



February 2009



Dear VAPT Playmates,

Over 125 participants attended the 6th VAPT Winter Workshop, Play-based Strategies for Working with Children and Teens Who Act-Out Aggressively with DAVID CRENSHAW at Regent University in Virginia Beach on FEBRUARY 6th, 2009!

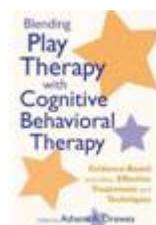
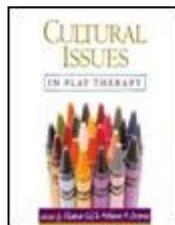
Go to <http://www.flickr.com/photos/annestewart/collections/72157605231945659/> and click on the **February 2009 VAPT 6th Winter Workshop photo icon** to view over 100 pictures of our day of learning and fun. We gave away over 15 door prizes including many heart motif expressive arts items, colorful office materials and David's books. The grand prize winner was awarded a stuffed gorilla and David's book, *Understanding and Treating the Aggression of Children*. Be sure to read about the workshop from VAPT member and officer, Suzanne Getz Gregg, in this enote.

Happily, some participants decided to join APT/VAPT and receive a free VAPT mouse pad puzzle. Please continue to recruit members as we need to increase our membership to serve children and families with well-trained and playful practitioners and to be able to continue to apply for APT Gold Branch status (need a total of 157 VAPT members by March 31, 2009).

Playfully,
Anne

1. Save the Date! JUNE 12th and 13th, 2009

Athena Drewes from the Astor Home for Children in New York will be our VAPT come play with us conference presenter. Join us on June 12th and 13th at James Madison University in Harrisonburg (you can see photos other recent workshops at <http://vapt.cisat.jmu.edu>). A few of Athena's books are shown below.



2. Promote Healthy Caregiver-Child Relationships

One of the most robust findings in the field of mental health is the positive impact of good quality caregiver-child interactions on children's emotional, intellectual and social well-being.

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child

The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, a multi-disciplinary collaboration of leading scholars in neuroscience, early childhood development, pediatrics, and economics, works to bring sound and accurate science to public decision-making affecting the lives of young children. For more information on the Council and the science of early childhood, go to www.developingchild.net.

A quote from a publication from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child states, **“The quality of parent-child conversation is important even before young children are good conversational partners.”**



The article *Early Relationships for Healthy Brains* is an interview with developmental psychologist Ross Thompson, who discusses how healthy brain development relies on the quality of early relationships. Read the complete interview at http://www.developingchild.net/pubs/persp/pdf/Early_Relationships_Healthy_Brains.pdf

3-



Chinese New Year

The Year of the Ox, Cultivating VAPT Leadership and Membership

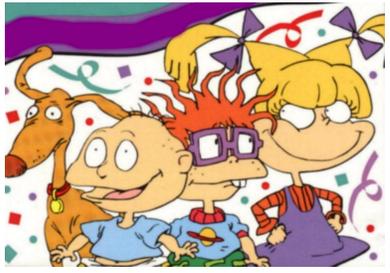
The Chinese New Year of OX, 2009 began on January 26th and started the 15 day long festivities ending on till February 9th.

The Ox years include 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997 and now 2009 followed by 2021 (according to the 12 year cycle).

People born in the Chinese New Year of Ox, 2009 are believed to have these traits in their character: Leadership qualities, dependable, great organizers, loyal, patient as well as strong and responsible. They are also some of the best people one can have as colleagues in the work place as they are believed to possess a strong work ethic and have a creative side as well.

So begin a conversation with a colleague of yours about their Chinese New Year sign... and whatever their sign, please invite them to join our organization!

Here is the scoop from APT Membership Coordinator, Pam Bradshaw, about the membership VAPT has and the membership we need to retain and build to be eligible to apply for Gold Branch status:

Our Gang	Current	Amount Needed by March 31
		
Professional members	149	157 (At least—we can invite even more members and remember, this means we are depending on VAPT members to renew in February and March!)
Affiliate member	25	43 (We can go for a record and try to have the highest percentage of student membership of all APT branches...!)
Total	174	200+

Consider how you would like to exercise your creativity and enhance your work with more active engagement with your colleagues! We have VAPT chapters around our beautiful and, rather sprawling, state. The **chapter chairs** are area **leaders in VAPT** who have an interest in bringing together members and non-members in your locality to learn and play. VAPT can offer **CE's for these gatherings**, when there is a topical presentation or discussion. Some chapters have been meeting for a while, some are just revving up and some are re-revving! Let's get busy and grow more APT and VAPT leaders!

