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**A Qualitative Case Study Approach
to Examine the Process of using Mental Skills
in a Family with Special Needs.**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of a Master's in Human Kinetics
Department of Health Sciences
School of Human Kinetics - Sport Psychology
University of Ottawa
January 2001**



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I dedicate this thesis to my God who heard the cry of my heart

and

to my special friends who hear the song in my heart

and sing it to me when my memory fails.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to introduce positive life skills to a family with special needs. A qualitative single case study was used to discover whether positive life skills would be advantageous as tools or resources for one family with special needs. Mental skills activities, such as Orlick's Feeling Great program for children, were adapted and presented through audio tape and activities to the family, at their home on a weekly basis. Information was gained through observations, conversations, interviews and interactions. Weekly notes were gathered and reported. Two interviews were taped mid-way through the program and at the end of the program. The interviews were transcribed; the objective was to see if the positive life skills were useful as tools or resources for the family. A detailed description of the responses of the child, the parents and the researcher are given. Through the span of this study the family was equipped with a common language and action for dealing effectively with stressful situations. Of immeasurable value was the family's discovery that despite their many demands, there was time to spend together which could re-energize each of them. The coping of this family was improved and they viewed themselves as functioning at a much greater level than before this program began. This project presents one family's journey of interacting with each other while discovering that mental skills can help them all to face the special demands and stress of their unique family. Future research could examine the collaborative efforts of education or health professions in supporting children with disability and their families, with respect to the usefulness of mental skills as a means of coping with unique demands.

Acknowledgements

A heartfelt thank-you to those who have made this project fulfilling in diverse ways: to Adam and his family for willingly sharing their lives with me; to Dr. Orlick for his support and guidance; and to my committee members for enriching me with their perspectives. Thank-you to friends and family who have supported me more than I could have ever imagined during this journey.

Table Of Contents

List of Tables	
List of Figures	
Introduction	1
Literature Search	2
A) Medical Model	4
B) Family Systems Model	5
C) Intervention Approaches	6
The Need	9
The Purpose	10
Methods	11
Research Tradition	11
The Family	12
The Life Skills Program	13
Table 1 - Audio-taped Activities used during 10 Sessions	14
Data Collection Process	15
Creation	15
Data Analysis Process	16
Trustworthiness	17
Results	19
Table 2 - Overview of Activities and Interactions for Weeks 1- 5	21
Week 1	22
Week 2	25
Week 3	27
Figure 1- Cat Scales	29
Week 4	31
Week 5	36
Table 3 - Overview of Activities and Interactions for Weeks 6 - 9	42
Week 6	43
Week 7	46
Week 8	49
Week 9	52
Week 10	53
Personal Reflections on the Journey	65
Discussion	71
The Path Ahead	73
References	76
Appendix - A Letter of approval from the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre	79
Appendix - B Example of a session handout	81
Appendix - C Life Time Zone question and answer sheet	83
Appendix - D Interview Transcripts	86
1. Session 5	87
2. Session 10- Adam	96
3. Session 10- Family	104

List of Tables

Table 1 - Audio-taped Activities used during 10 Sessions	14
Table 2 - Overview of Activities and Interactions for Weeks 1- 5	21
Table 3 - Overview of Activities and Interactions for Weeks 6 - 9	42

List of Figures

Figure 1- Cat Scales	29
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Introduction

I began interacting and working directly with disabled and special needs children ten years ago. From the onset of my experience with these special people, both young and old, I have had numerous encounters which have taught me life lessons. My encounters included working with blind children in a recreation program, volunteering with special needs and rehabilitation clients who were meeting with therapists, serving as program director for a children's summer camp as well as extensive interactions in the deaf community during my undergraduate research project. Most recently (1998-1999) I have worked with preschool children involved with programming at the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre (O.C.T.C.). At present I work with high-need disabled adults whose daily living support is provided through group homes in the Ottawa area. These numerous experiences have included on-going interactions with other children and adults who play and live alongside these special people and I am privileged to be a part of all their lives.

Through these many interactions over a significant period of time I have come to see the great necessity for support that special needs individuals and their families require. I have witnessed the struggles that the special needs community faces when trying to function positively in a health and social support system that is unable to completely meet their needs. Families need to confront the issues surrounding the support that their children receive either in a school setting or through home care. These special families struggle when advocating for the needs of their child and family within the community. Although I have seen some extremely positive interactions between parents and their children, there appears to be an underlying "stress" or "demand" placed on these parents. They are faced with some "unique

“demands” that parents with non-disabled children do not confront. The community of children with disabilities requires a louder voice to be heard by the larger community. A research community in particular would help to better equip those with special needs to meet the needs.

