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Minnesota Autism Center to Begin Using Skills™ to Treat Individuals with Autism

The Minnesota Autism Center has acquired Skills™, the Center for Autism and Related Disorders' online autism treatment curriculum, to help treat children and youth affected by autism spectrum disorders.

NATIONWIDE – JULY 1, 2012 The Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD), the world's largest provider of state-of-the-art, early intensive behavioral intervention for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) announces Minnesota Autism Center (MAC) will begin using Skills™, CARD's online autism solution, beginning August 1, 2012. MAC staff will receive four days of Skills™ training as early as July 1st. Approximately 250 children and youth affected by ASD will benefit from the behavioral health treatment program.

"MAC currently services individuals ages 2 to 21 throughout the state of Minnesota through a variety of programs," says MAC's Executive Director Kathryn Marshall. "Skills is aligned with our curriculum in that the program tailors to meet the individualized needs of each person. We are excited to begin using Skills and feel confident it will help us continue to provide effective care and support for those affected by autism spectrum disorder."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in every 88 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with an ASD, making it more prevalent than juvenile diabetes, pediatric cancer and childhood AIDS combined. CARD develops and utilizes technology to increase access to training for professionals who work with individuals who have been diagnosed with ASD.

"We are honored to have the Minnesota Autism Center choose Skills as their online autism solution," says Skills co-creator Adel Najdowski, PhD, BCBA-D. "Unlike other curriculum design tools for the treatment of autism, Skills has an assessment with a corresponding curriculum that addresses every skill a child learns in typical development from infancy to adolescence across every area of human development. Skills offers the first and only ABA-based comprehensive social skills, social cognition, and executive functions curricula available. It's also one of the only online programs available that provides the ability to write behavior intervention plans for challenging behavior. When creating Skills, we really tried to make it as comprehensive and self-explanatory as possible with the goal of achieving positive results with every child."

MAC has a staff of highly trained professionals who provide applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy on an individualized basis with the goal of reducing and eliminating the signs and symptoms of ASD in children and youth, and help reduce future supplementary support.

Skills is designed to give the educators of children with ASD access to the most comprehensive assessment of a child's development available. The results of the assessment are linked directly to a set of eight curricula that provide individualized lesson plans with step-by-step instructions for teaching children with ASD the skills they need. Skills is based on empirically supported treatment. And while the system will automate a program for users, it allows users the

flexibility to tailor the program to the child's unique needs. Each of nearly 4,000 lesson activities also includes IEP goals, worksheets, visual aids, tracking forms, and lesson videos.

Teachers, parents and practitioners can also use Skills as an effective management tool. The online program can evaluate treatment progress one child at a time. Skills provides charts and graphs that track treatment progress and the impact of various events (including other treatments and life events) on the child's progress. Plus, by allowing the user to look at progress across a number of children, the user can evaluate treatment integrity down to the individual teacher.

Skills features:

1. An approach based on over 40 years of research on the use of ABA-based treatment for ASD
2. 24/7 access from any computer anywhere in the world
3. An individualized assessment linked to a comprehensive set of curricula across eight developmental areas: (1) *Social*, (2) *Motor*, (3) *Language*, (4) *Adaptive*, (5) *Play*, (6) *Executive Functions*, (7) *Cognition*, and (8) *Academic Skills*
4. Age of typical development for skills assessed and within lesson plans
5. Almost 4,000 lesson activities
6. Easily accessible lesson activities, teaching guides, and tracking forms
7. Lesson activities that are customizable to meet the child's needs
8. Printable, fun, and creative worksheets, tracking forms, and visual aids
9. Clear, brief, and visually appealing demonstration videos
10. Detailed treatment progress and clinical timeline chart
11. Ability to track and view the effect of challenging behaviors and alternative treatments on learning progress
12. Access to assessment, treatment, and progress tracking all in one place
13. Lesson plans tailored to individualized educational plan (IEP) goals and benchmarks
14. Ability to write behavior intervention plans (BIP) for challenging behavior
15. Ability for teachers, professionals, and parents to work together as a team in one online location
16. Multiple student viewing at one time (view all of a teacher's students in one account)
17. Ability to share access to students' accounts with other teachers and/or members of the treatment team
18. Ability to compare the effectiveness of teachers
19. Unlimited live assistance via web chats

For more information about Skills, visit www.skillsforautism.com.

About Minnesota Autism Center:

The Minnesota Autism Center's (MAC) mission is to promote and provide home, school and center-based therapeutic and academic services for children and youth affected by autism ASD. The Minnesota Autism Center promotes the general education and welfare of persons challenged by ASD and supports the development of healthy families. For more information about the Minnesota Autism Center, visit www.mnautism.org.

About the Center for Autism and Related Disorders:

The Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) is one of the world's largest and most successful organizations treating children with autism, Asperger's syndrome, PDD-NOS, and related disorders using state-of-the-art therapy. CARD treats autism using the principles and procedures of applied behavior analysis which has been empirically proven to be the most effective method for treating individuals with autism and is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the US Surgeon General. For more information about the Center for Autism and Related Disorders, visit: www.centerforautism.com.

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