



THE MILLER METHOD®

NEWSLETTER

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

ELEVATION STUDY UNDER WAY AT LCDC

For over 30 years LCDC has been elevating children with autism in order to improve their ability to learn and to make sense of their surroundings. Observations over the years suggest that elevation contributes to improved body awareness, eye contact, better focusing of attention, and problem solving. Further, many children who toe-walk on the ground walk normally when elevated. In a 1973 article by the Millers the capacity of elevation to help a child generalize what she had learned while elevated to her ground functioning was described: A nonverbal autistic 5-year old girl first learned to respond to the sign and spoken word "come!" while straddling an elevated parallel board 3 feet above the ground. She came to her beckoning mother while swaying from side to side as she alternated moving forward by first sliding one foot forward on one side of the parallel board and then sliding forward the other foot on the other side of the board. Later, when her mother called her when she was on the ground she could respond only by using the same side-to-side gait that she had used when she first learned to respond while elevated.

These and many similar observations over the years made the value of elevating special children seem self-evident. However, these findings had never been tested in an experimental format until this year. The design we are using to study the effects of elevation involve having each of twenty children with autism take part in the same procedures while elevated and then while on the ground. To control for order effects, half the children are randomly assigned to the elevation condition first and then the ground condition, while the other half are assigned to the ground condition first and then the elevated condition. The elevated condition uses an Elevated Square 2.5 feet high, 7 feet long and 5 feet wide; the ground condition has a square painted on the ground. Except for elevation the dimensions of both squares are the same.



Children have a 10 minute unstructured period in which they have an opportunity to relate to objects and people located around the square. Here, we address the question of whether or not children spontaneously initiate behavior toward objects and/or people more in one condition than the other. Following the unstructured period, the child's therapist engages them in a variety of big and small body tasks such as going over and around objects, pouring water over a water wheel,

hanging up cups, using a spray bottle, completing puzzles and so forth. Then, one week later the therapist conducts the same activities in the other condition. All sessions are carefully videotaped.

The experimenters consist of Arnold and Eileen Miller, doctoral candidates Stephen Shore and Heloiza Barbosa at Boston University's Department of Special Education and Lindsey Sterling who has just completed

her degree in psychology at the University of California Los Angeles. Their work begins in earnest once all the children have been videotaped. They will then carefully compare each child's functioning under elevated and ground conditions. To avoid bias sections of the videotapes will be independently reviewed by observers who have not been involved in conducting the study. Their findings will be correlated with those of the experimental team to determine what level of agreement has been achieved.

Ultimately, findings from this first study will be published in a refereed journal and, in that way, provide a framework for ongoing research into the effects of elevation.

TWO NEW MILLER METHOD® CERTIFICANDS

One, is Lisa Hauben, M.A., a special education professional employed by the Small Wonder Preschool, Long Island, New York; the other, also a special education professional, is Sonia Mastrangelo, M.A. from All Saints Catholic School in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. Both were able to complete their training in the course of regularly supervised videoconferencing (VCO) sessions between LCDC and their respective schools. Congratulations!

**Visit our (NEW) Discussion Forum
at <http://www.millermethod.org>**

NEW TRUSTEES JOIN THE LCDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Three new members who will serve a 3-year renewable term will join the Millers in directing the Center: They are Dr. and Mrs. Gamble and Robert Parish. Dr. Gamble is a retired developmental pediatrician and he and Mrs. Gamble are grandparents of a special child previously attended our school. Mr. Robert Parish, is the prize-winning creator of "Come Back, Jack" which is currently being shown by PBS throughout the United States and Canada. The Center is currently treating his son, Jack, and training therapists in his school (Stepping Stones) in Cincinnati via regular videoconferencing sessions.

The Millers intend to expand the board to include another two people, bringing the total to ten.

