



**DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY RESOURCES**

**The ONE Resource Network Integrating Conventional & Holistic Approaches**



*HealthPro Labs:  
Transdermal Creams for complete absorption*

**This newsletter is made possible by a grant from Springboard, Spring Valley, CA**

Springboard, under its HealthPro Labs label, offers an easy alternative to oral supplements: transdermal creams. Larry Jordan, the grandfather of a boy with autism, couldn't bear to think of his daughter crushing, mixing and disguising nutrients in applesauce or vegetable juice, and then feeling frustrated when the vile concoctions were rejected!

Not a scientist, Jordan commissioned a biochemist to create unique creams with special properties that could be simply massaged into thin-skinned areas of the body. The results: specially formulated creams with a liposomal delivery system that bypasses the malabsorption issues of the gastrointestinal tract, ensuring complete absorption of the nutrients. Today, HealthPro Lab's creams help children globally.

**Creams for General Nutritional Support**

- **Autistique** - a combination of Phosphatidylcholine, Acetyl-L-Carnitine, B6, B12 Methylcobalamin, and Vitamin E plus thiamine and R-Lipoic Acid;
- **Vitamin C** - that even in high dosages won't cause diarrhea.

**Creams to Support Detoxification**

- **R-Lipoic Acid** - which includes a potent, natural form of alpha lipoic acid, milk thistle, selenium, and NAC acety-L-cysteine. This formulation may be helpful in regenerating the liver;
- **Glutathione Plus** - a combination of glutathione plus its co-factors that work synergistically to enhance the efficacy of glutathione;
- **Magnesium Sulphate** - a cream form of Epsom salts.

**Creams to Repair Methylation**

- **Autistique 2.0** - a more intensive combination of original Autistique, with L-Carnosine, folic acid, and trimethylglycine added;
- **B-12** - as Methylcobalamin;
- **Folic Acid and Trimethylglycine** - can increase the production of SAMe which elevates serotonin levels, improves mood, behavior, and reduces homocysteine.

**Creams to Enhance Cognition and Language**

- **Cognitive Therapy Complex** - a formulation of Phosphatidylserine, Acetyl-L-Carnitine, L-Carnosine and other nutrients to enhance clarity, focus, concentration, motor planning, and memory;
- **GABA L-Theanine** - calms brain wave functioning and creates a state of relaxation while maintaining alertness, learning performance, mental clarity, concentration, and immunity. Addresses issues of high anxiety and aggressiveness;
- **Phosphatidylcholine** - a form of choline that may improve brain development, motor planning, and complex expressive language development.

**Creams to Reduce Oxidative Stress and Cortisol**

- **CoQ10** - for reducing oxidative stress and excitotoxicity;
- **Melatonin** - for insomnia, high cortisol levels, and hyperactivity.

**Creams to Heal the G. I. Tract and to Reduce Inflammation**

- **Cod Liver Oil** - for Vitamin A and G-protein deficiency;
- **Curcumin** - may calm enterocolitis and excitotoxicity;
- **Panthenol** - vitamin B5, which the body converts into Co-enzyme A, which affects energy production, gut integrity, metabolism, and adrenal functioning;
- **Zinc Cysteine** - addresses issues of metallothionein protein dysfunction.

Springboard also carries a wide range of products from Allergy Research Group, a pioneer in dietary supplements designed for people with chronic allergies, chemical sensitivities, autoimmune disorders, and neuro-degenerative diseases. Their Russian Choice GI is a potent probiotic used to boost the immune system in those with severe radiation exposure from Chernobyl. Mucolyxir eliminates excess congestion, and Mastica inhibits the growth of H. Pylori, the cause of ulcers.

Springboard is committed to working diligently to produce a variety of creams and other products that meet the biological needs of children with special needs and their families. For full information on all products in English and Spanish, visit <[www.springboard4health.com](http://www.springboard4health.com)> or call 866.882.6868.

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## Executive Director's Column

by Patricia S. Lemer, M.Ed., NCC, M.S. Bus.



# Autism One: One Family, One Vision, One Future

A year ago I wrote my editorial on *Autism One Radio*. In its infancy then, this part of the *Autism One* family has grown to include over 60 shows, not only in English, but in Spanish, French, Japanese, and Italian. Listen any time to shows archived for your convenience, by going to <[www.autismone.org/radio](http://www.autismone.org/radio)>

*Autism One 2006*, the conference, takes place Memorial Day weekend in Chicago. It is a greatly expanded marketplace offering something for novice and seasoned parents, practitioners in every field, and anyone else interested in disabilities. Five (5) is the magic number: **5 days: May 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 5 tracks.**

DDR is proud to be the official bookseller at the conference. Look for us in the middle of the Exhibit Hall and at speaker presentations. We will have over 200 titles of carefully selected titles, including books written by speakers.

### Pre-conference Days

**Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>** is devoted to *Family Health*. The rate of separation and divorce in the autism community is almost 90%. The remaining 10% are often less than a vigorously functioning family unit. In the morning, take part in a workshop based on Bowen family systems theory, which views the family as an emotional unit. Families will learn healing and nurturing options for solving problems for all its members. The second half of the day takes the family into the future. Speakers address how to make the biomedically right choices to protect future health.

**Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup>** has two exciting choices: *Culinary Delight* and *First Responders*. Good food is the best medicine. Want to put your child on a gluten- dairy-free or specific carbohydrate diet, and are afraid he/she will starve? Then *Culinary Delight* is for you! Learn how to prepare nutritious, delicious GF/CF and SCD meals, where to shop, how to read labels, what cookware to use, time-saving tips, and more from experts Sueson Vess, Jody Goddard, Betsy Hicks, and Carolyn Lewis.

Research indicates that persons with autism and other developmental disabilities are approximately seven times more likely to come in contact with law enforcement professionals than others. *First Responders* is a free day of training for law enforcement, fire rescue, public safety, emergency medical response teams, hospital ERs, 911 dispatchers, social services, and criminal justice agency personnel. The general public is also welcome. The workshop is led by Anne Yas, Norfolk County, MA. Assistant District Attorney, founder of Autism and Law Enforcement Education Coalition (ALEC) and autism safety expert, Dennis Debbaudt.

### Main Conference

Over 120 sessions combine the latest in scientific research with the most effective treatments and therapies. Speakers are distinguished researchers, scientists, doctors, practitioners and educators. DDR is very proud that several of our members are among them: Samuel Berne, Jeff Bradstreet, Peta Cohen, Mary Coyle, Dorinne Davis, Betsy & John Hicks, Patricia Lemer, Seth Pearl, Mary Rentschler, Terrie Silverman, Denise Tarasuk, Anju Usman, Andy Wakefield, William Walsh, Esther Weinstein, and Deborah Zelinsky,

- **Biomedical treatments** - Topics: autoimmune factors, the biochemistry of autism, chelation, dental care, diet, environmental toxins, enzymes, essential fats, glutathione, minerals, nutrition, oxidative stress, probiotics, secretin, transfer factors, vaccinations, vitamins, and more.
- **Behavioral, communication & educational therapies** - Applied behavioral analysis (ABA), auditory integration, FloorTime, hippotherapy, home schooling, music therapy, occupational therapy, reflex integration, social skills, sensory integration, verbal behavior, vision therapy, prioritizing therapies, toilet training, and others.
- **Complementary and alternative medicine** - Ayurveda medicine, detoxification, low oxalate & SCD diets, GF/CF, cell-signaling chiropractic, homeotoxicology, naturopathic medicine, hyperbaric oxygen, homeopathy, neurofeedback, traditional Chinese medicine, orthomolecular medicine, neural organization, NAET, and more.
- **Adolescence and Adulthood** – Bullying, driving, intimacy, living arrangements, middle school, puberty, safety, school districts, social skills training, work programs, and others.
- **Government, school, personnel and legal issues** - Autism and the law, estate planning, government services IEPs, insurance companies, legislative action, listservs, siblings, vaccines and the law, and more.

New this year are 25 workshops and roundtables with panels hosted by top people in their fields. These offer participants the opportunity to say, “I have a kid who...” and get answers from various points of view. DDR professionals will be hosting the one on behavioral, communication, and educational therapies.

*Autism One 2006* is the first presentation at an autism conference by Dan Olmstead, a correspondent who has helped spread the word about the autism epidemic, vaccine/mercury/autism connection, and recovery stories. He will be presenting along with autism “hero” David Kirby. Be sure and use this opportunity to buy Kirby’s *Evidence of Harm* for everyone you know.

The conference has a few special events, adding fun to the weekend. Sign up now for the Saturday night dinner. DDR will host what has become our annual fund-raising auction. Bid on over 200 items. Most are available with “silent” bids before dinner. Buy \$5 lottery tickets, and you can win big prizes. A few special items, such as an autographed copy of Bernie Rimland’s *Infantile Autism*, will be auctioned off live with TACA’s Lisa Ackerman as auctioneer.

Childcare a problem? Not an excuse! For a small daily fee the onsite daycare center will provide supervised games, art supplies, and activities for all ages. Knowledgeable and experienced Easter Seals of Chicago workers will provide care and constant attention to children with autism and their siblings.

Thanks to “Emperor” Ed Arranga for making *Autism One 2006* the best conference yet. Go to <[www.autismone.org](http://www.autismone.org)> and register. **Hope is Real. Recovery is Real. Children get Better.**

## DDR 2006 Networking Directory Done

If your membership is current, you should be receiving a copy of your 2006 Directory about the same time as this newsletter. Please let us know if you have not received it by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Spring DAN! and Mercury Generation March

Thank you to Maureen McDonnell, Joanne Sheehan and the whole Defeat Autism Now! team for the biggest and best DAN! conference yet. If you missed it, order DVDs from all the sessions from InstaTapes at <[www.instatapes.com](http://www.instatapes.com)> or 800.669.8273. Don't yet own a copy of the revised DAN! manual, *Autism: Effective Biomedical Treatments?* See enclosed booklist. The DAN! conference followed The Mercury Generation March in Washington, DC. A-Champ representatives from almost every state lobbied their representatives to support the revised "Combating Autism Act." Want to join their efforts? Go to <[www.a-champ.org](http://www.a-champ.org)>.

