baron-Cohen et al., 1996; Charman et al., 1997; Osterling & Dawson, 1994) are accomplishing a great deal in this direction. In line with this, information is needed about the areas of brain activity that accompany social responses and thinking, and the availability of functional magnetic resonance technology should facilitate investigations of these parallel processes. Such studies will also provide a broader appreciation of the normal processes of development of representational and social abilities and will enhance the significance of the developmental perspective to the understanding of childhood psychopathology.

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**Editor's Note:** Marian Sigman is Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at the University of California at Los Angeles. This paper was adapted with permission of Cambridge Press, from Sigman, M. (1998). *The Emanuel Miller Memorial Lecture 1997: Change and continuity in the development of children with autism*. *Journal of Child Psychology, Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 39, 817-827.



## Family House to Promote Infant Mental Health

To provide a comfortable, neutral space for infant mental health professionals to meet with families, the Center for Child and Family Studies at the University of California at Davis will establish the Family House, a place of nurturing and guidance for parents and children.

This project is being made possible through the generosity of Donis and Erwin Eichhorn, who have offered to provide the building. Plans call for the Family House to be located at the Center for Child and Family Studies. The two-story Family House will include office space, meeting rooms, a kitchen and playrooms for parent/child guidance. The building will also include a library and conference room capable of hosting 60 people. This synthesis of home and office spaces will allow faculty, staff and students to interact with health professionals and troubled families, as well as provide a facility for teaching, research and outreach activities in the field of infant mental health.



by Mary Scoblic

My favorite definition of collaboration has, of course, a pediatric connotation, and that definition is "putting your blocks on the table and putting your hands in your lap." What a definition of trust, that building block of all our other abilities to function in polite society. How do we learn to trust other people, other agencies, other people vying for the same clients and families? How do we know when it's safe to let someone else look at how we've been conducting business, what mistakes we've made, how we've spent our money-or the public's money-and what we have to show for our efforts? I think it happens the same way we learn trust in our family, by experiencing the nurturing, safe, respectful environment that most of us experienced as infants and toddlers.

Just as attachment and trust do not occur overnight, and take much work on both parties being attached or establishing trust, so collaboration must be nurtured as an interactional way of dealing with others in the work situation for the benefit of some third party, usually in our professional world, a family. It is the active sharing of planning functions, decision-making, funding of services, and very importantly, the responsibility for assuring that the family receives the services needed in a way that they can be utilized most effectively to support family growth.

## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER: COLLABORATION FROM A PEDIATRIC POINT OF VIEW

Collaboration has also been defined by individuals engaged in that activity as the "hardest work they ever loved to do." It is time and labor intensive, it is frustrating when others have differing opinions about what families deserve and need, and it makes us address the turf issues that separate us and fragment services for families. Jargon becomes unacceptable, feelings of indispensability need to be sacrificed, and recognition of the contributions of other team members needs to be clear and honest.

Infants and families' needs are often too complex for any one person, or one profession, or one agency to think they have everything that a family might need. Lily Tomlin was wrong when she said "We are all in this alone." We had better all be in this together. We do not want families to suffer needlessly simply because we are unwilling to work together.

*Editor's note: Mary Scoblic is a Collaborative Partner with the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, representing the Michigan Department of Community Health, Family and Community Division. This article is reprinted from Michigan AIMH's newsletter, The Infant Crier, No. 85, October-December 1998.*



## President's Perspective

Yvon Gauthier

Having been exposed once more to good clinical work done during pregnancy and in perinatal time, I will try to elaborate on how we have to recreate birth conditions which have been lost in the progress of our modern societies.

We know that in many cultures, which we are too easily tempted to call "primitive," pregnancy and the birth of a new child are a family and/or a community affair. The mother is not alone in giving birth and taking care of this new child; she is accompanied particularly by her own mother, and often by several other mother-substitutes. She is thus well supported and can gradually learn her new role in the care and relationship of a new being.

Modern occidental societies have gradually lost such holding processes around the birth of a child. Young families are often left alone in large, inhuman cities. Young mothers, young couples, who may not have been exposed to earlier images of good enough child-caring, rarely have the support of an extended family.

To such changes in cultural mores we should add that high-technology obstetrics has become another dehumanizing factor, as if the only important thing to consider is following the labor and birth with machines to make sure that everything takes place normally. When a dramatic incident still happens in spite of such technology—perinatal death, Down syndrome, any kind of

malformation—it usually becomes a tragic situation where both parents and staff are overwhelmed by intense affects, thus potentially hampering the establishment of an adequate mother-child relationship.

