

THE MILLER METHOD NEWSLETTER

Spring/Summer, 1996 Arnold Miller, Ph.D., Editor Vol. 1, Issue No. 2

The Miller Method Newsletter is a publication of the Language and Cognitive Development Center (LCDC) of Boston. Its purpose is to encourage exchanges of information between Miller Method programs and practitioners in the United States and abroad. For parents of children with developmental problems, this newsletter will always contain strategies for helping children with autism and pervasive developmental disorders as well as a list of parents whose children either are or have been in Miller Method programs and who have volunteered to have their names and phone numbers listed so that they might respond to questions from other parents or professionals.

PROFESSIONALS SEEK TRAINING IN THE MILLER METHOD

Following a series of 2-day workshops offered last year in the United States and Canada (Atlanta, Williamsburg, Tallahassee, New York City and Toronto) professionals (OTs, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, teachers and others) have approached us for additional exposure to the Miller Method. Accordingly, we have structured a variety of training models.

Intensive Training Week on the Miller Method

Sponsored by LCDC and taught by the Millers with senior staff, this is a 5-day, 30 hour, theory + hands-on training experience for professionals concerned with autism and PDD. Currently, over 30 professionals from the United States and Canada have registered for this year's training weeks. While prior exposure to a 2-day Miller Method workshop is desirable, it is not essential. Capacity for each week-long training session is 20 people.

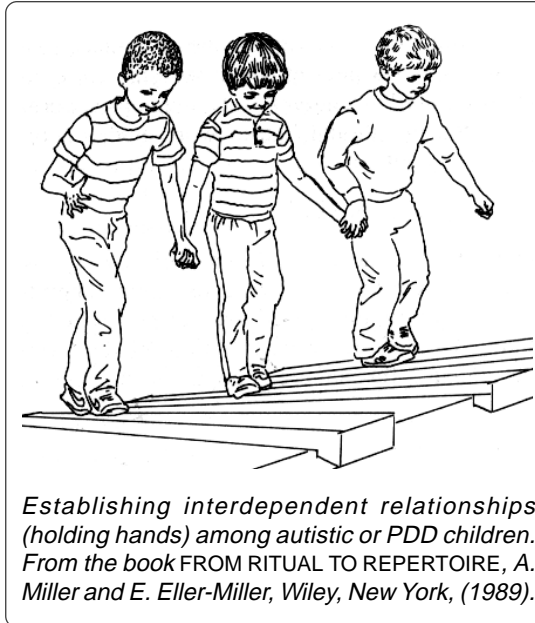
Because of continuing requests for training, a second week-long training session has been scheduled.

Offered: September 30-October 4, 1996
Tuition: \$975.
Status: Still open.

Traineeships

The Center periodically makes available traineeships for 3-, 6-, 9-, 12-months, to professionals seeking more prolonged exposure to the Miller Method. Trainees are assigned to senior staff either in classroom or clinical settings and take part in weekly training seminars and supervision. When appropriate, trainees are assigned cases under close supervision.

Offered: At all times during the year
Tuition: Determined on a case by case basis



Establishing interdependent relationships (holding hands) among autistic or PDD children. From the book FROM RITUAL TO REPERTOIRE, A. Miller and E. Eller-Miller, Wiley, New York, (1989).

Research Assistance + Miller Method Training

LCDC has an ongoing research program concerned with the effect of Miller Method intervention on children with autism and PDD. We are interested in applicants with some research background to serve as research assistants. In the past we have traded instruction in the Miller Method for research assistance.

Offered:
At all times during the year.
Tuition:
Waived (in exchange for research assistance).

Status: Two openings as of 8/10/96

PARENTS FROM UNITED STATES AND CANADA DISCOVER MILLER METHOD PROGRAMS AT LCDC

This year, following our workshops, parents have vigorously sought services for their children at LCDC. Services sought and provided include the Umwelt Assessment (22 conducted), week-long training sessions (12 families registered), six week summer session (6 families), relocated to LCDC area (3 families). We describe the various services below:

The Miller Umwelt Assessment

This assessment provides information as to the relative emphasis the child places on things as opposed to people. It also assesses the extent to which the child is able to communicate with others about things. Parents are directly involved in the assessment and often contribute information which allow the examiners (usually the Millers) to access unsuspected capacities in the child. At the end of the 2-hour session, the parents receive an oral summary of findings — including prognosis for response to the Miller Method — and a videotaped copy of the assessment which provides baseline data on the child. A detailed report with recommendations is sent within 2-3 weeks. Usually, 6-8 weeks advance scheduling is necessary.