LCDC'S SUMMER AND SHORT-TERM PROGRAM

LCDC has two short duration programs: One, during the summer for six weeks (July and part of August); the other, for eight-week placements during one of the following pairs: September and October, January and February, March and April or May and June. In general, there are more openings for short term placement during the year than during the summer. Children are accepted on a first-come-first-served basis when there is an appropriate classroom opening

Last summer families from Canada and various states enrolled 9 children on the autism spectrum (ages 3 to 7) in the Center's summer program. At the end of the program parents reported improvement in eye contact, in understanding and use of signs and spoken words and in improved social contacts. Three families from Connecticut who attended the summer program are continuing the Miller Method for their children by setting up an Elevated Square in the basement of one of their houses and contracting for regular videoconferencing (VCO) with senior staff at LCDC for all three children.

Both summer and short duration programs during the year have all the hallmarks of the year-round LCDC program. These include small classes (no more than six to a class) with a head teacher and two assistants for each class: regular use of elevated board systems, sign and spoken language training as well as cognitive-developmental, speech-language, movement therapies and adaptive physical education and manual arts (shop work). LCDC's unique Symbol Accentuation Reading Program and its Art Program are also introduced. Parents also participate in a regular Parents' Group conducted by Education Director, Eileen Eller-Miller and clinical psychologist, Dr. Paul Callahan.

For information on summer and short-term placement programs contact Dr. Paul Callahan, Director of Operations at (800) 218-5232.

NEW MILLER METHOD WORKS PUBLISHED AND IN PROGRESS

A newly published chapter titled "The Miller Method: A Cognitive-Developmental Systems Approach for Children with Body Organization, Social, and Communication Issues" by Arnold Miller, Ph.D., and Eileen Eller-Miller, M.A., C.C.C.-S.L.P is now available. This chapter is in a book edited by Stanley Greenspan and Serena Weider titled: ICDL Clinical Practice Guidelines: Redefining clinical standards for infants, toddlers and children with developmental challenges. The chapter may be read or downloaded by internet users by going through the following steps:

1. Go to www.ICDL.com.
2. Click section referring to newly published material.
3. Click Part Six: Innovative Models.
4. Chapter 19 presents the Miller Method. You can read or download the chapter as a PDF file using Adobe software.

The Millers with Kristina Chretien are writing a reader-friendly book especially designed for parents. The title is "The Miller Method for Parents of Children on the Autism Spectrum." The first few chapters are titled, "Getting Started with the Miller Method," "Helping Your Special Child Hear You," "Helping Your Special Child Come Alive!" "Becoming a Child who Communicates." We anticipate publication toward the end of 2001.

LCDC SCHEDULES WINTER-SPRING OPEN HOUSES

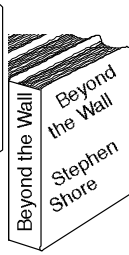
LCDC has scheduled three Open Houses for parents and professionals seeking more information about the program. Schedules on Fridays, the first Open House is for December 8, 2000, the second for March 23, 2001, and the third for April 27, 2001.

Each Open House will begin at 9:00 AM and end around noon. It will begin with a brief presentation by Arnold and Eileen Miller, founders of the Center and its programs, followed by tours of the Center and opportunity to view classes and individual sessions through one-way mirrors. Guides from LCDC staff will explain various interventions and answer questions. Following this there will be a short videodocumentary, refreshments and an opportunity to have questions answered.

Those planning to attend one of the Open Houses should contact Dr. Paul Callahan at (800) 218-5232 or (617) 522-5434. Advance notice is requested as our space is limited.

AUTISM, MIMICRY AND ME By Stephen Shore

As indicated in the last Miller Method Newsletter, the author of this article has lived the experience of autism spectrum disorder and has completed an autobiography detailing his life and work with children on the autism spectrum. Currently, he is working on a doctorate in special education at Boston University. The following article was adapted from his book, Beyond the Wall: Personal Experiences with Autism and Asperger Syndrome. It is now under contract with Autism Asperger Publishing Company and should be out in 2001.



