

"Back to School" August 9-10, 2008 Autism / Aspergers Conference

Workshop for ParaProfessionals: **How to be a Para Pro for Students with Autism**

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Saturday August 9, 8:45 am – 5:00 pm

This workshop is based upon information contained within the book, *How to be a Para Pro: A Comprehensive Training Manual for Paraprofessionals*, written by the speaker. The central premise of this presentation is that students with ASD require *informed* educational support if they are to succeed. As such, using the features of ASD as the disability category, this workshop directly addresses the *knowledge base, skills, and attitudes* that paraprofessionals require to ensure classroom success, while at the same time it meets head-on the critical issues involved in coordinating support between teachers and paraprofessionals, and outlines the specific duties and responsibilities that para pros need to acquire and understand in order to meet their students' needs.

The following categories of educational supports will be discussed: *peripheral / environmental; direct instruction / academic; social, play, and leisure; and behavioral supports*. Several examples of each support category will be given. In addition, the para pro's clerical and record-keeping responsibilities will be outlined, and examples will be given of how to streamline the process of recording important information and determine progress.

Finally, a unique model for gauging the amount of support to provide will be presented as a means of providing the para pro with a method of avoiding prompt dependency in students. Hands-on activities will address problem behavior and will include practice in the actual application of the *Blueprint for Troubleshooting Problem Situations*.

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- describe the strengths, weaknesses, and unique characteristics of individuals with ASD
- describe the ways in which knowledge, skills, and attitude interact to affect caregiver behavior
- identify the key deficits in ASD that require accommodations and support, as well as the implications that they have for educational programming
- list the duties and responsibilities of paraprofessionals and the areas of overlap with teachers.
- list the different types of support that students with ASD require
- apply a formula for gauging the amount of support that students require to be successful
- "troubleshoot" regarding problem behaviors

Dr. Diane Twachtman-Cullen is a licensed speech-language pathologist specializing in autism and related disorders. The editor-in-chief of *Autism Spectrum Quarterly* (www.ASQuarterly.com), Dr. Twachtman-Cullen is also co-chair of the Autism Society of America's Panel of Professional Advisors, and the author of numerous articles and chapters. Her books include the following: *How to be a Para Pro: A Comprehensive Training Manual for Paraprofessionals*; *Trevor Trevor* (a children's book for peer training); and *How Well Does Your IEP Measure: Quality Indicators for Effective Service Delivery* (co-authored with Jennifer Twachtman-Reilly). Dr. Twachtman-Cullen serves on several professional advisory boards, and provides training seminars internationally, through ADDCON Center, LLC in Higganum, Connecticut.

Registration and More Info on Conference: This workshop is one of many workshops and presentations at the "**Back to School**" *Autism/Asperger's Conference* in Pasadena, CA on August 9-10, 2008. Go to www.autism-conferences for more information.