



Vol. 1, Issue 1, April 2006: Evidence-based practice in life skills training.

The National Rehabilitation Information Center serves thousands of patrons each year. Our patrons include people with disabilities, advocates, rehabilitation professionals, educators, and researchers. Requests are answered by phone, mail, email, and AskMe, a chat-based reference service. The majority of our patrons' requests can be answered with a simple database search, web address, or phone number. Researchers' requests often prove more challenging and offer our Information Specialists a change to put NARIC's databases "through their paces" and to explore resources offered by other information clearinghouses.

These requests have become valuable exercises for our staff and an exciting new information resource for our patrons. Six times per year, we select an example of these requests and publish the research results as *reSearch: An extensive review of current literature*. This first issue highlights a request received through the AskMe service in January 2006:




*Jane: I work in a community based substance abuse prevention organization and we have partnered with a local elementary school to provide life skills training/development of social/emotional skills in two classrooms with developmentally disabled students. We are looking for an evidence-based program/service that we could provide to address the development of selected life skills such as: impulse control, empathy, and communication skills.*

## *reSearch*

*A collection of research reviews on rehabilitation topics from NARIC and other information resources.*

Jane's inquiry led NARIC to construct a research brief of documents and projects related to evidence-based programs, services, and practices in regards to life skills training, substance abuse, and communication skills for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The citations and programs listed in this research brief are the result of extensive keyword searches in several databases. We combined more than 60 terms to create, expand, and narrow our searches. Two databases offered relevant citations: NARIC's REHABDATA database of disability and rehabilitation literature, and the database of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). Of the keywords searched, 14 terms were common to both databases:

-  Assistive Technology
-  Augmentative and Alternative Communication
-  Child Development
-  Early Intervention
-  Emotional Disorders/Disturbances
-  Evaluation/Evaluation Methods
-  Health Promotion
-  Independent Living
-  Interpersonal Relations/Relationships
-  Learning Disabilities
-  Physical Disabilities
-  Physical Education
-  Substance Abuse
-  Teaching/Teaching Methods

The REHABDATA search resulted in nine documents ranging from 2005 to 1998. Searches in the ERIC database resulted in six abstracts from 2004 to 2000. Complete citations are included at the end of this research brief.

In addition to document searches, NARIC searched its Program database of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) projects to locate grantees/projects related to topic of evidence-based practices and life skills. Six projects fell within the research scope. These projects and their publications are offered as additional resources to our patron:

- 📖 Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging and Developmental Disabilities. Project Number: H133B031134 (Active)
- 📖 Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Substance Abuse, Disability, and Employment. Project Number: H133B040012 (Active)
- 📖 Opening Doors for Children with Disabilities Special Health Care Needs. Project Number: H133B060012 (Active)
- 📖 Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Infants, Children and Youth. Project Number: H133B40019 (No Longer Funded)
- 📖 Research and Training Center on the Social Psychological Development of Children and Youth with Disabilities. Project Number: H133B90012 (No Longer Funded)
- 📖 Do Interventions in Augmentative and Alternative Communication Really Work? A Research Synthesis. Project Number: H133F010010 (No Longer Funded)

For project information, you may visit <http://www.naric.com/research/default.cfm>, select *Research Projects* and type in the project number. Each project listing includes citations from NARIC holdings.

***Documents from NARIC's REHABDATA search listed are listed below:***

**2005**

***Buekelman, R. David, and P. Mirenda. (2005). Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Supporting Children and Adults with Complex Communication Needs, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.***

NARIC Accession Number: R08640

ABSTRACT: Textbook offers information to prepared students and practicing professionals interested in providing augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for people who cannot meet daily communication needs through natural modes such as speech, gestures, or writing. The book comprises 19 chapters in three parts. Part 1 introduces readers to AAC processes. Part 2 contains six chapters that review AAC interventions for individuals with developmental disabilities. Part 3 focuses on acquired communication disorders. This new edition includes new and expanded content on adults with degenerative language or cognition disorders, more research on adults with acquired disabilities, information about supporting students who use AAC in general education classrooms, use capability assessment, the most recent AAC devices and interventions, and updated terminology throughout the book to reflect the recommendations of the International Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication and the World Health Organization.