One of the first concepts brought up in the intensive five day Miller Method Seminar was the view that the underlying issue for children on the autism spectrum was a failure to fully comprehend the body to environment relationship that most people take for granted. This problem can be seen at all levels of the autism spectrum. At the severe end, this unawareness may be as striking as a child not pulling their own leg out from a hole stepped in, and, in my case, to not being able to process my mother's call to come into the house for lunch. She had to touch me which triggered my grabbing her hand to come with her into the house.

I am grateful to report that it is now usually possible to gain my attention by merely calling out my name. Sometimes the fuzzy boundary between what I hear and what I say may also reflect itself as unconscious imitation of other sounds in the environment. After losing my verbal abilities at eighteen months, my first sounds were imitations of household machines and animals. These sounds were much easier to make and had a sense of predictability not found in human vocal communication.

It's as if I have fused to the sound. One day, in third grade, I unwittingly copied the sound of a siren I heard while in class. I became aware of this when I suddenly noticed the whole class laughing. Needless to say I was quite embarrassed and my classmates made sure that I didn't forget that day for a long time.

Even today I often mimic people without realizing it. The imitations I do of peoples speech patterns can be embarrassing when I speak to people with accents because I wonder if they realize that I am imitating them. During part of my time as a music instructor at a college, I would spend much time with the president's assistant who had an African-American accent. There were many times that I caught myself in horrified realization that I was talking like him to his face; copying his intonation and speaking style. He called me a "homie" so I'd refer to him as one. The word homie is often used by African-Americans as a term of friendship or closeness. He would refer to me as a brother and I would do the same all without realizing at first that I was doing this.

Perhaps as another offshoot of my tendency to fuse with outside events is my imitation of people's movements (echopraxia) and even emotions (echoemotica). Often I will pick up mannerisms of others when I am with them. One time I was told that this was due to a weakness in being able to form a personality. I think it is far more likely a problem in separating myself from the environment as a distinct and separate being.

Whenever I get a very strong emotion and I am not clear as to where it comes from I have to consider whether someone I am in communication with is displaying a similar emotion and I am picking it up from them. Sometimes I feel as if I am fused with that other person's emotions and am unable to separate myself from them.

An example of this was when I was talking with my mother on the phone while at college. I got an overwhelming feeling of blackness when I talked to her and got very sad. Thinking about this, I realized that I didn't have anything to be terribly sad about and perhaps I had fused myself with an emotion from her. I called my mother back and found out that she was indeed terribly sad about something.

Experiences like these have made me realize that I have to keep assessing where some of my vocal or action patterns or feelings come from. For example, whenever I experience a strong emotion, I need to take a step back and question whether this feeling is something that I should be having or whether I am picking it up from someone else in my environment. It keeps my life interesting.

PROPOSED GREENHOUSE AND PLAY AREA ON TOP OF LCDC

Ethan Miller, LCDC's Building Coordinator (also a mechanical engineer), has suggested a plan to build a greenhouse and play area on the flat roof of the Center's three-story brick building. The greenhouse would provide an entirely new program area for the children. Each child could then learn about the role that sun, water and soil play in nurturing plant growth. They could also tend their own small plots in a protected environment. The remaining portion of the roof would be devoted to open-air, recreational activities to be determined. To provide ready access to the roof, a new staircase must be build from the third floor to the roof.

Ethan has announced a competition (\$500.00 prize) for the best design. Readers of this newsletter intersted in participating are invited to contact him for details (as well as for the dimensions of the roof).

THREE YEARS OF VIDEOCONFERENCING An anecdote from a teacher based in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

I am a boardwide teacher for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in Mississauga, Ontario. I teach at All Saints School under the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board. For me, it all began in March of 1997 when I took Dr. Miller's one week training session at LCDC-Jamaica Plain. I was amazed at the theory and how it was applied in a practical way during the day to day activities with the students.



