

seems a bit more realistic, as is befitting of a book that is informed by questions posed by parents themselves, and gives more direct advice about how parents can handle situations. Comorbid conditions get much better coverage in the OASIS book, which gives an excellent discussion of the pros and cons of methylphenidate and other medication.

I shall be consulting both books in the future and will recommend them to any American family consulting me. If I had to choose one, it would probably be *The OASIS Guide*. However, I could not recommend either book to families outside the United States. There are so many subtle cultural differences, even down to the tests used, that a U.K. family would be confused.

Nor is either book the definitive in-

troduction to Asperger syndrome for parents. Both books treat the discovery that a child has Asperger syndrome rather like travel to a foreign country. The habits of the natives are treated as curious and intriguing. The reader is made to feel optimistic about managing in this new culture. But the humanity of persons with Asperger syndrome does not come across well; nor does the fact that people with Asperger syndrome have the same aspirations, ambitions, vanities, and hatreds as the rest of us. The optimistic detachment of these books is reassuring and attractive. But parents who are overwhelmed by the negativity and pain surrounding a child who is marginalized and frustrated will not find an echo here. For that, they would be better off reading Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child*.

havior analysis and discrete trial teaching) and the TEACCH curriculum (Teaching and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children). Both methods are based on principles of behavior learning theory. Siegel explains these methods in a very accessible fashion while insightfully critiquing their strengths and weaknesses. She also examines several model programs, but, as she emphasizes throughout the book, no single method will work for every child. In the final chapter, "Putting the 'I' Back in IEP: Creating Individualized, Meaningful Life Learning Experiences," this message is reaffirmed, and a very effective conclusion is delivered that synthesizes the previous sections very well.

I highly recommend this book to any parent, teacher, or health professional, or any other person who has contact with children with an autism spectrum disorder. The author's earlier work, *The World of the Autistic Child*, was received very positively eight years ago, and this her latest work is likely to receive similarly strong praise.

Helping Children With Autism Learn: A Guide to Treatment Approaches for Parents and Professionals

by Bryna Siegel; New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, 498 pages, \$30

Brian Isaacson, M.D.

As director of the autism clinic at the University of California, Los Angeles, Bryna Siegel, Ph.D., has undoubtedly worked with a rich tapestry of individuals with autistic spectrum disorders. Her extensive clinical experience is deftly communicated in *Helping Children With Autism Learn: A Guide to Treatment Approaches for Parents and Professionals*. In this book, Dr. Siegel guides teachers, therapists, and parents through the often confusing landscape of ideas about how to effectively enable children who have autism spectrum disorders to learn.

The first section of the book competently explores the known information about the etiology of autism spectrum disorders. It also expertly explains the need to examine specific learning disabilities that occur among children

with these disorders. Siegel establishes the basis for the methodology of examining specific symptoms of autism spectrum disorder and how to effectively treat them, which are discussed throughout the remainder of the book.

In the second section, specific disabilities among children with autism spectrum disorder are examined in detail, and treatment options are explained in clear, crisp language. The writing is accessible to a wide audience despite the discussion of potentially complex issues, such as theory of mind. Siegel anticipates potential problems with the techniques she describes and preemptively offers alternative solutions. She comprehensively examines all the most common deficits among children who have autism spectrum disorders and offers a wide variety of approaches to aid the child in overcoming these obstacles.

The final section presents an excellent discussion of pragmatic methods of helping children with autism to learn, such as ABA/DTT (applied be-

Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Research Review for Practitioners

by Sally Ozonoff, Ph.D., Sally J. Rogers, Ph.D., and Robert L. Hendren, D.O.; Arlington, Virginia, American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc., 2003, 296 pages, \$35.50 softcover

Fred R. Volkmar, M.D.

The growth in knowledge about the causes and treatments of autism and related conditions has been phenomenal in recent years. This book provides a succinct and helpful summary of current knowledge, highlighting areas in which knowledge is readily available and ar-

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eas in which it continues to be lacking. The editors are respected members of the autism research community, and all the authors are drawn from the M.I.N.D. Institute of the University of California at Davis.

In the first chapter, two of the book's editors—Sally Ozonoff, Ph.D., and Sally L. Rogers, Ph.D.—review some of the critical advances during the years since Kanner's first description of autism in 1943. The next section includes four chapters on different aspects of interdisciplinary approaches to assessment—contributions from psychiatry, psychology, neurology, and pediatrics. These are solid chapters containing a wealth of information. Probably because of space limitations, one major area—speech and communication—is not included.

The third part of the book includes

five chapters focused on treatment. The chapter on nonmedical interventions is a model of clarity. Similarly, the chapter on pharmacotherapy provides a useful summary of current knowledge. The chapter on alternative treatments will be invaluable for professionals and parents alike; too often, this area is not addressed or is addressed in insufficient detail. The evenhanded approach is most welcome. The chapter by Brown and Rogers on cultural issues is one of a handful focused on this topic. The final chapter, by Charles and Gardner, provides some historical context for the model of research and clinical work provided at the M.I.N.D. Institute and will be of greatest interest to centers and individuals who are thinking about the formidable problem of organizing systems of care for persons

with an autism spectrum disorder.

The final section of the volume provides a detailed list of resources, including information about resources for parents, intervention, related disorders, and centers around the country that specialize in autism and related conditions. This list itself is worth the price of the book.

In summary, *Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Research Review for Practitioners* is an outstanding contribution that will be of interest to teachers, parents, and professionals. As with any edited volume, the chapters are somewhat variable, but it is a tribute to the editors that my main criticism is that the book is too short! On the other hand, it is just this concern that will make the book, in providing such a concise account, so attractive to parents and teachers.

Submissions Invited for Multimedia Reviews Column

In September 2002 *Psychiatric Services* launched Multimedia Reviews, a quarterly column focusing on innovative applications of multimedia technologies and programs in clinical, education, and research settings. The column's editor is Ian E. Alger, M.D., clinical professor of psychiatry at New York–Presbyterian Hospital of Weill Medical College of Cornell University in New York City.

Traditional audiovisual programs are being joined with rapidly evolving virtual-reality computer programs and with digital video technologies, which bring leading-edge concepts and applications to education, research, and clinical practice in exciting and challenging ways. For the column, Dr. Alger welcomes reviews of teaching, training, and therapy programs presented on film, video, audio, virtual reality, and combinations of these media. Reviews should be no more than 1,600 words and should be submitted directly to Dr. Alger.

For more information about the column or to propose a submission, please contact Dr. Alger by e-mail at ianalger@aol.com or by mail at 500 East 77th Street, Suite 132, New York, New York 10162.