

Press Release

Source: TeachTown

Research-Based Computer-Assisted Therapy from TeachTown Now Available for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Wednesday March 1, 12:42 pm ET

Company's First Product Increases the Availability and Affordability of Pre-School and School-Age Autism Treatment

SEATTLE, March 1 /PRNewswire/ -- TeachTown, a Seattle research firm, has announced the release of their first product, TeachTown: Basics, a computer- assisted treatment service for children with autism. With five years of research and development, the company brings together experts from the video game industry and autism researchers led by Christina Whalen, PhD., BCBA. (Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20060301/SFW091LOGO>)

"We have a rapidly growing school-age autism population that is severely underserved. It's critical that these children receive ongoing consistent treatment," says Dr. Whalen. "TeachTown's mission is to increase the availability and affordability of that treatment."

"Today, thanks to organizations like Autism Speaks and Cure Autism Now, there is greater awareness of the autism epidemic," says CEO Sven Liden, "and there is critical need for ongoing research, but also a current crisis point for families who have already been diagnosed: 'How do we help our kids now, on a massive scale?'"

TeachTown's intervention is based on the principles of applied behavior analysis and incorporates teaching procedures from both discrete trial and pivotal response training. "I was very impressed with the fact that TeachTown is totally research based," says Dr. Laura Schreibman of the UC San Diego Autism Research Lab, "and it is something that is adaptable and complementary with any of the other programs that the child's likely to be involved in: clinic-type programs, school programs, as well as in the home." Jessica Lawrence, a preschool special education teacher from Washington adds, "This program does everything that I spend months teaching my support staff to do -- scaffold learning, provide reinforcement, collect data...and it explicitly targets skills that research indicates as areas of deficit in our students!" The program was developed with input from an advisory board with expertise in applied behavior analysis, special education, developmental and clinical psychology, and speech pathology, including Dr. William Frea from Autism Spectrum Therapies in Los Angeles, Dr. Geraldine Dawson, and Dr. Ilene Schwartz, of the University of Washington in Seattle.

Says Tom McGurk, a Seattle parent: "We cannot stress enough what an important tool this is. Our only wish is that this program had been available when our son was first diagnosed!"

The curriculum teaches a broad range of skills across several domains, including emotion identification, matching feelings to events, face matching, following eye gaze, friendship, safety awareness, personal needs, sequencing, phonics and early reading, vocabulary, mathematics, time, money plus off- computer generalization activities. The subscription is designed for children with a developmental age of 2 to 7 years. TeachTown: Basics also includes extensive data tracking, exceeding IEP reporting requirements in all fifty states, plus a communication interface that connects all members of the child's team. A 30-day trial is available at www.teachtown.com.

TeachTown is a privately held company funded by the Washington Research Foundation and private investors including Richard Fade, founder of the Autism Treatment Network.

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