## Klinghardt Interviews on Autism One Radio

Take time to listen to DDR Executive Director Patricia Lemer's interviews with Dr. Dietrich Klinghardt on April 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. He is astounding! His seven precipitating events that contribute to autism are applicable to any illness or disease. Go to <[www.autismone.org/radio](http://www.autismone.org/radio)> and click on the red "Help" in the lower left hand corner. The calendar of the current month will come up. Click the backwards facing arrow to get to April and then click on the shows to play.

## Kirby and Shafer Win Awards

Congratulations to David Kirby and Lenny Shafer. Kirby received the "Investigative Reporters and Editors 2005 Award for Outstanding Investigative Reporting in a Book" for *Evidence of Harm (EOH)*. In their comments, the esteemed judges cited Kirby for "careful and meticulous reporting" in his book on thimerosal and autism. Shafer was honored at the Spring DAN! conference for his online Autism Calendar. A beautiful plaque and a check acknowledged him for his contribution to the autism world. Both will be speaking at the Autism One conference in Chicago (see Upcoming Events). Kirby will do a book-signing there. If you do not yet own EOH, it is now in paperback. (See booklist.)

## Vision Therapy Paid for by School System

A Georgia court ruled that the Dekalb County Schools must reimburse a student's parents for vision therapy (VT) their son received for ocular motor issues, including convergence insufficiency. At the time the student was a high achiever even though he could not maintain single vision. The judge ruled that he required VT as a related service to prevent him from achieving poorly. To read this ruling, go to <[www.specialedlaw.blogs.com](http://www.specialedlaw.blogs.com)>



## Treating AD(H)D without Drugs

Now that the FDA has issued warnings about the long-term negative side effects of stimulant medications, more and more people are interested in alternative solutions. Many gathered to hear speakers on diet, nutrition, neurofeedback, vision therapy, craniosacral therapy, and more in Chicago in March. This program will be repeated in May with local talent in Washington, DC. (See upcoming events.) See the enclosed booklist for many titles extolling the virtues of treatments that address causes instead of masking symptoms.

## Codex Alimentarius: What You Need to Know

Never heard of it? That's because faceless international forces and a compliant corporate-owned media won't tell you. Codex is an anti-democratic attempt to overturn existing US laws governing nutritional supplements in favor of Pharma friendly international trade rules. What does that mean? Possessing vitamin C and other supplements will be as illegal as possessing heroin and cocaine. All the world's animals will have to be inoculated with growth hormones and antibiotics. Codex will go global in 2009, unless you act now. Want to know more? Go to <[www.HealthFreedomUSA.org](http://www.HealthFreedomUSA.org)> and order the DVD or book by Rima Laibow, MD to learn how to protect your freedom.

## All Organic Milk is Not the Same

If you are using dairy products and think you are safe "buying organic," think again. In a survey of 68 organic brands by Wisconsin's Cornucopia Institute, a group that educates the public about sustainable and organic agriculture, Horizon, Trader Joe's, and Whole Foods 365 earn the lowest scores. Why? Because they buy much of their milk from factory farm contractors or unknown sources. Those with the highest scores, like Organic Valley, maintain 100% control over their milk supply, give animals access to pasture, and rear their own replacement cows. To see how your favorite brands measure up, go to <[www.cornucopia.org](http://www.cornucopia.org)>.

## Watch Me Learn

Mary Beth Palo, noticing how glued her son was to his videos, wondered if she could seize the power of this medium to teach her son with autism how to play games, ride the school bus, tie his shoes, and sing. After shooting hundreds of hours of typical children doing these activities, she created "Watch Me Learn" videos. Coupled with continuous music and movement, they capture a child's attention and can yield some exciting results. To preview or order them go to <[www.watchmelearn.com](http://www.watchmelearn.com)>

**New Developments** is a quarterly newsletter published by **Developmental Delay Resources (DDR)**, a 501c3 not-for-profit organization whose mission is connecting families, professionals, and organizations and disseminating the most current information about possible causes, interventions, and preventions for developmental delays. Members of DDR support the inter-relationship of physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development in children whose delays include, but are not limited to, sensory-motor deficits, speech-language disorders, attention deficits, learning disabilities, pervasive developmental disorders and autism. DDR seeks to educate the public about treatments that: address sensory-motor processing, including occupational therapy, vision therapy, auditory training, and perceptual-motor therapy; boost the immune system, including dietary modification, nutritional supplementation, homeopathy, and detoxification; address structural integrity, including osteopathy, CranioSacral therapy, and chiropractic; and encourage positive social-emotional relationships, such as communication therapies, FloorTime, and family therapy. **DDR is the only organization that integrates all these disciplines.**

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All material in **New Developments** is for information purposes only and is not to be substituted for professional advice from your health care provider.

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# The Fastest Way to Change Behavior is Through a Lens

by Melvin Kaplan, OD

Most people don't associate attention, learning, processing, and difficult behaviors with vision. They should, however, because the brains of children with autism spectrum disorders prevent them from correctly focusing on and perceiving what their eyes see. Let an optometrist prescribe special glasses, and watch those behaviors change!

## Vision Involves Both the Eyes and the Brain

Seeing is far more than the prescription in your glasses. Have you ever picked up a new prescription that didn't seem quite right at first? After a short time, your brain acclimates to a new way of seeing. In treating those with developmental delays, eye doctors use lenses therapeutically to change perception. Why? Because perceptual deficits translate into impaired social skills, delayed language, motor problems, and a host of other symptoms, even in children with 20/20 eyesight.