Literature Search

Knowing that there exists some form of “stress” within special needs families and being aware that these families live in a society that emphasizes individual autonomy compelled me to examine the content of research written about these special families. Families who have a child with a disability vary as much in their behaviours and attitudes as any other family. Having a child with disability does not make these families a more homogenous group than they were before a child with disability joined them. Much literature, however, exists to support that raising a child with disability creates a special difficulty for the parents (Cummings, Bayley, & Rie, 1966; Dyson, 1991; Rousey, Best, & Blacher, 1992; Simons, 1987;). Evidence in the literature supports that each family has a special combination of strengths, stressors, vulnerabilities, and coping strategies. The family structure and the members of the family are of utmost importance as they:

“often represent the only long-term responsible, and caring people in the life of a child with a disability. The family is of vital importance; interaction with family members deeply influences the child’s opportunities, barriers, challenges, expectations, ambitions, frustrations, and general quality of life. Whether the family is nuclear, single-parent, or extended, it plays a powerful role in the child’s social, emotional, behavioural, and academic development and progress” (Winzer, 1993, p. 571).

If the family has such a strong influence on a person with disability does it not seem appropriate for the family, as a unit, to be promoted within the structural supports of a larger community?

People who care for the disabled often see very little in the way of measurable outcomes as these special needs people live and function in a society which places an importance on higher levels of individual success. As the disabled person is not able to achieve this level of individual success, the eyes of society view them as unsuccessful. Cordoni (1990) makes a powerfully accurate statement concerning families who have disabled children: "It is a sad cliché that having a handicapped child too often results in a handicapped family. A handicapped family is one that does not function as well as it might" (p.39). Families set out desiring to function "as well as they might", but this goal is not always achieved. Unfortunately, such families with disabled children are unable to fully support their children as they would hope to. Individuals with disability require long-term commitment that is unwavering and immensely consistent each day. Parents and caregivers in these situations tire as they give of themselves to support the disabled individual. In the family's desire to fulfill the needs of the child, a neglect of personal needs begins to show. Families recognize the demands, but often are unable to move toward achievable success in meeting the many demands. Special needs families need to be challenged to perceive success in different ways than our society might. Success can be found in different achievements than society would applaud. Families need to be challenged to mobilize resources to fulfill the needs of their unique situations and to develop positive coping strategies for present and future situations.

In the research, attention has been given to the variables that contribute to family

adjustment. Slater and Wikler (1986) found that “families [who have a child with disability] report an increase in stress, a tendency toward social isolation and a reduction in personal and family autonomy” (cited in Dane, 1990, p. 120). Families who have children with disabilities have been examined, in an applied sense, with consideration to what social workers can provide when counselling them during stressful situations. The field of social work has done much to support families during the initial stages of coping with the discovery of a disability. A literature search shows that there are different ways of understanding, and different interventions that follow, when trying to help special needs families from within this discipline.

To understand the different perspectives used for framing research, particularly the examination of special needs families, different philosophical positions exist. These different positions lead to different perspectives on how to best support the special needs family. There are specifically two domains that are related to this unique examination of families: a medical model and a family systems model and the interventions that follow out of them.

A) Medical Model

Most research is based heavily on a purely medical model of understanding. In this medical model, professionals desire to “treat” the situation (disability) to find a “remedy” for the family that is consistent with the disability label assigned to the child. The child with disability is approached as a patient to be examined, assessed and directed. Families will be directed to professional after professional in any attempt to “diagnose” the child. Thus within the medical model the diagnosis of disability is viewed as having great value, as it

determines the treatment path.

Many professionals, however, challenge the medical model and its approach toward “treating” the disabled child. Many accurately note that, “parents [of children with illness] may hope for improvement in the child’s condition due to breakthroughs in medications or the potential for remission, [but] such hope is not available to those [parents who have a child] with disability” (McDermott, Valentine, Anderson, Gallup & Thompson, 1997, p. 324).

A diagnosis is valuable when trying to gain understanding of the child’s disability. However questions arise regarding whether the family and child are given the opportunity to understand how to function given their unique situation. Is the family supported in ways that promote positive interactions even after a condition has been assigned? Does the stress reduce when diagnosis has been given?

