



Highlights

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June/July 1986

Bridging the Gap—

Improving communications and services, to Spanish-speaking individuals

In El Paso—

“Push the button,” the teacher instructed 22-year-old Luis, only to be met with a blank stare. In response to his questioning gaze, she repeated her instructions in Spanish and in return received an approving nod from Luis as he pushed the button that sent the automatic dishwasher in his vocational skills training class into motion.

Luis is one of several students involved with the Special Education Clinic at the University of Texas at El Paso. Under the direction of Elva Duran, Ph.D., the clinic received a Developmental Disabilities Program grant in 1984 to create an independent living skills training center targeted toward young adults with autism and other severe disabilities. As part of the project, students learn to perform tasks that will help them transition into the “everyday” world. Participants are trained in self-help, vocational and community living skills.

. . . students completed tasks more quickly if their native language . . . was used in the instruction . . .

Through her work on the project, as well as previous teaching experience in working with Hispanic individuals, Duran noticed the difference in the rate of accomplishment between children who were fluent in English and those who were not. In teaching students with limited English proficiency and severe disabilities, Duran observed that students completed tasks more quickly if their native language, or some words from their native language, was used in the instruction, along with English commands. Using Spanish-language cues even helped Hispanic students who were nonverbal to follow instructions more quickly.

Teaching in an area heavily populated by Spanish-speaking families, Duran and other teachers at the clinic were successful in using the Spanish-English teaching method, when needed. However, without research to validate their findings, Duran had

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Through the Children’s Center for Developmental Therapy’s program for Spanish-speaking parents, translator Catalina De LaGarza helped Veronica Gomez (center) and her mother (left) to communicate with physical therapist Priscilla Lewis (far right).

In Houston—

It took the social worker a lot of convincing to get the Rodriguez family to take their 18-month-old daughter, Maria, to the Children’s Center for Developmental Therapy in Houston.

The Rodriguez’ (not their real name) knew that Maria was not growing and learning at the same rate their other children had, but they didn’t understand much English and didn’t feel any local agency would be able to communicate with them on the needs of their daughter. However, once at the center, the family was put in touch with a bilingual counselor who explained, in Spanish, information on the center’s program for children ages 0 to 3.

The Children’s Center for Developmental Therapy was able to help the Rodriguez’ with the assistance of a three-year grant, awarded in 1983, from the Texas Developmental Disabilities Program. The program started through the grant is now funded by the United Way and continues to increase the quality of services provided at the center to infants with motor handicaps and developmental delays from Spanish-speaking families.

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Photo courtesy Children’s Center for Developmental Therapy

DD Program announces continued funding to grantees

Twenty four grant projects in their second and third year of operation received continued funding from the Texas Developmental Disabilities Program for fiscal year 1986.

Continuation funding is awarded by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, on behalf of the Council. Projects were awarded in the Council's chosen priority service area—alternative community living arrangement services. These are services that

help people with developmental disabilities in developing or maintaining suitable residential arrangements in the community.

For more information on new or continuation grant projects, contact the Texas Planning Council. A 1986 Developmental Disabilities Program Grant Awards report, which profiles all current grantees, is available upon request. New grants were detailed in the April/May 1986 edition of *Highlights*.

Agency City	Title of Project	Federal DD Grant Award	Agency City	Title of Project	Federal DD Grant Award
ARC-Austin	Project Amicus	\$18,765	Midland ARC	Alternative Community Living: A Cost/Benefit Comparison with Traditional Resources	\$40,000
ARC-Spring Branch—Memorial, Houston	Pilot Parent Training Program	\$15,189	National Self Help Center for the Deaf/Hearing Impaired, Austin	Self-Help for Emotionally Disturbed Deaf and their Families	\$40,450
ARC-Texas, Austin	Innovative Funding Approaches for Community Living	\$52,535	Nueces County MHMR Center, Corpus Christi	Core Cluster Community Living Project	\$110,997
Autistic Treatment Center, Richardson	Transitional Steps Toward Independent Living	\$51,000	Region XIX Education Service Center, El Paso	Teaching Interpersonal and Community Living Skills	\$36,770
Beaumont State Center	Alternative Community Living Arrangements	(under negotiation)	Santa Rosa Medical Center, Project ABC, San Antonio	Texas Respite Resource Network	\$65,364
Beaumont State Center	Community Residential Training Facility for Adults	\$95,183	Tropical Texas MHMR Center, Edinburg	Willacy County Residential/Day Program	\$150,226
Beaumont State Center	Family Education Services	\$22,721	Tropical Texas MHMR Center, Edinburg	Alternate Residential Program	\$50,000
Brackenridge Hospital, Austin	Austin Spina Bifida Center	\$7,801	UT at Arlington	Methodology to Evaluate the Intermediate Community Services Program	\$99,144
City of Denton Parks and Recreation Dept.	Recreation Services and Training Model	\$70,000	UT at Austin	Augmentative Communication for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities	\$48,032
Deaf Action Center, Dallas	Community Living for Deaf-Blind Adults	(under negotiation)	UT at El Paso	Teaching Students with Autism and other Severe Handicaps	\$36,573
Deep East Texas Regional MHMR Services, Lufkin	Jasper Day Treatment/Clubhouse Project	\$66,169			
El Paso Center of the Deaf	Promoting Social Developmental Experiences through Peer Leaders	\$23,500			
Lighthouse of Houston	Community Living for Deaf-Blind Adults	(under negotiation)			
Mental Health Association in Texas, Austin	Open the Door: Housing Alternatives for Persons with Long-Term Mental Illness	\$30,000			