## How Vision Affects Behavior

In perception, the brain must answer two questions about objects in the environment: what it is and where it is. If the answer to either of these questions is faulty, perception suffers. Abnormal postures, such as a head tilt and fleeting eye contact, are an individual's adaptations to distorted perception of the environment.

Some children may over attend to space and have difficulty locating objects; others may over focus on details and not see the whole gestalt. Attempting to eliminate these behaviors without addressing their cause is ludicrous. Changing the underlying visual dysfunction can often eliminate the behaviors, allowing the child to be more available for learning.

## Single and Ambient Prism Lenses

All lenses displace light. Single prism lenses, which is what most of us wear, address the "What is it?" function. Once prescribed, they are typically worn for the rest of a person's life, because they are compensatory.

Ambient prism lenses operate on the "Where is it?" function. They deflect the light rays differently through the thin edge at the top and the thick edge at the base, influencing how the brain interprets where the body is in space. Perception in this area is tied to determining where you are relative to an object, how to move toward and away from it, and how to react to moving objects.

## Yoked Prisms

When the prisms' bases face in the same direction in both eyes, they are called "yoked." Designed to alter neural organization, yoked prisms are powerful tools that can have a dramatic impact on the lives of those with autism and other delays. Yoked prisms address a patient's ability to organize space and create a coherent body schema. These lenses are used therapeutically to change the neuromotor processing of the brain; after rehabilitation occurs, they are no longer needed.

Yoked prisms can cause the environment to appear to be curved up, down, left or right. Objects may thus appear closer, farther away or sloped. Prisms are employed in various magnitudes, which are measured in diopters. Altering both the magnitude and the direction of the prism can influence a patient's perception.

## Experiencing Prisms

Low magnitude prisms can create an immediate unconscious change in posture or attention. Body movements give a child's brain feedback to the effects of prism lenses, during therapy or in everyday life. Such was the case for a young boy who walked dragging his left foot. With yoked prisms he walked with a normal gait. High magnitude prisms can create a conscious awareness of depth and movement, initiating a change in self organization through grounding of self. This was the case in a child who rocked from side to side before being introduced to yoked prism lenses. After disrupting his system with high magnitude prisms, he stopped the side to side rocking completely.

The immediate changes seen in performance with prisms are not permanent. However over time, the experience of changed perception leads to consolidation, which is adaptive, and then prisms can be removed.

## Testing Vision

I have developed a test, "The Kaplan Nonverbal Battery" to help optometrists and others evaluate the effect of prism lenses. Tasks are arranged logically in a hierarchy allowing an observer to see how an individual reacts to increasing demands on the visual system. Initial tasks focus on visual perception in isolation, while succeeding ones require the patient to coordinate visual, vestibular, proprioceptive, auditory, and gravitational input. In each step, the clinician assesses the patient's posture, attention, and disposition, in response to a visual demand, both before and after applying ambient prism lenses.

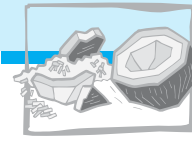
## Change Perception, Change a Life

Most children with autism and developmental delays use their vision poorly. Ambient prisms can help them use their vision more effectively to identify and experience their spatial environment differently. As vision develops more efficiently, it dominates over touch and audition, and performance improves in all areas. To learn more about using lenses and vision therapy for children with developmental delays, read my *Seeing Through New Eyes* (see booklist). DDR can help you find an optometrist in your area.

## Integrating Lenses into a Complete Treatment Program

While lenses and prisms are powerful tools, the optometrist is only one member of a multi-disciplinary team treating a child. To achieve maximum benefit, a comprehensive treatment program includes at least biomedical, educational, and other sensory therapies. Therapists in these and other disciplines must understand how visual intervention impacts upon their therapies. Likewise, optometrists must respect and learn about the synergistic reactions between other therapies and vision. With a team approach, we should be seeing an increasing number of kids recover and lead normal lives.

*Dr. Melvin Kaplan is Director of the Center for Visual Management in Tarrytown, NY. He evaluates and treats children with autism and related disorders from around the world. To learn more, go to his website at <[www.autisticvision.com](http://www.autisticvision.com)>. Contact him at [cvmkaplan@aol.com](mailto:cvmkaplan@aol.com) or 914.631.1070.*



**A**nother diet for those with attention deficits, autism and related disorders! Enter the Body Ecology Diet (BED). Its developer, nutritional consultant Donna Gates, believes that the key to understanding these problems lies deep within the intestinal walls. Recognizing the value of the amazing “subculture” of microflora in our intestinal tracts could prevent and heal these and other disorders.

### Healing the Gut, Healing the Brain

Of the many side effects of mercury toxicity, leaky gut (see *New Developments*, 5:3, 6) is probably the most serious. Unable to absorb nutrients properly and to defend approximately 85% of the immune system it is home to, a wounded gut allows incompletely digested nutrients to pass into the bloodstream. The result: an infected brain.