***Friedman, M. Robert, and David Drews. (2005). Evidence-Based Practices, Systems of Care and Individualized Care.***

NARIC Accession Number: O16271

ABSTRACT: Study examined the relationships between evidence-based practices, systems of care, and individualized care in the delivery of services to children with serious mental health challenges and their and families. Interviews were conducted to identify barriers and facilitators of effective integration of these approaches. Recommendations for the effective implementation of an integrated approach are presented.

***Kent-Walsh, Jennifer, and David McNaughton. (2005). Communication Partner Instruction in AAC: Present Practices and Future Directions. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 21(3), 10.***

NARIC Accession Number: J49732

ABSTRACT: Article addresses the need for instructional methods to improve the interaction skills for communication partners of individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). An eight-step strategic model for use in communication partner instruction programs is proposed. Future research directions related to this model are discussed.

Newman, Catherine, and C. Liberton. (2005). *17<sup>th</sup> Annual Research Conference Proceedings: A System of Care for Children's Mental Health: Expanding the Research Base, February 29-March 3, 2004, Tampa, Florida.*

NARIC Accession Number: O16098

ABSTRACT: Proceedings of a conference on children's mental health service delivery system. Volume contains abstracts describing research projects, program evaluation, and aspects of investigation and implementation of service delivery systems and innovative programs. Chapters are organized around central topics featured during the conference: (1) building and maintaining a system of care; (2) evidence-based practices and processes in systems of care, (3) wraparound fidelity and processes, (4) professional training and workforce development, (5) measurement and instrumentation, (6) family involvement and perspectives, (7) sensitivity to culture in systems of care, (8) early intervention, trauma, resilience, and health; (9) school-based approaches, (10) substance abuse, child welfare, and juvenile justice; (11) outcomes and processes of residential and intensive services; and (12) transition to adulthood.

## 2004

Baker, L. Bruce, and Alan Brightman. (2004). *Steps to Independence: Teaching Everyday Skills to Children with Special Needs.*

NARIC Accession Number: R08407

ABSTRACT: Handbook provides strategies for teaching independent living skills to children with developmental disabilities. Step-by-step guidance is presented for parents to teach 7 types of skills: (1) get-ready, (2) self-help, (3) toilet training, (4) play, (5) self-care, (6) home care, and (7) functional academic. Includes information to help manage challenging behavior; strengthen partnerships with the child's teachers; and use technology, such as email, Internet communities, search engines, and software, as a source of information and support.

Hill, Katya. (2004). **Augmentative and Alternative Communication and Language: Evidence-Based Practice and Language Activity Monitoring.** *Topics in Language Disorders, 24(1), 13.*

NARIC Accession Number: J47186

ABSTRACT: Article discusses the definition, components, and steps of evidence-based practice (EBP) and performance measurement used to support augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) assessment and intervention processes. A model for evidence-based practice is presented that demonstrates how collecting and evaluating performance data supports clinical decisions. Three components of EBP are discussed: (1) field evidence, (2) evidence at the personal level, and (3) clinician experience. Language activity monitoring is described as an approach for collecting performance data. Software tools such as the AAC Performance Report Tool are described for reporting language skills and communication competence. Clinical examples illustrate the application of EBP and performance measurement.

Millar, C. Diana, and Janice Light. (2004). **The Effect of Direct Instruction and Writer's Workshop on the Early Writing Skills of Children who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication.** *Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 20(3), 15.*

NARIC Accession Number: J46869

ABSTRACT: Study examined the effect of a writing instructional program on the selection of initial letters of word by three children with developmental disabilities who used augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) system. The writing instructional program consisted of direct instruction in letter-sound correspondence and selection of initial letters of words, and a writing workshop-type task to provide instruction in literacy activities. Results showed that two of the three children were successful in the acquisition of the target skill, maintained use of the skill at least 1 month following instruction, and demonstrated some generalization of the skill to other tasks. The third child required a simplified instructional program to accommodate transient episodes of hemiplegia and to increase his time on task.

