

LETTERS

Good advice

To the Editor:

I found a book called *The Power of Positive Thinking*, by Normal Vincent Peale, at the library. I think it is a real life saver for understanding people who have psychiatric disabilities, and for people who need to understand other people better.

I found it very helpful to improve my understanding.

I suggest that copies of this book be made available everywhere, to help people understand other people better.

Lee Bomstein
Pittsburgh, PA

Dear Lee: I appreciate your suggestion. The book you recommend, The Power of Positive Thinking, is excellent. Another terrific book, especially for autistic adolescents and adults, is How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie. It is easy to find in paperback, and contains a wealth of excellent information explaining why people think and act as they do.

(A note to our readers: Lee is the fine young man who appears with his parents in our videotape, Vitamin B6 and Magnesium in the Treatment of Autism. The vitamin continues to bring about much positive change in Lee's life.)

Screaming Child I

To the Editor:

I'm writing to tell you about [my son] Anthony and his vitamin therapy.

For the first 2-1/2 years of his life, Anthony never slept a full night. Every hour or two he would wake up screaming. After countless trips to emergency rooms, pediatricians and neurologists—having heard everything from colic to teething and night terrors—I contacted your office.

Two days after starting him on DMG and [vitamin B6 and magnesium], Anthony began sleeping peacefully all night long. In addition, his eye contact has improved as well as his attention span.

I could never thank you enough for your help and hope you will share my story with other families.

Mrs. Rose Giangiabbe
Maspath, NY

Screaming Child II

To the Editor:

[Our daughter is] severely retarded with autistic tendencies [including] screaming. She can go for months, then begin to scream until we can no longer control her.

Back in May we put her on B6/magnesium. She was doing fine and remained interested in activities, playing outside, continuing contact with other people. In July,

we had a routine change due to a babysitter situation, and she was off the B6/magnesium for approximately 3-1/2 weeks. At the end of that time she started screaming and we could not get her to sleep. Of course, everyone—home, babysitter, etc.—tried everything to the point of letting her scream until she decided to stop. By that time, she would be worn out, no voice left, and nerves around her frazzled. We put her back on B6/magnesium, and she soon calmed down and has not screamed now for four weeks.

Cheryl goes to Special Education in the public school system. If she should scream, they will call and have us pick her up.

Linda Baker
Amarillo, TX

Editor's Note: I'm pleased to hear that the B6/magnesium treatment is helping control your daughter's screaming. You might try adding DMG (see "Screaming Child I," above), which also seems highly effective in some cases.

Your letter brings up one of my concerns about "full inclusion." We are receiving more and more reports of "included" children actually being EXCLUDED from school altogether, because of their disruptive behaviors—behaviors that special education teachers are prepared to handle. An autistic child who is sent home when he tantrums, rather than being taught not to tantrum, is not being educated.

Melatonin for sleep

To the Editor:

For the past eight years we have been trying to solve our son's sleeping problems. During the past year we had to sleep on the floor next to his bed to stop him from getting into bed with his sisters in the middle of the night. We have been following the information on melatonin and decided to give it a try recently. The results were very dramatic. Our son has fallen asleep within 1/2 hour to 3/4 hour after taking a 3 mg. capsule. He sleeps well all night. Needless to say, we have a whole new life.

Eve Rembrand
Houston, TX

Pollution-linked autism

To the Editor:

Many readers of the ARRI have contacted me as a result of the publicity our study received from the 20/20 television show and other media. We continue to be very much involved with research on the possibility that many cases of autism are the result of environmental pollution. We are maintaining a file of cases thought to be pollution-caused, especially those where there has been a cluster of similar cases within a small geographic area.

Please note that we now have a new address, which is: Prevent Autism Now, 264 Paxton Road, Holden, MA 01520.

Lori Altobelli
Holden, MA

Computer bulletin boards

To the Editor:

We are parents of a four-year-old boy who was previously diagnosed with PDD at age 3, but who is now doing too well to qualify for that diagnosis. We have been using a behavioral therapy program (like UCLA) for our child and he attends an integrated pre-school with normally developing children. He goes to sensory integration occupational therapy and is taking nystatin, DMG, and B6/magnesium. He is making tremendous gains rapidly. We would like to network with other parents of high functioning preschool children, especially those involved in similar behavioral programs, and those in our state. Our address is: 164 Delano Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15236.

Joan and Peter Davin

Editor's Note: Many parents and siblings of autistic children are "networking" through America Online (AOL), a commercial computer service which offers Thursday night "chats" in its disAbilities Forum. For information about AOL, call 800-827-6364. Also, The June 1994 issue of The Exceptional Parent contains a large listing of disability-related computer bulletin boards in the U.S. and Canada. The list includes modem numbers and information about topics and pricing.

Editor's Note: nonaversives

Anne Donnellan and Gary LaVigna have requested that we clarify for our readers a reference to them in ARRI 8/1. We wrote, "Ann Donnellan and Gary LaVigna, both outspoken opponents of the use of aversives, acknowledge that they may be required after at least three attempts to use non-aversives have failed." They state that they feel that the use of aversives is never justified, and that what we wrote is based on an "out of context" misrepresentation of their writings.

We based our statement on the following quote from their 1986 book, *Alternatives to Punishment*: "...That you not even consider a punishment procedure unless you have carried out a full functional analysis (see Chapter III), you have failed with no fewer than three carefully designed non-aversive attempts and you absolutely cannot think of any more non-aversive strategies to try." (page 187)

Donnellan and LaVigna say that "consider" does not (to them) imply "utilize," and that if one studies the "entire corpus" of their works one would conclude that they believe the use of aversives is never justified.

So, let the record show that Donnellan and LaVigna assert that they feel the use of aversives is never justified. Let the record also show that our one-sentence mention of Donnellan and LaVigna appeared in an article of well over 1,000 words which reported that a five-year, federally funded, 5.5-million-dollar, multi-university study had made only limited progress in a search for procedures which would make the use of aversives unnecessary. —BR