Aren't a gluten-free casein-free (GF/CF) or Specific Carbohydrate Diet (SCD) enough? “No,” says Gates. The BED takes GF/CF and SCD, and the best of macrobiotics, Fuhrman, and other diets, to the next level. The BED heals the gut by reestablishing a healthy inner ecosystem, eliminating dysbiosis, correcting nutritional deficiencies, strengthening the adrenals, and conquering systemic infections. A healthy gut produces nutrients for the brain; a healthy liver removes toxins from the body. The result: a healthy brain.

### BED Scientific Principles

- **Contraction/Expansion** – For over 5,000 years Oriental medicine has viewed foods on a continuum from contractive to expansive. At the contractive end are animal products, eggs, and salt. At the expansive end are fruits, sugar, and caffeine. The BED encourages foods from the middle, such as root and leafy green vegetables.
- **Acid/Alkaline** – Ideally, human blood is slightly alkaline to discourage the growth of yeasts, fungi, viruses, and bad bacteria. Each meal on the BED contains only 20% acidic foods and 80% alkalizing foods. Because classifying foods can be confusing, use a guide, such as *Alkalize or Die* by Baroody (see booklist).
- **Individualization** – The BED has adapted principles of D’Adamo’s blood type diet to guide individual food choices. For instance, some types can eat animal protein while others should avoid it.
- **Food Combining** – 1. Eat fruits alone and on an empty stomach. Fruits pass through the digestive tract very quickly and encourage yeast. 2. Eat protein with non-starch and/or ocean vegetables. If starch and protein are consumed together, the stomach cannot properly digest either. Separation increases digestive efficiency, thus reducing undesirable fermentation. 3. Eat grains and starchy vegetables with non-starchy and/or ocean vegetables, such as kelp, hiziki, wakame, dulse, and nori, all of which greatly enhance the immune system and are extremely high in minerals.
- **80/20** – 1. Eat until your stomach is 80% full, leaving 20% for digestion. 2. Eat 80% land/sea vegetables and 20% animal protein (fish, meat, eggs), starchy vegetables, (potato, winter squash), and gluten-free, alkalizing ancient grains (quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, and millet).

- **Cleansing** – This most important, misunderstood, and least trusted of the seven BED principles allows the body to restore balance. The BED recommends regular bowel cleansing to remove toxins, which continuously accumulate. Complete cleansing includes elimination of toxic thoughts and feelings. Gates believes that complete healing is impossible without this step.
- **Step-by-Step** – In naturally slow, sequential healing, the body goes through cycles of progress followed by periods of rest. Each step gets deeper into the body, pulling out toxins, and healing affected organs.

### BED Foods

The BED includes only nutritionally dense foods, as near to their natural state as possible, seasoned with Celtic sea salt and herbs. Use only high-quality, organic, unrefined seed oils, raw organic butter (available only from local farms and 99% casein-free), and ghee or coconut oil for cooking. The following vegetables are not permitted: beets (too much sugar), mushrooms (too expensive), avocado (too much oil), and tomatoes (too acid).

Gates recommends daily servings of BED’s signature foods, specifically aimed at halting sugar cravings and reestablishing good intestinal flora: cultured vegetables and coconut kefir. Purchase “starters” for both at <[www.bodyecology.com](http://www.bodyecology.com)>.

- Alkaline-forming raw cultured vegetables are “pickles” loaded with vitamins and rich in lactobacilli and enzymes. Eaten at every meal they help to restore and heal the body’s ecosystem.
- Coconut kefir is made from culturing the water and meat of young green coconuts. The fermentation process eats up the natural sugars in the juice, makes the minerals more bioavailable, and leaves a delicious, refreshing probiotic drink teeming with potent, protective micro-organisms. Kefir contains high levels of calcium and magnesium.

BED includes high quality fats.

- Raw butter and cream are both rich in raw, saturated fatty acids that nourish the brain and intestinal lining. Casein content is minimal. When the butter is introduced a week after starting the coconut kefir, the trace amount of residual casein almost never causes a problem.
- Coconut, cod liver, pumpkinseed, flax seed, evening primrose, borage oils, and raw, casein-free ghee are anti-fungal and anti-viral, and add a variety of omega and other essential fats that heal the damaged gut.

The BED does it all: alkalizes and heals the gut, reestablishes the inner ecosystem, and feeds the body real, nutrient dense foods that allow it to withstand the detoxification process. Want to know more? Read *The Body Ecology Diet* by Gates, (see booklist). The ninth edition comes out this summer. Practitioners interested in becoming Certified Body Ecologists can take a three-day course. Check out <[www.bodyecology.com](http://www.bodyecology.com)> for the next training session, and how to crack those pesky coconuts!



By Mary B. Rentschler, M.Ed.

**E**ver wonder why some families, like the Kennedys, have so much tragedy and pain, and seem almost to be “jinxed”? As parents, our deepest wish is that our children thrive and that our families be filled with love and joy. When instead we experience illness, failure, and conflict, we want to know why. Mercury? Allergies? Birth trauma?

German psychoanalyst Bert Hellinger has a different answer. His Family Constellations begin with the idea that instead of originating in an individual’s life history from birth to the present, dysfunction and suffering often relate to painful events in the family’s past. One of the most profound therapies in Europe today, Family Constellations are now available in the United States.