Schwartz, Sue. (2004). *The New Language of Toys: Teaching Communication Skills to Children with Special Needs: A Guide for Parents and Teachers.*

NARIC Accession Number: R08456

ABSTRACT: Guidebook designed to teach parents and teachers how to use toys and other play activities to aid their children's language development. This third edition features dozens of new toys and activities and new color photographs of children playing with the toys recommended. The book is divided into three parts. The first part presents background information about language, its sequential development, causes of language delay, the value of play in enhancing language development, and the role of parents. The second

section identifies specific toys that have been found to be useful in stimulating language development and explains how parents can use these toys in playing with their children. This part includes sample language dialogues for use with each toy. The third section discusses general issues related to toys and learning that can help the reader select and use toys and other language learning materials effectively.

Tarver-Behring, Shari, and Michael E. Spagna. (2004). **Counseling with Exceptional Children with Developmental Disabilities.** *Focus on Exceptional Children, 36(8), 12.*

NARIC Accession Number: J49845

ABSTRACT: Article discusses the characteristics of children with developmental disabilities, physical and neurological disabilities, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), as well as guidelines for counseling specific groups of children and youth with disabilities. The counseling needs of those with specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, mild mental retardation, orthopedic impairments, multiple disabilities, and ADHD are addressed.

Woods, Juliann, and Shubha Kashinath. (2004). **Effects of Embedding Caregiver-Implemented Teaching in Daily Routines on Children's Communication Outcomes.** *Journal of Early Intervention, 26(3), 19.*

NARIC Accession Number: J47969

ABSTRACT: Study demonstrates the viability of teaching caregivers to embed effective teaching strategies within daily routines to improve the communication skills of children with disabilities. Four toddlers with developmental disabilities participated in the intervention, which involved teaching their caregivers to use specific strategies within the family's preferred indoor play routines. The primary outcome was the frequency of use of target strategies by caregivers within the target routine segment. To assess generalization, caregiver teaching strategy use was observed during outdoor play and other care giving routines. In addition, the child's progress was evaluated before baseline and at the end of intervention using a curriculum-based assessment measure. Results showed

that caregiver strategy use increases subsequent to instruction within indoor play routines. Generalization to other routines, however, was limited in three of the four dyads. All four children demonstrated gains in communication objectives and test scores across multiple developmental domains improved.

## 1998

Demers, J.C. (1998). **ATOD Prevention Activities for Youth and Adults with Disabilities.**

NARIC Accession Number: O13100

ABSTRACT: Training manual provides a broad selection of activities which can help youth and adults with disabilities avoid involvement in Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) use. Designed for teachers, prevention specialists, health educators and others who have an impact on the lives of people with disabilities, this guide contains four sections: The first section discusses the challenges and risks faced by young people with disabilities in avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. A brief conceptual overview of resiliency is provided along with ways in which prevention programs can strengthening the person's protective factors. The second section offers guidelines for implementing the activities in the guide. Suggestions are offered for adapting and modifying activities for participants with a variety of physical and developmental disabilities. The third section features 30 prevention activities for nurturing the participant's protective factors and competencies. Finally, a series of charts on specific risks, medication side effects, and recommended adaptations are included for tailoring aspects of the program to the needs of the individual participant. Recommended resources also are provided. This document is included in NCDDR's Guide to Substance Abuse and Disability Resources Produced by NIDRR Grantees, number G.1. This document is included in NCDDR's Guide to Substance Abuse and Disability Resources Produced by NIDRR Grantees, 2nd Ed., number G.1.