Improving communications in El Paso (con't)

difficulty in convincing other service providers to incorporate native language cues into their teaching methods. Therefore, she embarked on a six-month study involving two major school districts and clients enrolled in her transitional living project. Her findings confirmed what she had witnessed in the clinic, that accompanying English instructions with commands or phrases in a student's native tongue helped to increase the student's ability to complete a task.

Duran refutes the criticism that students, regardless of their level of ability, are confused by hearing instructions in two different languages.

"Teaching these children by using only English sets them behind in their

level of ability," she said. "By hearing both, their native language and English, we help them to accomplish tasks while learning English."

Most of the parents I talk with now on the subject are relieved," said Duran, "because they feel better about using some Spanish with their son or daughter at home. Many of these parents are unable to speak any English. Spanish is the the only way they can communicate with their children. Parents would often say that they felt out of place in any situation that never allows them or their child to express themselves in their native tongue."

"We're hoping that this research will open avenues for more research in this area," she explained. "There's already been a lot written on the advantages of using native language cues for people with mild to moderate disabilities, but there's a lot more information needed on improving teaching methods in working with clients with more severe disabilities."

For more information, contact Elva Duran, Ph.D., Director of the All Day Autism Program, University of Texas at El Paso, Dept. of Leadership and Services, College of Education, El Paso, Texas 79968, telephone, (915) 747-5300.

From the Executive Director

by Roger Webb

As many of you are well aware, state agencies in Texas have been asked to reduce spending by 13 percent for the remainder of the biennium, without reducing services to those most in need. These reductions have been scrutinized by many advocacy and consumer groups, as well as various councils and committees. In its role of monitoring services and advocating on behalf of persons with developmental disabilities, this matter was recently reviewed by the Advocacy and Public Information Committee of the Council.

It is our belief that many of these reductions will result in fewer services for many individuals with developmental

disabilities who frequently have no other assistance available. Most human service programs have received at best only minor funding increases for the past few bienniums and have no "fat" to be cut. Funding reductions will, therefore, result in service reductions. In addition, cutting funds to children and young adults in their developmental years will only serve to make them more dependent on our service delivery system in the future.

The Texas Planning Council also believes that it is not appropriate to determine "priorities" among the various reductions of different agencies. To do so results in pitting agency against agency and, at times, disability against disability—and that cannot be productive. Those agencies who provide human

services to persons with severe disabilities recognize that they have not previously had sufficient funds to serve all of those who need their services. It is, therefore, not appropriate to evaluate the "priority" of reductions. We simply must find other more equitable ways to balance the state budget without reducing services to our fellow Texans.

Improving communications in Houston (con't)

"Through our program for Spanish-speaking parents and children we try to address not only problems associated with the language barrier," explained Kathryn Moody, program director, "but cultural factors as well."

Two bilingual staff members, a counselor and a translator, have worked with 40 Hispanic families over the past year. The bilingual staff becomes part of the child's interdisciplinary team at the center, comprised of a physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech pathologist, and an educational consultant.

To complement the program, training materials are also printed in Spanish including a booklet that outlines the parameters of and barriers to normal

"... we try to address not only problems associated with the language barrier, but cultural factors as well."

development while explaining disabilities such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida and arthroporosis and how they can be managed. Another booklet explains information about early childhood programs, how to work with the school system and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Brochures and audiovisual presentations, also in Spanish, help to orient parents to the center.