## Why Is the Past So Important?

Nothing is more important to a child than belonging. Sometimes a child’s way of belonging, though, is to suffer like those who came before. A child may become “entangled” in the difficult fate of a past family member, and unconsciously draw unhappiness, failure, addiction, or illness into his own life. The purpose of a family constellation is to reveal that hidden dynamic and point the way toward resolution.

## How Do Constellations Relate to Autism?

Parents of children with autism spectrum diagnoses know well how the issues they confront constitute a difficult fate for their families. According to Dr. Dietrich Klinghardt (see *New Developments*, 11:2,2) such children are particularly vulnerable to disturbances in the family’s energy field. Unhealed trans-generational family issues create a disturbance in the field, which filters down into a child’s psyche, nervous system, and metabolic functioning. Toxins further prevent their physical bodies from receiving information.

With their extraordinary energetic sensitivity, children with autism are easily affected by unresolved trauma in their ancestry, which compounds their illness. These children are very alive outside their bodies, he says, not inside. It is as if the soul is outside the body looking for a place to dock, but can’t find one because of damaged receptors.

Both illness and healing occur at all five levels of Klinghardt’s paradigm: physical, electromagnetic, mental, intuitive, and spiritual. Any disturbance in the physical realm, which includes the body’s structure and functions, manifests also in another form on the other four levels. Family Constellations work at the fourth (intuitive) level, which is what Carl Jung called the “collective unconscious.” This level is usually ignored by more familiar interventions.

Constellations work is unique; it can be done for a child any time by any living family member. Klinghardt recommends two or three sessions of Family Constellation work to free up the system to release more toxins. Then other interventions suddenly become more effective.

Many types of practitioners are incorporating constellation work into their practices. Most are mental health professionals. However, given the complexity of autism, constellations are showing up in the tool boxes of doctors, nurses, nutritionists, and other disciplines.

## How Do Family Constellations Work?

Family Constellations usually take place in groups. After a brief interview with the facilitator, an individual with a concern chooses representatives for members of his/her family from the circle of participants. S/he positions them in a way that seems right and sits down to watch.

In a short time the representatives begin to experience physical sensations, emotions, or urges belonging not to themselves, but to the family members they represent. It is as though they have become antennae, receiving information from a “family soul” mysteriously present in the room. Facilitators refer to this as the “knowing field.”

Through observations, questions, trial statements, and movements, the facilitator and client come to see the issue in a new way. A resolution may emerge that enables the client to break his/her connection with difficulties in the family’s past. Constellations last from 10 or 15 minutes to over an hour. As the hidden dynamic becomes clear and movements of peace and reconciliation arise, the genuine love and strength in a family can begin to flow in a healthy way.

## An Example

The family history of one boy with autism was full of turmoil and pain on both sides. His father was preoccupied with his own mother’s tragic story. The boy’s mother, an immigrant whose family had experienced political exile, felt rootless in America. In addition, their decision to abort a previous child lacked healthy closure.

As the constellation unfolded, the body language of the boy’s representative showed his ties to those issues. His intense eye contact with the representative of the aborted child was striking. To lighten the burden on their son, the father needed to become less involved with his mother and more present in his current family. The mother needed to develop respect for and roots in her new country, and together they needed to honor the soul of the aborted child by creating a place for it in their hearts. When they accomplished this with ritualized words and gestures, the boy’s representative breathed an audible sigh of relief.

## Can A Family Constellation Help Your Child?

Families who have participated in constellations speak of them as beautiful and life changing. Family Constellations workshops are scheduled at the Autism One conference in May in Chicago and at the USAAA conference in Salt Lake in August. (See *Upcoming Events*). Hellinger will be in Washington, DC in July. For more information visit <[www.hellinger.com](http://www.hellinger.com)>. See booklist for Ulsamer’s *The Healing Power of the Past*, an excellent introduction to constellation theory and practice.

*Mary Rentschler, M.Ed., is a graduate of The Hellinger Institute USA and has advanced training in the constellation methodology. She facilitates constellations for individuals in her private practice, and is also a member of The Constellations Group, LLC, which offers monthly workshops in Washington DC. You can reach her at [wren@pipeline.com](mailto:wren@pipeline.com).*

# Preventing Sensory Processing Disorders

By Kelly Dorfman, M.S., L.D.N., Cofounder DDR



**T**hree year old Charlie was recently diagnosed with sensory processing disorder (SPD). His parents were relieved to finally have an explanation for his extreme fussiness, poor sleep, and developmental delays.

### What are Sensory Processing Disorders?

Previously labeled sensory integration dysfunction, sensory processing disorders relate to touch, pressure, sound, and movement. In SPD, the nervous system does not accurately read and/or coordinate information about these and other senses. Youngsters with SPD can be over- or under-sensitive to their environment, resulting in odd behaviors such as not wanting to be touched, or conversely, wanting to be held continuously. Sensory processing anomalies are factors in most developmental delays involving attention, because, in order to focus, one must be able to sort and prioritize information from the environment.

### Sensory Processing Affects the Nervous System

In retrospect, Charlie's diagnosis was three years late. As a "28 weeker", Charlie was born 12 weeks early. Almost all babies born more than four weeks prematurely have nervous system troubles. Preterm babies account for more than 25% of cerebral palsy (cp) cases. Sensory disorders lack the obvious physical markers of cp, and are also caused by poor development of the nervous system.

