



CONTACT:
Susan Slater, Public Relations Coordinator
Columbus Speech & Hearing Center
614.261.5417 direct line
sslater@columbusspeech.org

Columbus Speech & Hearing Center Helps Children with Autism Connect to Learn

Columbus, OH - August 12, 2010 - For years the most common treatment program for children who have autism was Applied Behavior Analysis. This theory is based on the belief that behavior can be altered through intensive skill training using a system of rewards. More recently, many experts have adopted another learning philosophy, called Floortime. The Floortime model involves literally getting down on the floor and entering the child's world in order to engage emotions and turn repetitive acts into playful interactions. One of the advantages of Floortime is that parents can implement it with minimal training. And it's fun!

Columbus Speech & Hearing Center works with many clients on the autism spectrum. A **pilot program** will be kicked off in the fall in partnership with another local organization, Relate and Grow. The interdisciplinary program, **Connect to Learn**, utilizes a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist, an early childhood educator, and a home-based instructor.

The program will start with four children, age 3-5 years old, and will incorporate individual speech and occupational therapy in addition to small group therapy, and a monthly a home-visit.

"Connect to Learn was developed in response to parents' desire for a program that offers more comprehensive services to their children," said Minda Bickley, Assistant Director of Speech Programs at Columbus Speech & Hearing Center. *"They appreciate the approach that we use in our JAM program, which incorporates the child-centered philosophy of Floortime. The children learn and grow in an environment that fosters strong relationships between adults and other children, and sets the stage for life-long learning."*

Some of the key characteristics that differ between the two methods include:

Floortime

Developmental
Naturalistic
Child Initiated
Parents as Play Partners
Play Interaction
Flexible Intensity

ABA

Behavioral
Controlled
Program Oriented
Parents as Program Facilitators
Teaching Drills & Skills
Intensity Prescribed

Columbus Speech & Hearing Center, founded in 1923, is a non-profit United Way organization serving over 10,000 people annually. Services include hearing evaluations, hearing aids, speech therapy for children and adults, occupational therapy and treatment, and vocational services for the Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf and Deaf-Blind through the Comprehensive Program for the Deaf and Ohio Deaf-Blind Outreach Program. Generous charitable giving from the community help offset the cost of the Center's valued services for low-income families. For more information, www.columbusspeech.org.