"One of the most rewarding aspects of the program," said Moody, "is the increased level of involvement by parents in their child's program. There is definitely a need to make programs like this more accessible to non-English speaking individuals."

For more information, contact Kathryn Moody, Program Director, Children's Center for Developmental Therapy, 1415 California St., Houston, Texas 77006, telephone (713) 522-1051.

Calendar

June 6, quarterly meeting, Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, Holiday Inn—Town Lake, Austin.

June 6-8, annual conference, Deaf-Blind Multihandicapped Association of Texas, Texas School for the Blind, Bldg. K, Austin. Call Dolby Murphy at (817) 756-6332 or Kitty Dorsey at (512) 454-8631 for more information.

June 19,20, biennial convention, Texas Association of the Deaf, El Paso.

June 20-22, annual conference, Association for Retarded Citizens - Texas, Wichita Falls. Call Karen Dunn at (512) 454-6694 for more information.

July 13-16, annual conference, Texas Rehabilitation Association, Corpus Christi.

July 18-19, Board of Directors meeting, Mental Health Association in Texas, Austin. Call (512) 476-0611 for more information.

July 21-25, annual conference, Texas Association on Mental Deficiency, Waller Creek Plaza Hotel, Austin.

Information on national and statewide activities submitted for inclusion in the Calendar should be submitted three months in advance of the event. For more details on the 1986 publication schedule for *Highlights*, contact Judy DeDonato at (512) 445-8852.

**Helen Keller
National
Deaf-Blind
Awareness Week
June 22 - 28**

News You Can Use

College guide

Peterson's Guide to Colleges with Programs for Learning-Disabled Students contains profiles on 279 colleges and universities that have special services for students with learning disabilities. The guide is available in bookstores for \$13.95 or by writing Peterson's Guides, Department 5710, 166 Bunn Dr., P.O. Box 2123, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

Hiring guide for employers

The American Society of Personnel Administrators (ASPA) has published *Job Match: A Process for Interviewing and Hiring Qualified Handicapped Individuals*. The 53-page booklet sells for \$8.50 and covers general concerns about interviewing people with disabilities and information on 25 disabilities. Copies can be purchased from ASPA Marketing Dept., 606 N. Washington St., Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

New director for Council of Community MHMR Centers

Spencer McClure has been appointed the new executive director of the Texas Council of Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Centers, 7700 Chevy Chase Dr., Suite 310, Austin, Texas 78752, telephone (512) 458-4159.

NCH recommendations

Toward Independence, published by the National Council on the Handicapped (NCH), recommends changes to improve the lives of people with disabilities and help them live independently in the community. The report also includes NCH recommendations for the redirection of federal expenditures to enhance the independence and productivity of people with disabilities. For more information, contact NCH, 800 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20591.

Training programs for direct care personnel

North Texas State University, Center for Rehabilitation Studies, offers training programs geared toward direct care facility personnel. The four-day programs are designed specifically for workers involved in preparing persons with severe disabilities for employment and independent living. Course work is designed for people with little or no training in rehabilitation. Upcoming classes are "Innovative Techniques for Residential Counselors: Stress Management and Biofeedback Applications," June 24-27, and "Basic and Innovative Techniques for Job Placement Specialists," July 8-11. For more information, contact the Center for Rehabilitation Studies, NTSU, P.O. Box 13438, Denton, Texas 76203-3438, telephone (817) 565-2488 or 565-3461.

Financial aids

Financial Aids for the Disabled and their Dependents is a comprehensive listing of the hundreds of educational financial aid programs established primarily for individuals with disabilities or the dependents. The publication, which costs \$30, contains information on educational benefits by states as well as an extensive annotated bibliography of general financial aid resources. For more information, write Reference Press, 3540 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 310, Los Angeles, Calif. 90010.



Highlights

Highlights is produced by the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities for distribution to Council members, grantees and other interested persons throughout the state. Organizations that serve persons who have developmental disabilities are encouraged to submit news items for publication. Inquiries may be addressed to Judy DeDonato, editor, Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, 118 E. Riverside Dr., Austin, Texas 78704; or telephone (512) 445-8867, TDD 445-8004. Taped copies are available upon request. Phototypesetting and printing by Texas Rehabilitation Commission Printing Services.

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