A baby can be born at 26 or 28 weeks gestation because, while not fully formed, all parts are present. During the last trimester, fat is laid down, and the nervous system, 60-70% fat, is shaped. The brain is packed with fatty cells and then goes through a pruning process just before birth to allow for better growth and complex development of the neurons. The process is analogous to making a pie. Roll out more dough than needed and then trim it to fit the pan. Researchers now believe that disruption in this pruning process may be one of the causes of autism.

Toxins, illness, malnutrition, and premature birth can all interrupt critical brain development. Other factors that may increase risk to sensory disorders include vaccines given to pregnant women, extended bed rest during pregnancy, and the stressors associated with giving up children for adoption.

### The Mouth as a Sensory Processing Machine

One of the most highly tuned pieces of sensory equipment is the mouth. Premie babies who have endured tubes taped to their faces, often are hyper- or hypo-reactive in the mouth, and on the lips and face. Low muscle tone and an underdeveloped nervous system lead to misreading of taste, texture and temperature, and difficulties sucking and chewing.

A poor suck or troubles transitioning to solid foods are early indicators of potential speech and sensory problems, and future picky eating. Sucking, chewing, and swallowing are all prerequisites to talking. Parents frequently comment that they are only doing speech therapy because they believe language takes priority over chewing and eating. Moving food around the mouth and mastication are the best exercises for training the muscles and nerves needed for speech.

### Strategies for High Risk Infants

Excellent neurological and biochemical diets nourish the nervous systems of high risk infants such as babies who miss out on the normal stimulation and gravitational changes associated with movement and touch. A good neurological diet includes stimulation on the face, lips, in the mouth, as well as on the rest of the body. An intensive oral-motor program from either a speech-language pathologist or occupational therapist can normalize sensory processing in the mouth. Studies show that sensory stimulation causes the neurons to form more complex connections, thus increasing the size and capacity of the brain.

Some innovative birthing centers are turning moms and dads into human incubators by bundling premature babies into slings that the parents carry around all day. Instead of a static machine, the baby can use her mother or father's heartbeat, breathing, movement, and heat to regulate. (See *Mothering*, Mar-Apr 2006.) A further benefit is that the good bacteria living on the skin of the parent is shared with the baby, and builds immune defenses.

The biochemical diet for high risk infants must include a multitude of long chain fatty acids. When available, breast milk is the best choice. Nursing mothers should add mercury-free fish oils to their intake to assure proper fat balance for babies' brain development. Vegetarians can get the omega-3 fats found in fish in algae-based docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) supplements.

All babies can benefit from DHA in formula, breast milk, or directly. DHA Purity, available from <[www.drfuhrman.com](http://www.drfuhrman.com)> is an algae derived liquid supplement suitable for babies. Use ¼ ml for babies less than 6 months.

### Helping the Gut

Good bacteria or probiotics help formula-fed babies gain weight properly and absorb the fats they need for brain development. Most premature and colicky babies have digestive systems that are not ready for food. While they need nutrients, eating further irritates their underdeveloped systems. Good bacteria feed on food particles and produce short chain fats that act like healing balm for the gut lining. Probiotics also improve immune functioning by producing antibacterial substances and reducing allergic response.

Bifidobacterium bifidum, or other members of the bifido family, which normally inhabit the intestines of infants, are the best ones to add to infant formula. Because they are heat sensitive, add to a bottle after it is heated and is ready for consumption. Most good health food stores carry bifido bacteria for infants in the refrigerator section.

Help prevent sensory problems in high risk toddlers by improving the neurological diet, adding DHA and good bacteria. Start with these interventions preventively, before sensory symptoms appear. If no problems occur you may not know if you have prevented delays, but the only side effect is a healthy, happy baby.