*Full-text copies of these documents may be available through NARIC's document delivery service. Call 800/346-2742 or visit [www.naric.com](http://www.naric.com) for more information.*

**Documents from the Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) search at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/> are listed below:**

## 2004

Bremer, D. Christine, and John Smith. (2004). *Teaching Social Skills: Addressing Trends and Developments in Secondary Education and Transition.*

ERIC #: ED484258

ABSTRACT: To achieve the best outcomes possible, transition-age youth need specific skills in areas such as math, literacy, and independent living. However, skills in these areas will not assure successful outcomes in the absence of adequate social skills. Social skills form the basis for social competence. This brief reviews research on the importance of social skills for youth and highlights strategies for teaching social skills to youth with disabilities.

Kaspa-Tur, Hana. (2004). **Social-Information-Processing Skills of Kindergarten Children with Developmental Learning Disabilities.** *Learning Disabilities and Practice, 19(1), p. 3-11.*

ERIC #: EJ686992

ABSTRACT: The study examined the social-information-processing skills of kindergarten children with developmental learning disabilities (LD) utilizing Crick and Dodge's (1994) model of children's social adjustment as a theoretical framework. Participants consisted of 20 kindergarten children with developmental LD who attended three integrated kindergartens and 20 children without developmental LD from the same kindergartens. Participants were assessed on social-information-processing skills, feelings of loneliness, sense of coherence, and teachers' ratings of behavioral problems and positive resources. The results indicated that girls with developmental LD performed significantly lower on two information-processing steps the response decision and the enactment steps than did girls without LD. Such differences were not found for boys. The results also showed that the social-information-processing skills of children with developmental LD were correlated with teachers' ratings.

## 2002

Bruder, Mary Beth. (2002). *Social Competence in Early Childhood/Effects of a Specific Curriculum*

**Focus. Final Report.**

ERIC #: ED473687

ABSTRACT: This final report describes activities and accomplishments of a federally supported project in Connecticut to develop and examine the effectiveness of a social competence curriculum on the behavioral outcomes of young children (24-48 months) with disabilities and their families. Children (n=17) and their families received two years of implementation of the Play Tools for Toddlers Curriculum. This curriculum focuses on development of skills in the areas of peer group entry, conflict resolution, and maintaining play as well as skills in personal social involvement, play initiations, emotional regulation, and shared understanding. A parallel curriculum for parents emphasizes parent child interactions, family attitudes and beliefs, parent orchestrated learning opportunities, and family support. Although children in the curriculum group had higher age equivalent scores at 42 months in every sub domain than did children in a control group, these results did not reach statistical significance. The bulk of this document consists of both the toddler and family curriculums. The toddler curriculum provides details on teaching 24 target skills, including adaptations for specific disabilities. Extensive appendices present additional project information such as newsletters, agenda, the Project Procedure and Intervention Manual, and evaluation forms.

Simpson, Richard, Ed. (2002). *Technology & Disability: Research, Design, Practice and Policy. Proceedings from the 25<sup>th</sup> RESNA International Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 27-July 1, 2002.*

ERIC #: ED479678

ABSTRACT: These proceedings of the 2002 annual RESNA (Association for the Advancement of Rehabilitation Technology) conference include more than 200 presentations on all facets of assistive technology, including concurrent sessions, scientific platform sessions, interactive poster presentations, computer demonstrations, and the research symposium. The scientific papers included in the book address recent scientific research, practical designs, and case studies. Scientific content is grouped into the following eight categories: (1) technology for special populations, which includes "Robot Use and Cognitive Development in Children with Cerebral Palsy" (Petrina Duff and others), "Student Mentoring for the Design of Assistive Technology Devices" (Debra D. Wright and others), and "Assistive Technology Outcomes and

Students with Mild Disabilities” (Dave L. Edyburn); (2) augmentative and alternative communication, which includes “A Language Activity Monitor for Digitized Speech AAC Systems To Support Evidence-Based Clinical Practice and Outcomes Measurement” (Marvin Indermuhle and others) and “The Learning Experiences of AAC Users: Results of an Internet-Based Focus Group Discussion” (Tracy Rackensperger and others); (3) computer access and use, which includes “Assessment of Computer Task Performance with Paediatrics and Low Vision” (Claude Vincent and others); (4) environmental accommodations; (5) functional control and assistance; (6) service delivery and public policy; (7) research and functional outcomes; and (8) seating and mobility, which includes “Educating Students of Occupational Therapy about Wheelchair Use: Comparison between Standard Curriculum and Skill-Acquisition Protocols” (Anna L. Coolen and others). The book includes papers from the student design competition and the student scientific paper competition, including “Development and Evaluation of a Thoracic Pressure Chair for a Student with Autism” (Andrew E. Anderson and others). (Papers include references.)

