

**University of Florida / Jacksonville
Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
Final Report and Year End Summary**

2007 – 2008

Submitted By

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Since 1996, the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities with the University of Florida College of Medicine (CARD-UF/Jax) has been serving six northeast Florida counties: Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns. Currently, CARD-UF/Jax serves 1,965 individuals with autism and related disabilities. As we continue to expand our autism awareness efforts each year, we receive new referrals that reflect the continuous growth in this population. Nearly 200 new constituents were enrolled this year. We have working relationships with educational professionals in both public and private schools in our region. Additionally, we have a presence in local collegiate settings (e.g., University of Florida College of Medicine/Jacksonville, Jacksonville University, University of North Florida) where we provide pre-service training to future psychologists, educators, and medical professionals. We also have a collaborative relationship with the Developmental Pediatrics Clinic and the UF/Jax Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System program (FDLRS), which provides diagnostic services and referrals to families. In support of our mission, the UF/Jax CARD constituency board provides the center with valuable insight and advice and will assist with fundraising initiatives.

Accomplishments during FY 2007 – 2008 include:

- Providing 10,427 technical assistance and consultation contacts to family members and educational professionals throughout all 6 counties.
- Conducting 43 training events for teachers and other educational professionals and 6 regional workshops.
- Providing mentorship throughout the year through the PEPSA program to 5 teachers in our region.
- Providing training to diverse community organizations, including churches, Early Steps, local university programs, Jacksonville Children’s Commission, companies, and local professional organizations.
- Providing over 261 home visits to assist families with home-related issues.
- Providing 411 school visits to assist teachers with school-related issues.
- Providing support groups for adults with Asperger’s Syndrome and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders.
- Connecting families to existing support groups and resources in the community.
- Supporting development of highly qualified and effective teachers by providing practicum and internship experiences for 15 local undergraduate students.
- Collaborating with the six other CARD centers on development of a checklist for observing students with ASD in general education classrooms and hosting statewide CARD conference.
- Providing 67 professional development workshops for educators in our region,
- Starting a Hanen “More than Words” training series for parents and their young children.
- Starting a Behavioral Detectives Social Skills Camp for children between the ages of 9-13 with autism spectrum disorders.
- Providing training to UF Department of Pediatrics residents.

In FY 2007– 2008, CARD continued to provide services to our constituents in the six areas identified in the Florida Statutes and Florida Department of Education Rule: Individual and direct family assistance, Technical assistance and consultation services, Professional training programs, and Public Education. Additional accomplishments for FY 2007 – 2008 in these areas include the following: Individual Family Assistance: 1,504 individuals received assistance from CARD staff during the year. Assistance provided to families included home, school or center-based consultation, provision of resources and referrals, and training. 219 new individuals with autism or related disabilities registered with CARD-UF/Jax, and many have worked closely with CARD staff to receive individual family assistance. We connect families to learning opportunities provided by CARD and other organizations through email, mail, and our website. Five scholarships were given to parents to attend the CARD Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida who could not otherwise participate. Several groups were offered to provide support and social skill instruction to individuals on the autism spectrum. This includes a Hanen “More than Words” mother and me group, Behavioral Detectives Social Skill Camp, Adult Asperger’s Syndrome Group, and Adolescent Autism Group. We also collaborated with the Autism Society of America of Greater Jacksonville to host 2 large events specifically for families of children with autism spectrum disorders.

Consultation and technical assistance: CARD-UF/Jax provided consultation and technical assistance to professionals in both public and private schools in our 6 county region. We also provided technical assistance to personnel in other agencies including the Job Opportunity Consortium (JOC), ARC/Jacksonville, Duval County Health Dept. Center for Women and Children, Clay County Healthy Start, and Jacksonville Children’s Commission.

Professional training programs: Fifteen college students from local universities participated in semester-long autism practicum experiences. Practicum experiences focused on CARD-UF/Jax provided individualized mentorship training to five educators this year through the Partnership for Effective Programs for Students with Autism (PEPSA). We also provided full day in-service trainings to educational professionals in Duval County (on Applied Behavior Analysis), Flagler Co. (on picture exchange communication), Clay Co. (ABA approach to teaching language), and St. Johns Co. (on Asperger’s Syndrome).

Public Education: CARD has presented at numerous community events to increase awareness of autism. During the month of April, CARD partnered with a local Barnes and Noble bookstore to hold a weekend-long series of autism awareness events. We also provide educational information via our website: <http://www.hscj.ufl.edu/peds/aut/>