In the 5th Journées Européennes de Périnatalité held in France (Montpellier) in January, I was struck once again by the importance of creating a certain spirit within the perinatal team—an intention to take care of difficult situations as early as possible with the idea of preventing pathogenic situations. Concretely, it means not only a regular presence of child psychiatry or psychology within obstetrics, but much more: a whole obstetrical unit (obstetrician, echographist, midwife, other staff) that is aware of the emotional life of the mother, and is readily able to play the role of listening, of "holding" the anxiety and/or depression of the mother. The Montpellier team has come to call this process "creation of links around the coming child."

I understand it to mean that a fragile, expectant mother (couple) needs to feel that she is understood and accepted as she is, with all her weaknesses and miseries, and that she is going to be held until the arrival of this child—and well after—to make sure that within this warm milieu her new child is going to be taken care of, and the relationship started properly.

A good instance of such preventive care is with expectant mothers who have lost their last child in a

perinatal death. These are truly high-risk pregnancies. Such women need to be closely followed, not only by the obstetrician, but also by a professional able to listen and talk about the anxiety and the depression that often follows a loss. The new pregnancy can then be lived as separate from the earlier tragic one, and the new child start his own life without becoming the object of projected repressed affects. Current research in Paris suggests that such psychotherapeutic work during and after pregnancy can make a real difference in the way a mother relates to her new child in the first months post-partum. If such work can be done earlier with the parents, closer to the perinatal death, it can prevent more intense anxiety in the following pregnancy.

Another good instance of such care is with drug-addicted mothers. We all know how difficult it is to relate to these mothers, how biased medical staff may be, how decisions are often made in advance that nothing can be done other than taking the child away as soon as possible. Cases were presented at these European Journées showing how a midwife was able to create a program in which these women were not seen first as being drug-addicted, but as women carrying a child who also happen to be caught with a drug-addiction problem. The women are treated as human beings, not drug-addicts, thus starting a process of rehabilitation leading to the possibility of a new relationship with the world around, and the new child. One gets the feeling that a *milieu interieur*—a maternal matrix—is thus created around these vulnerable women helping them to feel supported the way mothers are supported in cultures that have kept their traditional systems of caring for new mothers.



## meet your regional vice-president

*Regional vice presidents play an important role in WAIMH. They are responsible for Affiliate development and are liaisons between Local Affiliates and WAIMH. They have major responsibilities for membership expansion, regional congress promotion, and inter-country advocacy of infant mental health. They also are encouraged to provide input to the Executive Committee apropos of the goals and issues that WAIMH should be addressing.*

### Deborah Weatherston, M.A.



*In the previous issue of the Signal, we featured two Regional Vice-Presidents: Pia Risholm Mothander, Ph.D. V.P. for Northern Europe and Hisako Watanabe, M.D., V.P. for the Asian Continent and Islands of Japan. In this issue, we go to the United States and meet Deborah Weatherston, M.A., Regional Vice President for the Northern Hemisphere. Deborah is Director of the Infant mental Health Program at Wayne State University's Merrill-Palmer Institute.*

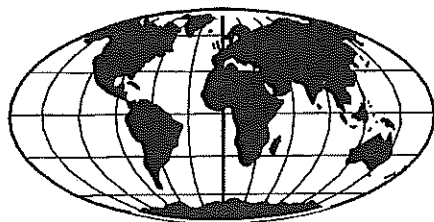
Ms. Weatherston's training is in early childhood and human development, psychology and social work. An infant mental health specialist for the past 20 years, Ms. Weatherston developed and currently directs the interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate Program in Infant Mental Health at Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University where she has trained graduate students and professionals in a 22-credit specialization program to work with young children and families. In addition, she provides community in-service training for professionals who are working with children 0-3 years of age and their

families. She offers guidance and clinical consultation to a variety of individuals and agencies within the mental health and early head start systems. She has been active in the implementation of Part H-Early On within the State of Michigan, serving on numerous committees at both the local and state levels. She was a member of the Board of Directors for the Michigan Association of Infant Mental Health for over 10 years, serving on the membership, training and publications committees. She received the organization's Selma Fraiberg Award in 1989 for her contributions to the field of infant mental health.

Her publications include articles in the *Infant Mental Health Journal* and *Zero To Three*, as well as a manual for practitioners, *Infant Mental Health Services: Supportina Competencies/Reducing Risks*. She is currently working on her Ph.D. within an individual-

ized, interdisciplinary program with a focus on infancy and infant mental health at Wayne State University.