Each classroom brought the children to life through a variety of techniques and each child received programming for his/her individual needs. These programs included: cognitive developmental therapy, woodshop, speech and language, movement therapy and music therapy to name a few. Dr. Miller's cognitive-developmental approach is a truly unique and sophisticated way of delving into the world of a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Over the last 3 1/2 years, I, along with the children have been truly fortunate to have had Dr. Miller watching over us via a video camera hooked up to a computer screen. My administrator, Connie Gale, had a vision. She said, "If we can't bring all of the kids from Canada to Boston, why not get on board with videoconferencing so that Dr. Miller can see what is happening in Canada." After contacting our telephone company to get ISDN lines put into place we were ready to go. We have recently expanded to 2 ISDN lines, two cameras (which Dr. Miller is able to control) and a suspended microphone.

I have seen remarkable progress in all of the children and I attribute this success to Dr. Miller's direct consultative input. He changed the way I structured activities for the children. With my higher functioning children, he would often direct the sessions by giving them guidance in the Symbol Accentuation Reading Program. Furthermore, I have used some videoconferencing sessions to have parent discussions with Dr. Miller.

The families have found this to be beneficial and worthwhile. At times, I would also use a session to discuss difficulties I was having, and how I could change the curricula to meet the needs of the student. I have also used videoconferencing to assist me with keeping anecdotal notes on the children. Dr. Miller has given me valuable input for their progress reports at the end of the term.

The beauty in all of this technological advancement is that I videotaped every session. This provides me with wonderful data on how the kids were several months ago as opposed to now. It also gave me the opportunity to review each videotape and take notes on each specific child. Each day I send a copy of the tape home for the parents to view with their children so that they can also implement the cognitive developmental way of teaching with their children.

I have been extremely pleased with the results we have achieved with videoconferencing over the past three years. I produced a documentary entitled, *A Journey Into the Mind* which is a compilation of video footage taken of the children. It tracks the development of each child over the past three years and I have shown this documentary at an Educator's Forum sponsored by the Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders in Virginia.

The training sessions offered by Dr. Miller gave me the necessary theoretical framework along with the practical strategies that I needed in order to move my students along the developmental ladder. I have taken Part 1, and Part 2 of the Miller Method. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to work with a child from Italy at Dr. Miller's clinic in Boston during the summer of 1999. I am now completing my Miller Method examination which will result in certification as a therapist.

I am happy to report that videoconferencing will continue for another school year and I am particularly excited as new kids begin to enter the program. The ongoing support of Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board along with the guidance of my mentor and principal, Connie Gale, we are able to continue this program that continues to enrich the lives of children. It is my hope that the day will come when other teachers in Canada are also using videoconferencing with Dr. Miller. It would be wonderful to liaison with one another through the technology and share ideas about strategies, program planning, assessments and curriculum.

Dr. Miller... Words cannot express my thanks. On behalf of the children and staff working in the class I want to commend you on your never ending quest and passion to help these children reach their maximum potential.

You are a truly remarkable individual and with each passing moment you positively affect the life of a child.

If anyone has questions with respect to videoconferencing please feel free to e-mail me at:

sonia.mastrangelo@dpcdsb.org

Sincerely,

Sonia Mastrangelo, B.A, B.Ed

VOLUNTEERS COME THROUGH FOR LCDC KIDS!

On the 28th of October, 55 volunteers from Investors Bank and Trust (IBT) and City Year (CT) did a huge amount of work moving gravel, painting playground structures, planting bulb and bushes and repairing the chain-link fence. The work was part of the annual Servathon held by CY organization, which does projects like this throughout Boston -- we were pleased they chose us as one of the project.

The group was headed by *Linda Weber* who works at IBT. The CY groups was headed up by *Anne Curran*. Thanks to all involved -- we are planning a more in-depth story in the next issue.

Last September a group of students from Northeastern University's *Circle K* organization helped us by cleaning up the front and back yards, moving air-conditioners and washing windows as well. This group was headed up by *Erin Deharse* and included many of the volunteers who had worked on the NU service day the past April. We hope to keep a good relationship going with *Circle K* and Northeastern.

MIT's *Citidays* service project was also represented at LCDC in September, volunteers painted school equipment and did other tasks around the school. *Trisha McAndrew* of MIT community service organized and planned this event. We hope they will be back next year.