## 2000

(2000). *Developmental Therapy – Developmental Teaching: An Outreach Project for Young Children with Social-Emotional-Behavioral Disabilities. Final Performance Report. Georgia University, Athens, College of Family and Consumer Sciences.*

ERIC #: ED462780

ABSTRACT: This outreach project is based on the validated Developmental Therapy-Developmental Teaching model originally designed for young children with severe emotional/behavioral problems and their families. It is an approach that emphasizes the teaching skills that foster a child’s social-emotional-behavioral competence. The model has proven effective in inclusive settings with children who have social, emotional, or behavioral disabilities and those who have additional developmental delay, autism, or other disabilities. Components of the model have been integrated into early childhood general pre-academic curriculums and in natural settings. Family involvement such as parental participation in assessment, program planning, and simultaneous home implementation of model practices is an integral aspect of the model. The project assists early childhood and local childcare programs in replicating components of the model in

natural, inclusive, or pull-out settings for children (birth to age 8) with social-emotional-behavioral disabilities, and their families. Recognizing that effective implementation depends upon the knowledge and skills of the adults who work directly with these young children, the project assists participants in acquiring specific skills to foster social-emotional-behavioral growth. Emphasis is on model applications in typical daily activities such as social play, social language, listening and responding, creating, imagining, playing, and participating. Specific outreach activities include: (1) dissemination of information and general training about the model to early childhood personnel and families of participating children; (2) planning and model implementation at selected replication sites, with new staff development materials suitable for on-site and distance learning via Internet and satellite; and (3) evaluation of project impact on the proficiency of participating personnel and families, their evaluation of helpfulness and effectiveness of the outreach project, and the progress of participating children.

(2000). *Healthful Living Education. Standard Course of Study and Grade Level Competencies, K-12. North Carolina State Department of Public Education, Raleigh.*








ERIC #: ED457149

ABSTRACT: This document describes instruction for the acquisition of healthy lifestyle behaviors. The Healthful Living Education program reflects the needs of all students, including those with disabilities, combining health education and physical education. When appropriately reinforced in a comprehensive scope and sequence, it can provide such benefits for all students as: lowered risk-taking behaviors; enhanced academic performance; desirable social behaviors; increased levels of self-image; establishment of positive behaviors; increased respect for diversity; and appropriate skill development and behavior for competence in at least three lifetime activities. The standard course of study has objectives for each grade level. The same strands and competency goals occur at each level. The strands define major elements of healthful living that are relevant across grades and provide unifying threads of understanding supported by the goals and objectives of the standard course of study. The strands include: preparation; stress management; substance abuse; nutrition and weight management; protecting self and others; relationships; personal fitness; healthful lifestyles; appreciation for diversity; social wellness; movement forms; and fitness and sport literacy. (Contains 24 references.)

**About *reSearch*:**

*reSearch* is a new information product from the National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC). Each issue is based on real-world queries received by our information specialists from researchers, educators, and rehabilitation professionals around the world.

We search several sources both in-house and online, to fill these requests including:

-  REHABDATA and the NIDRR Program database
-  Education Resources Information Center
-  National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials
-  Campbell and Cochrane Collaborations
-  PubMed and other National Library of Medicine databases
-  Agency for Health Care Policy and Research databases
-  Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange

and other reputable, scholarly information resources.

We hope you find these *reSearch* briefs informative in your own research.

- NARIC Information and Media Team