Her interests within the field of infant mental health include 1) the preparation of professionals from various disciplines to offer intensive, clinical services to very young children and families; 2) the importance of relationship-based services to the health and growth of families; 3) observation as integral to optimal clinical assessment and treatment services, and, 4) the supervisor's role and responsibilities within relationship-based practice. When not working, and in search of respite, she may be seen running (slowly) down a flat, but pretty course, or photographing objects that seem particularly lovely or meaningful.



# WAIMH

## *Affiliate News*

### Welcome

Welcome to the latest new Affiliate in the WAIMH global network: *Northern Italian Association for Infant Mental Health*. Professor Graziella Fava Vizziello is President and can be contacted by email: villiel@psico.unipd.it.

A second group very close to full Affiliate status is the *Belgo-Luxembourgeoise a la WAIMH Internationale*. The group may be contacted through the Vice-President, Dr. D. Charlier via email: charlier@pscl.ucl.ac.be

### AIMH/UK Conference

AIMH/UK announces its 10th Annual Infancy Conference to be held in England on Friday, June 25th. The Conference theme is *Early Interventions*. Recent Government initiatives such as Surestart and the green paper on the family have placed infant mental health issues high on the political agenda and, in particular, have emphasised the potential role of the Health Visitor in supporting families. This year's Conference will bring together leading practitioners and researchers in the field of Early Intervention to look at how these initiatives may best be taken forward. They will describe a range of Early Intervention programs and present the latest research evaluating their effectiveness. The Conference will therefore be of relevance and interest to both practitioners such as Health

Visitors, childcare workers, psychologists, social workers and other involved professionals, and to those likely to be involved in commissioning such services.

This year's Conference is being presented in collaboration with the *Association for Infant Mental Health (U.K.)* an organisation seeking to promote the interests of infant mental health in this country, and an affiliate of the World Association for Infant Mental Health. All the speakers are members of AIMH.

Program speakers are:

- **Dr Mel Parr** (Director of Pippin; Chartered Counselling Psychologist and Adult psychotherapist) who will explain "PIPPIN: A group-based approach to promoting parent-infant mental health in the pregnancy and post-natal period."
- **Professor Lynne Murray** (Research Professor, Dept. of Psychology, University of Reading; co-director, Winnicott Research Unit) who will discuss "An NHS based preventive intervention for mothers and infants at risk."
- **Dr Maggie Mills** (Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist Bloomfield Centre, Guy's Hospital) & **Dr Christine Puckering**, Clinical Psychologist, University of Glasgow) who will present "What Mellow Parenting can tell us about how the internal world of the parent becomes the external world of the child."

The final plenary session will be a summation and discussion of the

topics presented.

Conference Chair is Paul Barrows (Child Psychotherapist, U.B.H.T.)

Fee: £65 £55 (if payment accompanies application)

Further details can be obtained from Conferences Unit, Child & Adolescent Service, Knowle Clinic, Broadfield Road, Bristol BS4 2UH, U.K. Tel/Fax (44) 117 914 5526 e-mail: knowle.clinic@btinternet.com

### Maine AIMH

The Maine Association intends to offer an 18 hour course in the Spring of 1999: *Introduction to Infant Mental Health: Issues and Practice*. Accomplishment of the learning objectives of the course will enable participants to:

- identify the importance of countertransference issues in IMH work
- identify parallel processes which occur while involved in IMH work
- become familiar with concepts of bonding, attachment, temperament and fit
- identify barriers to attachment, and behavioral disturbances
- identify capacities of the newborn
- identify the use of IMH practices in their work
- identify family and child strengths and needs in order to develop an appropriate treatment plan for a child with special needs

## New Jersey AIMH

The NJAIMH adopted a position paper in November 1998 which reflects their stance towards managed mental health services for infants and their families in the state of New Jersey. Their paper recommended that all children covered under the governmental health insurance programs be guaranteed a benefit package including at least five of the following requirements:

- funding for prevention, screening, early detection, and early intervention services for pregnant women, infants, and young children who are at risk for physical, emotional, and psychosocial difficulties

- reimbursement for comprehensive home-based mental health services which provide parenting education, crisis intervention, developmental assessments, psychiatric evaluations, and other therapeutic interventions
- guaranteed access to and reimbursement for a range of community special needs services which could include therapeutic nurseries and preschools, play therapy, respite services, parent support groups, and other educational and therapeutic facilities
- funding for training, coordinated consultations, and other indirect services for professionals and para-professionals providing treatment to parents and their children.