Fee: \$1000.

Parent-Child Training (10 hours over 5-days)

The first day begins with a 2-hour Umwelt Assessment. The hypotheses formed during this first session are tested on the second, third and fourth days by introducing interventions which may include the Sign and Spoken Language Program, the Elevated Square, contagious activity, the Symbol Accentuation Reading Program, and so forth. The final two hours on the fifth day is devoted (while the child is cared for by a child-care worker) to planning with parents a home and/or school program.

Parents take home a copy of the videotape of the sessions and receive, within 3-weeks, a report outlining the findings and the recommendations for the home/school program.

Offered:

Throughout the year (with 6-8 weeks advance notice)

Fee: \$1975.

Status: Openings in November and December, 1996

Oversight Program

The oversight Program is designed for families distant from the Center or one of its satellite programs. It is most effective when it follows the Umwelt Assessment and a week of Parent-Child Training as described above.

Basically, the Oversight Program is a means of providing ongoing support and guidance for parents and/or professionals trying to live and work with a challenging child with autism or PDD. Once parents and Center work out a renewable contractual relationship for 3-, 6, or 12-months, a case manager trained in the Miller Method is assigned to the family. Then, at a mutually convenient time each week there is a one-hour conference call which allows consultation between the case manager and parent and/or the professional working with the child.

Each month the parent and/or professional provides the case manager with an hour videotape of the child's performance in different parts of his/her day. On the basis of this videotape – as well as from information derived from the weekly phone consultations – the case manager recommends needed changes in the child's program. This procedure continues throughout the contractual period.

Offered: Throughout the year

Fee: \$1000 per month for regular weekly consultation with one person (usually a parent).

An additional fee of \$500. per month is levied if regular weekly contact is also required with a second person (teacher, OT, speech-language or other professional).

MILLER METHOD STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

Those working with children with autism or PDD are appropriately concerned with developing the children's ability to interact. In the previous issue we discussed the value of "rough and tumble" activity in this regard. Supplementing "rough and tumble" is the following strategy for the CLOSED SYSTEM child who is so preoccupied with an object that he/she won't look at or interact with you.

OPENING A CLOSED OBJECT SYSTEM: First determine the kind of object with which the child is preoccupied (long-slender, round-soft or round-hard, etc.), then collect about a dozen of the favored kind of object. With your collection of child-preferred objects close at hand, approach the child. While the child is "working" with his/her object, quickly and firmly remove it from the child, then *immediately* replace it with one of the objects in your collection. Repeat this procedure 3-4 times the first day, 5-6 the second day, 7-8 the third day. As the child becomes accustomed to the interruptions and replacements, you can begin to delay returning the object for a second or two until he/she can tolerate delays of up to 5-6 seconds. The delay provides you with opportunity to place the object in front of your face so that the child continues to look at both you and the object. At this point, you might begin to offer objects that are slightly different to the child. For example, if he has been preferring round-soft offer round-hard, and so forth.

Results: Children interrupted in their object pre-occupations in this way will initially show some distress but will, at the same time, look at you (particularly if you have placed their object in front of your face). Gradually, the child will begin to include you in the exchange game and will — more and more — be weaned from solitary pre-occupation with the object and learn to interact

Status: Openings for 2-3 oversights

Six Week Summer Program (During July and August)

This year, children from six families from the United States and Canada have been accepted into a six week summer program at LCDC. Children are accepted when there is an appropriate class setting for them or when — as is the case this year — a special class for summer children is set up. To insure appropriate placement and

around a variety of objects. *WARNING:* Too much delay in returning the object — before the child has learned to tolerate this — will result in a catastrophic reaction on the child's part and preclude further work that day!

ESTABLISHING AND EXPANDING A "GIVE" SYSTEM: *This next strategy is for the closed system child who will not give you an object even when you tap your extended palm next to the object in or near his/her hand and say, "Give!"*

First, get a variety of similar objects such as blocks of different shapes and a large container into which those objects can be thrown. Select a container that makes a satisfying, resounding sound when the object lands in it. Then, set-up a contagious system where you begin to rapidly throw the blocks one at a time into the container as you say, "In!" each time. If the child has not joined you, take his/her hand and help him/her (hand over hand) pick up and drop the objects one at a time into the container. As the child gets into this contagious system (evident as the child throws in 4-5 blocks without support), introduce your extended palm right in front of where he/she throws the block and tap your palm urgently as you say "Give!" If he/she places the block in your hand, *immediately* drop it into the box. If not, keep trying this procedure until the child does put the block in your hand.