VAPT Chapter Chair Updates

VAPT Chapter Chairs are VAPT playmates providing leadership to help support the work of play therapists for children and families. We have chapter chairs in each area of the state (we can have more, of course!). The chapter chairs help organize and conduct periodic meetings of VAPT members in the area, help introduce potential new members to play therapy and our organization, and offer feedback and guidance to determine the activities that are responsive to their area's needs and the state programs and events. The VAPT Chapter Chairs are:

Winchester	Stephanie Pratola	pratola@pratola.com
Roanoke	Norma White	norma.white@couplesandkids.com
Central Virginia	Amy Kale Fraitas	play@mail.planetcomm.net
Northern Virginia	Joyce Meagher	kdknzlr@comcast.net
	Cathi Spooner	cathispooner@hotmail.com
	Sheri Mitschelen	shmitsch@cox.net
Tidewater	Kathrin Hartmann	HartmaK@EVMS.EDU
Richmond	Barbara J. Smith	bjsmith461@aol.com
Southwest	Suzanne Sanford	playtherapyworks@msn.com

4. Fawns in Gorilla Suits

On a crisp February day in Tidewater, over 125 playmates joined Dr David Crenshaw for a full-day training at Regent University. From his years of experience in both residential and outpatient settings, David created in-depth profiles of the unimaginable early sorrows suffered by children who later develop angry and aggressive behavioral styles. When youth posture "as if" they were in gorilla suits, we look for the deeper hurt. How can children convey to us all they have lived through? Early intervention might first entail that we build together a language of feeling states using various expressive modalities.

David brought to life haunting child profiles through their poems, stories, drawings, and videotapes of actual sessions. Then he demonstrated evocative techniques for helping children and teens to disclose details from their life histories, layer by layer. Coping strategies like "downshifting" are useful in helping dysregulated children gain some emotional self-control. Heartfelt Feelings strategies were practiced by participants for use when "invitational" methods are needed. As we speak to the vulnerable fawn hiding within, a pathway for heartfelt connection takes shape. When a child comes to trust that a relationship with a caring adult can give pleasure rather than pain, emotional security and tolerance for intimacy take root. Merging these evocative strategies with self-attribution messages so children can claim their personal strengths could create the best outcomes. David Crenshaw lives and breathes as the embodiment of the Safe Place where children can feel at home. We send him a million thanks!

(Editor's Note: Our own playmate, Dr Suzanne Getz Gregg, has an early chapter on "Heartlines and lifelines: Narrative reconstruction in doll-house play," in H.G. Kadusen & C.E. Schaefer (2003), 101 Favorite Play Therapy Techniques, Vol. III.)

5. Autism Spectrum Disorder

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAS) Resources

NECTAS has compiled a large number of resources related to a wide range of disorders and special needs, including autism spectrum disorder, or ASD. NECTAS says ASD is an umbrella term commonly used to describe several developmental disorders in which individuals have substantial differences in the nature of their social development and communication skills, as well as unusual behaviors and interests. ASD is not a diagnostic category, but is widely used to refer to three of the five diagnoses under the category of pervasive developmental disorders. Those three diagnoses are Autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder, not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS). Use this site to learn about early identification, policy issues and provision of appropriate services.

See <http://www.nectac.org/topics/autism/autism.asp>

Newspaper article by Norfolk parent - Sharing autism and those awkward social moments

Brian Field, co-founder of the Autism Support Network, writes that when he first tells people his son has autism, many aren't sure how to respond. In this column, he offers advice on discussing autism, especially for parents of children who have been newly diagnosed. [The Examiner](http://www.examiner.com/x-2195-Autism-Examiner~y2009m1d20-Sharing-autism-and-those-awkward-social-moments)
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Playfully,

Anne

 COME PLAY WITH US!! 