

Montano Assistive Technology Center Division of United Cerebral Palsy Association of Southern CT



Dear Parent and Staff,

I have recently opened (October 2006) a center for individuals of all ages with disabilities. It offers state of the art technology that is not available in the state of CT. One example is when a participant speaks, scenes are created on a wall. One scene displays a sound wave of the individual's voice. When the person does not speak, the screen is black. As soon as the individual speaks the sound wave appears. When the client speaks clearly bouncing balls intermingle with the sound wave. I am achieving significant results with this activity. An essentially non-verbal 30 year-old (she can sing familiar songs but cannot initiate language) is now speaking up to 50 words in a 10 minute segment. Eye gaze technology is on order to allow individuals to use on screen keyboards or pictures (icons) to communicate. These are just two examples of unique technologies that can:

- Increase ability to speak if they have limited verbal ability
- Increase ability to speak more precisely
- Increase ability to listen
- Increase ability to focus
- Increase ability to read
- Increase speed of processing information
- Increase listening comprehension
- Increase working memory
- Increase movements (body language is communication)
- Organize sensory input (Sensory Integration activities)
- Allow them either to become more alert or calm
- Increase understanding or cognition that when they do something, something will occur (cause and effect)

The Montano Assistive Technology Center provides 2 programs which are implemented by a speech/language pathologist, physical therapist, and occupational therapist. The first is specialized software that takes a digitized sound and expands it. This allows the participant to increase cognition, attention and literacy. The second program involves 2 rooms with multi-sensory integration centers. Sensory integration is the process of organizing sensory input so that the brain produces useful body activities. When an individual interacts in these with rooms, significant advancements have been recorded in the short time we have been operated. One example is an individual with autism sequenced 8 activities he performed the previous day. Most people with autism can usually talk about what they are presently doing, but cannot tell you what they did the day before. Language infused sensory experiences include:

- Vibroacoustic ball pool equipped with gentle, changing, colored lights
- A giant interactive bubble tube with swimming fish
- Continually changing liquid scenes displayed on the wall
- Music that either alerts or calms (psychoacoustics)
- A huge play floor that sends musical vibrations through the foam
- Movement that activates an elastic keyboard in space that allows users to play a 100 different musical instrument voices
- Voice activated sensory technology that displays sound waves intermingled with bouncing balls, woodland scenes, and other cause and effect scenes

A partial list of clients that we service includes those individuals with:

(for the sensory rooms)	(for specialized software)
Autism	Autism
Cerebral Palsy	Language Impairments
Language Delayed	Learning Disabilities
Mentally Challenged	Limited English Skills (English Language Learners)
Physically Challenged	Deficits in Auditory Processing
Neurologically Impaired	Weak Phonological Processing
Hearing Impaired	Limited Academic Success
Blind/Low Vision	

Sincerely

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