Once he/she tolerates giving you the block while your hand hovers over the container, gradually move your hand to the left or right of the container and continue tapping your hand while saying, "Give!" as you did before. Again, remember to immediately drop the block in the box as soon as you receive it. Once the child can expand his/her response to your hand and spoken signal even when it is quite remote from the box, the same "Give!" sign can easily be extended to elicit his/her handing you other objects in other contexts.

programming, all candidates for the summer program must receive an Umwelt Assessment. The children attend the school from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM from Monday through Thursday. On Friday they attend from 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM. The program is described in depth in the Millers' book *From Ritual to Repertoire* (Chapters 9 and 12), Wiley, 1989, and includes — during the summer — periodic opportunity for swimming

and other summer-related activities.
(*Programs, continued from bottom, previous column*)

In addition to the language-based classroom, the children receive individual speech-language therapy and cognitive-developmental therapy. Parents meet regularly with staff social workers and the Millers. At the end of the 6-week program parents receive a report with recommendations as to how best to follow-through with gains developed during the summer...Parents may inquire to determine if an Oversight Program can be developed to provide guidance beyond the summer program.

Offered: Summers

*Tuition: \$4828. plus \$1000. for Umwelt Assessment.
Total: \$5828.*

Status:

Filled for summer 1996; openings for summer 1997.

Variable Duration Programs within the School Year

Depending on the availability of an appropriate classroom setting at either the Boston, Lynnfield or Cape Cod satellites, parents have the option of contracting for as little as 2-months and as many as 12-months for placement in an LCDC program.

Offered: Throughout the year

*Tuition: \$2500. per month plus a one-time cost of \$1000.
for the Umwelt Assessment*

~~*Status: Several openings anticipated*~~

NEWS FROM OTHER MILLER METHOD PROGRAMS

From Tel Aviv, Israel

Yael Chen tells us that in addition to her very successful program at Yach Dav School in Tel Aviv she has been offered (and plans to accept) the directorship of an early intervention program (children from 18 months to three years). This program, too, she assures us, will be conducted in accord with Miller Method principles.

Yael can be reached at 011-972-9-582-440

From Cleveland, Ohio

Christine Cook, Early Childhood Supervisor, informs us that she and her staff have completed a successful first year applying the Miller Method with 3 children in her early intervention program. All three children have made significant gains. Two are now communicating through spoken language. Christine reports that the program is being expanded in the fall to include children

in the 3 to 6 age range. Christine has organized a 2-day conference in early August at the William Patrick Day Center in Cleveland to contrast the Miller Method with the Lovaas and Greenspan approaches.

Christine welcomes calls at (216) 736-2928

From London, Ontario, Canada

Sue Henry, speech-language pathologist at Robarts School, London, Ontario, reports completion of a first successful year with 5 deaf children with autism and/or PDD. An outcome study on the efficacy of the Miller Method – conducted in consultation with the University of Western Ontario — as it pertains to Sue's work with this group, will be available in the fall. Robarts School has already decided to expand the Miller Method program to include a class and a teacher for other children in this category.

Sue presented some of her work at a very well-attended workshop on the Miller Method conducted in May, 1996 in Toronto. She did a superb job — not only in presenting her work — but in conducting a live demonstration in which she worked with a child with autism on the Elevated Square...Currently, Sue is negotiating with LCDC/Boston to establish an LCDC satellite program in Canada which she would direct.

Sue Henry can be reached at (519) 453-4400 ext. 254



The LCDC Website is at
<http://world.std.com/~ArnMill>

MILLER METHOD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Language and Cognitive Development Center is now accepting applicants for its Miller Method Certification Program. Basic certification requires:

1. Participation in a week of intensive training conducted at LCDC.
2. Ability to conduct an Umwelt Assessment and write reports with treatment-education plans based on these reports (videotapes and written assessments of three children are required).
3. Weekly supervision of treatment by senior staff at LCDC of at least three children (of which 2 are nonverbal) over a one-year period. This requirement may be met either by a one-year traineeship at LCDC or via oversight supervision for one year. Videotaped samples of treatment, coupled with session notes and case formulations are submitted for each child.
4. Successful completion of a written examination on the cognitive-developmental systems theory on which the Miller Method is based. This examination is conducted at LCDC after all previous requirements have been met.
5. Those enrolled in this program may refer to themselves as Miller Method Specialists-In-Training.
6. To maintain certification, once granted, Miller Method therapists must participate in a one-week recertification program at LCDC every two years.

*For further information contact
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LCDC

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