INTENSIVE 4-DAY* COURSE LISTINGS

*Courses previously listed as 5-day workshops are now conducted as 4-day workshops. Two innovations have made it possible to do this without loss of workshop content: One, changing the examination from "in-house" to "take home," and two, by starting each workshop day a half hour earlier. Further, to make the workshops more "user friendly" they are now conducted Thursday through Sunday or from Sunday through Wednesday (instead of Monday through Friday as was previously done). The savings in hotel bills and lost time at work is substantial. All workshops are conducted by Arnold Miller, Ph.D. and Eileen Eller-Miller, M.A., CCC-SLP who -- with the help of their staff -- have created the Miller Method.



From time to time, these workshops will be conducted at the sites of schools currently using or interested in developing a Miller Method, program. The first two schools introducing the new format are Park Lake School in Rockaway, New Jersey (Cheryl Kaufman, Principal) and

Broadmoor School in Mentor, Ohio (Cheryl Kline, Principal). Both schools have been videoconferencing sites with LCDC for over four years and have played important roles in introducing the Miller Method to children on the autism spectrum in their regions.

All workshops introduce theory and practice of the Miller Method and provide some opportunity for "hands-on" training. Professionals planning to continue toward certification as a Miller Method Specialist or Therapist are required to take the examination. Parents of special children are not expected to take the examination.

Workshop Schedule

- November 9-12, 2000 at Park Lake School, Rockaway, New Jersey
- January 11-14, 2001 at Broadmoor School, Mentor (near Cleveland), Ohio
- March 19-22, 2001 at the Language and Cognitive Development Center, Boston, MA
- May 21-24, 2001 at the Language and Cognitive Development Center, Boston, MA
- July 23-26, 2001 at the Language and Cognitive Development Center, Boston, MA

Tuition: The tuition for each workshop is \$975.00 per person. The tuition for parents of a special child is \$450.00. Contact Dr. Paul Callahan at (800) 218-5232 to register, for further information about the workshops or hotel accommodations.

LCDC PROGRAMS

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

1. Miller Umwelt Assessment \$1000
(2 hrs., written report, recommendations)
2. Parent-Child Training \$2500
(Assessment and trial interventions, 6 hrs., over 3 days)
3. Six-Week Summer Session..... \$6950
(With Umwelt Assessment)
4. Short-term Placement at LCDC \$155
(From 2 months to a year) per diem
5. Videoconference Oversight (VCO)..... \$250
per hour
6. Interactive Consultation on the Internet (ICI)*.... \$150
per hour

Rates are subject to change

ICI is a new program where the parent or professional contracts on a fee-for-service basis to consult with a senior staff member in a private chatroom on the LCDC website <<www.millermethod.org>>. Contact Dr. Callahan for further information at 1-800-218-5232.

Parents and Professionals Listing

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



Some Parents Whose Children Have Participated in an LCDC Program

Ms. Teresa Becerra	(860) 637-1179
Ms. Kristina Bogus.....	(905) 450-8790*
Ms. Debbie Collins.....	(606) 586-6797
Ms. Jeanie Earl.....	(403) 208-8444
Barbara and Jack Hitchcock.....	(508) 376-5365
Ms. Sherry Hoty.....	(216) 967-3291*
Maria Mejia	(440) 951-6759*
Betsy Newman.....	(440) 639-1547*
Mrs. Kelly Pinhey.....	(613) 258-3322
Ms. Lynn Thompson	(410) 295-7219
Dr. and Mrs. Charles Tucker.....	(502) 753-7463

* Participation through Video Conferencing Oversight

Some Professionals Who Have Participated in an intensive Miller Method Workshop®

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

MILLER METHOD® CERTIFICATION

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

Professional Disciplines

Among the appropriate candidates for training and certification include clinical and developmental psychologists, music and movement therapists, occupational therapists, pediatric nurses, physical therapists, psychiatrists, social workers, special educators, speech and language pathologists.

Intensive 4-Day Miller Method Workshops

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

Supervision

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

Cases

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

Written Examination

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

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



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