

### **What is the role of the behavior consultant?**

The behavior consultant designs a program and trains instructors hired by the parent. The majority of teaching is done in a child's home by a team of instructors, the number of therapists depends on how many hours of therapy the child is receiving.

As a child progresses, the teaching procedures become less structured and are generalized to the child's school and everyday environment. Play areas, stores, restaurants, and other places in the neighborhood that facilitate the child's integration among typically developing children are utilized. The consultant works with the parents to identify a community program, school and/or classroom, regular education or special education, based on a child's current skills and needs. A trained 1:1 aide facilitates this transition and is faded when possible.

### **What is an instructor therapist?**

An instructor therapist is an individual that provides direct one-on-one instruction to a child within an ABA program. Instructor therapist is also referred to as an educator.

I recommend that each instructor works at least 6 hours per week with the child; enough time to become comfortable with your child while not spending so much time that your child becomes dependent on one instructor. Parents can also act as one of the instructors as well as carry treatment over to other teachable moments throughout the day. All members of the team are supervised by the behavior consultant.

### **What are the characteristics to look for in an instructor therapist?**

The positive characteristics of an instructor therapist commonly are:

- Willingness to learn and proactive about learning
- Interested in helping a child with ASD
- Knows how to balance the need to address the core deficits of a child with ASD and the need to recognize the child's uniqueness, strengths, and different way of learning.
- Dependable, punctual, and gives enough notice in the event of absence or not being able to continue to work.
- Organized and conscientious in following the program protocols and in taking data
- Tidies up after each session.
- Shows willingness to improve attitude/performance following feedback
- Respects confidentiality
- Sensitive to and respectful of family's culture, perspective, and situation
- Knows the boundaries and is careful not to cross them.

### **How do you find an instructor therapist?**

The most likely candidates are undergraduate students, especially psychology or education majors, who are interested in this type of experience. In addition, students are usually flexible in scheduling hours.

Many families have recruited students by posting flyers in the departments of Psychology, Speech-Language Pathology, and Education of nearby cegeps and universities or by contacting a professor who may be interested in making an announcement in his/her class about your child's home-based early intervention program. Career and placement centers located on campuses may post your ad as well (e.g., McGill University, Concordia University, Vanier College etc..)

An applicant does not need to have special credentials or previous experience to become a good instructor. The procedures employed for therapy can be mastered by most people. Some important characteristics to look for when recruiting staff are dependability, enthusiasm and a willingness to learn.

### **What does the training and consultation entail?**

Training and program development occur during an initial consultation and continue over follow-up consultations.

During each consultation, your behavior consultant will travel to your home and teach you and your instructors how to implement your child's treatment. The consultation will provide you with instruction on teaching procedures; what skills to teach, when and how to teach them, how to record data, and how to analyze and manage problems in your child's learning. The majority of the time will be spent working directly with your child. Initially the behavior consultant will model teaching procedures for you and your staff working directly with your child, and then help you practice these procedures through role-playing and directly with your child.

Follow-up consultations are conducted on a regular basis, typically every week. In order to maintain the highest quality of treatment, the recommended length for follow-up consultations is typically 2 hours. During these follow-ups, your consultant will re-evaluate your child's program, design new goals, discuss and rectify problems, and conduct further training of parents and staff. Phone consultations and email consultations, and are also available when necessary.