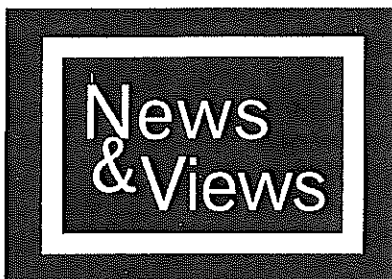
## Michigan AIMH

Members of MI-AIMH are busy planning their upcoming annual conference slated for May 16-17 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The conference theme is: *Nurturing Infants and Families: Examining and Enriching Our Roles*. Presenters include Ross Park, Ph.D. Harvard University, Alexa Canaday, MD, Children's Hospital, Detroit; Tammy Mann, Ph.D., National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, Washington, D.C.; Kadeja Johnson, Ph.D. University of California, San Francisco.

### Send YOUR Affiliate News to:

WAIMH, Kellogg Center #27, MSU  
East Lansing, MI 48824

or email it to: [waimh@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:waimh@pilot.msu.edu)



## Call for Papers

**Head Start.** The Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with Columbia University and the Society for Research in Child Development, announces Head Start's Fifth National Research Conference, *Developmental and Contextual Transitions of Children and Families: Implications for Research, Policy and Practice* to be held June 28-July 1, 2000 in

Washington, DC. The Call for Papers will be mailed and available at the web site on March 1, 1999. Proposals are due on July 15, 1999. All inquiries should be directed to Dr. Faith Lamb-Parker, Project Director, Columbia School of Public Health/CPFH, 60 Haven Avenue B3, New York, NY 10032. Email: [flp1@columbia.edu](mailto:flp1@columbia.edu) Tel: (212) 304-5251, Fax: (212) 544-1911. Web site: [www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb)

## Training Opportunities

### United States

April 23-26, 1999. Arlington, VA. **The Infancy and Early Childhood Training Course: Assessment, Diagnosis and Intervention for Developmental and Emotional Disorders.** Faculty are Stanley I. Greenspan, MD and Serena Wieder, Ph.D. For information call (301) 320-6360.

April 27-29, 1999. Washington, D.C. **The National Conference Addressing Issues in Early Development: Birth to Five Years.** Theme is: The Child With Special Needs. Internationally known guest speakers. Two day preconference on Autism. One day preconference on Feeding Disorders. For information, call: (925) 828-7100 x 3

May 4-7, 1999. Reno, Nevada. **International Parent to Parent Conference.** Acknowledges and celebrates Parent to Parent models and philosophies of best supports and practices for families and people with disabilities. For information contact Cheryl Dinnell at 702-784-4921 x 2352, or email: [cdinnell@scs.unr.edu](mailto:cdinnell@scs.unr.edu)

May 16-18, 1999. **Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health.** Annual conference: "Nurturing Infants and Families: Examining and Enrich-

ing Our Roles." Presenters include Ross Park, Ph.D. Harvard University, Alexa Canaday, MD, Children's Hospital, Detroit; Tammy Mann, Ph.D., National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, Washington, D.C.; Kadeja Johnson, Ph.D. University of California, San Francisco. For information call: MI-AIMH Central Office: (517)-432-3793.

May 19- 21, 1999. Minneapolis, Minnesota. *After Loss: Journey of the Next Pregnancy.*

A leadership seminar for professionals to affect clinical practices with families experiencing pregnancy after a loss. This three day seminar

will utilize video presentations, discussions, case studies and guest families. Participants will gain knowledge and receive resources in developing a pregnancy after loss program in their own clinical setting.

If you are coming from outside the United States, an attempt will be made to provide housing for you in local homes to help defray expenses. Please note that request when inquiring for information.

For information call (612) 863-5964 or FAX (612) 863-4860 or write:

Parent Education Department  
14201 Abbott Northwestern Hospital  
800 East 28th St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55407 USA

June 14-18, 1999. Syracuse, New York. *23rd Annual National Quality Infant/Toddler Caregiving Workshop.* Directed by Alice Honig. For information call: 315-443-3273 or email: mshin02@syr.edu

October 18-19, 1999. Chicago, Illinois. *The Loyola Forum on the Child.* "Reclaiming Childhood: Shaping Policy for the Future." For information call: (312)-915-8567 or visit their web site: [www.luc.edu/childforum](http://www.luc.edu/childforum)

**WORLD ASSOCIATION  
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