For more on feeding premature and high-risk infants, read Fuhrman's *Disease-Proof Your Child*, Galland's *Superimmunity for Kids*, and Schmidt's *Brain-Building Nutrition*. (See booklist.)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Saturday, May 13, 2006 – Washington, DC**  
*Treating ADD & ADHD Without Drugs, A DDR sponsored day-long workshop*  
Speakers include: Charles Gant, MD, PhD and Kelly Dorfman, MS, LN, LD.  
Contact DDR at 800.497.0944 to register.
- **Saturday, May 20 – Sunday, May 21, 2006 – Marietta, GA**  
*Get a HANDLE on Neurodevelopmental Differences, A 12-hour two day course*  
For more information, contact the HANDLE Institute at 206.204.6000 or go to <[www.handle.org](http://www.handle.org)>.
- **Wednesday, May 24 – Monday, May 28, 2006 – Chicago, IL**  
*Autism One 2006 Pre-Conference and Conference*  
Featuring over 10 speakers in 5 tracks, with workshops and roundtables.  
Attend the Saturday evening dinner with DDR fundraising auction. To register, go to <[www.autismone.org](http://www.autismone.org)>.
- **Wednesday, May 31, 2006 – New York, NY**  
*Integrative Medicine and Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*  
Topics include homeopathy, Chinese medicine, and family systems. For health care professionals and therapists. To register go to <[www.chpnet.org/cme](http://www.chpnet.org/cme)> or call 212.420.4713.
- **Saturday, June 3 – New York, NY**  
*Eating Attention: Managing ADHD in Children*  
Speaker: Stephen Cowan, MD. For more information, contact Natural Gourmet Institute for Food and Health at 212.645.5170 or go to <[www.naturalgourmetschool.com](http://www.naturalgourmetschool.com)>.
- **Tuesday, June 6, 2006 – Washington, DC**
- **Wednesday, June 7, 2006 – New York, NY**  
*DDR Annual "Toxic Dinners"*  
Speakers: To be announced. For more information and to register, contact DDR at 800.497.0944.
- **Wednesday, June 7 – Saturday, June 10, 2006 – St. Paul, MN**  
*2006 AHMA Conference, Holism in Action: Building Integrated Healthcare*  
For more information and to register, contact AHMA at 505.292.7788  
Or go to <[www.holisticmedicine.org](http://www.holisticmedicine.org)>.
- **Thursday, June 8 – Friday, June 9, 2006 – Buffalo, NY**
- **Monday, August 7 – Tuesday, August 8, 2006 – Columbus, OH**  
*The SI Tool Kit: Bringing Sensory Integration to Schools and Homes*  
Speaker: Diana Henry, OTR/L. For more information, go to <[www.ateachabout.com](http://www.ateachabout.com)>.
- **Saturday, June 10, 2006 – Amherst, NY**  
*The Gut-Brain Connection*  
Speaker: Coralee Thompson, MD. For more information, contact Autism Society of Western New York at 716.633.2275.
- **Monday, June 12, 2006 – New York, NY**  
*Vaccinating Your Children*  
Lecture by Dr. Lawrence Palevsky. Topics include the vaccine schedule and your baby's developing immune system. To register, go to <[www.realbirth.com](http://www.realbirth.com)> or call 212.367.9006.
- **Tuesday, June 27 – Thursday, June 29, 2006 – Manassas, VA**
- **Tuesday, July 18 – Thursday, July 20, 2006 – Manassas, VA**  
*DDR Summer Institutes*  
3 days of workshops on diet, nutrition, sensory integration, reflexes, and prioritizing therapies in conjunction with GMS Institute Summer Camp.  
To register, contact DDR at 800.497.0944.
- **Sunday, July 9 – Tuesday, July 11, 2006 – Baltimore, MD**  
*Brain Gym 101*  
Speakers: Shoshana Shamberg, OTR/L, MS and Rita Edwards, OT, DTSE.  
For more information or to register, contact Abilities OT Services at: 410.358.7269 or go to <[www.aotfs.com](http://www.aotfs.com)>.
- **Wednesday, July 12 – Saturday, July 15, 2006 – Providence, RI**  
*ASA's 37th National Conference & Exposition on Autism Spectrum Disorders*  
To register, go to <[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)>.
- **Saturday, July 15 – Sunday, July 16, 2006 – Milwaukee, WI**  
*Mini-DAN! with Drs. Elizabeth Mumper and Jon Pangborn*  
For more information, go to <[www.danconference.com](http://www.danconference.com)>.
- **Friday, July 21 – Saturday, July 22, 2006 – Kalamazoo, MI**  
*Sensory Integration and Beyond: Power Tools for Treating Children*  
Speakers: Patricia Oetter, OTR/L and Nancy Lawton-Shirley, OTR/L.  
For more information, contact PDP at 651.439.8865.
- **Friday, July 21 – Sunday, July 23, 2006 – Bellevue, WA**  
*Family Constellations – Systemic Energy Psychology*  
Speaker: Dietrich Klinghardt, MD, PhD. For more information, call 425.637.9339 or go to <[www.neuraltherapy.com](http://www.neuraltherapy.com)>.
- **Friday, July 21 – Saturday, July 22, 2006 – Denver, CO**
- **Friday, July 28 – Saturday, July 29, 2006 – San Francisco, CA**  
*How Does Your Engine Run?*  
The Alert Program for Sensory Integration  
To register, call 877.897.3478 or go to: <[www.AlertProgram.com](http://www.AlertProgram.com)>.
- **Thursday, July 27 – Sunday, July 30, 2006 – Longmont, CO**  
*Brain Gym 101 for Special Needs*  
Speaker: Cece Freeman Koester. For teachers, therapists, and counselors.  
To register, go to <[www.wholepicture.org](http://www.wholepicture.org)> or call 303.903.1349.
- **Saturday, July 29 – Sunday, July 30, 2006 – Washington, DC**  
*Family Constellations as Spiritual Helping*  
Facilitator: Bert Hellinger. For more information, call Lynne Miller at: 301.215.9168 or go to <[www.hellingerdc.com](http://www.hellingerdc.com)>.
- **Monday, July 31, 2006 – New York, NY**  
*Globally Gluten-Free: Italian*  
Instructor: Susan Baldassano. For more information, contact Natural Gourmet Institute for Food and Health at 212.645.5170 or go to <[www.naturalgourmetschool.com](http://www.naturalgourmetschool.com)>.
- **Wednesday, August 9 – Saturday, August 12, 2006 – Park City, UT**  
*2006 USAAA International Conference*  
For more information and to register, go to <[www.usautism.org](http://www.usautism.org)>.

## Developmental Delay Resources

[www.devdelay.org](http://www.devdelay.org)

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