B) Family Systems Model

In contrast to the medical model approach there is a growing body of literature that addresses the varying components of the family structure. A family systems model, as outlined by Dunst, Trivette, and Deal (1987) and supported recently by Zeitlin and Williamson (1994) and Dale (1996), uses family strength as a point of departure rather than family weakness as a medical model does. In a medical model the family is considered weak or broken because of a disability. From a family systems approach however, the family is considered unique because of a disability. The family systems model is principally concerned with services designed to enable and empower families. This approach strives to help families meet individual’s needs while attempting to challenge the pervasive societal

myth of self-reliance. When matching resources with needs “caution should be exercised to maintain a ‘reality-based’ approach to balancing the needs of children and families with existing resources” (Bradley, Parette, & VanBiervliet, 1995, p. 32). It is vital that the family receive the appropriate resource for their individual needs; the family can then be empowered and equipped to face their unique situation. But how are the families being equipped? Is the resource provided appropriate to meet the specific need of the unique family? Is the family able to feel success within their situations?

C) Intervention Approaches

A search of the literature related to intervention programs aimed at providing resources for expressed family needs reveals there is a lack of information in this area. What is found are interventions that exist primarily in two areas of study. First, a teacher’s perspective on how to aid the disabled child in integration. Second, a counsellors perspective on how to gain understanding of differing phases and changes that occur within families. It is known that children in today’s society experience numerous stresses: to excel in school, to fit in socially, and to cope with potential stressors within their families (Winzer, 1993; Zeitlin & Williamson, 1994). This explains why much of the research and available interventions take a public institutional approach (school or hospital).

Likewise, special populations of children experience stressors such as fear of the unknown, loss of control, and the uncertainty of their futures (Siegel, 1995). It is evident that teaching stressed children effective methods to deal with stressful events can reduce the feelings of helplessness and anxiety by equipping them with positive life skills along with practical methods for coping (Gilbert & Orlick, 1996; McDonnell & Bowden, 1989; Orlick

&McCaffrey, 1991, Orlick, 1998).

Children are capable of learning positive coping strategies, believing in their efficacy and applying them effectively as methods for coping. Non-disabled Children, in previous studies have shown that they are able to apply these strategies across a variety of settings, such as school and the hospital (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Genevro, Andreassen, & Bornstein, 1996). In my review of the literature, I did not find any type of approach that empowered both the child with disability and their family together, at a familiar location such as the family home. It has been commented that “since changes in a child’s development are intimately and directly impacted by the care giving that a child receives, it seems especially important to consider how the care giving aspects of the family system operate in relation to a child’s development” (Bradley, Parette, & VanBiervliet, 1995, p.3). How a family functions, whether positively or negatively, impacts on the child’s development; thus functioning should be further examined within family environments.

In my encounters with families who have children with disability the medical diagnosis is the beginning of a long journey of support and care for all involved. The family still faces the reality of living with disability every day. Very little alters after spending time searching out a piece to the puzzle by going from professional to professional. What does a family need? I have posed this question to parents with special needs children and have learned that among other things, these families desire to create more supportive environments for each member of the family, including the child with disability. The family is committed to supporting each other and there is a willingness to take the steps necessary to achieve their goal of a positive, high-functioning family. Often these families feel that the family unit is

divided and unable to be fully supported. In their attempt to meet the challenges and demands of life they are often unsuccessful and thus further disabled. Greater levels of support can be achieved when a family with disability and a supportive society work together, thus limiting the family from becoming a “handicapped family”.

Clearly, families who have a child with disability have needs that are wide and dependent on the uniqueness of each family situation. Throughout my search of literature I located only one study that purposed to explore the parental perspective on what is necessary for family coping. Petr, Murdock, and Chapin (1995) explored the relationship between stressful events, the family’s help-seeking behaviour, professional response, and crisis resolution in four families who depended upon home care for a child with disability. Petr, Murdock, and Chapin recommended that “professionals need education about the coping processes and experience of parents, and about how important empowerment is to that coping process. Training programs should utilize parents as trainers and require trainees to actually spend time with the families in their homes. The comments of [the] families encourage professionals to focus more on the strengths of families and the positive, character building aspects of the process” (p.20). This study draws attention to the need for further applied work with special needs families. Research is needed which focuses on training the trainer; the parent. It would be beneficial to further examine how families best support their children with disabilities from within the home.

There are divided approaches for supporting special needs children and their parents. School aged children are primarily supported through programs that exist within the educational setting. Parents of special needs children can often find significant support

through programs within the health care setting. At this point in time there does not exist a joint intervention between education and health professionals uniting the disabled child with the parent. With this knowledge I have come to understand that in this society, special needs families may not be properly served by divided “treatments”. Little research has been done on the resources that are successful for families who have a child with disability. At present, few tools and resources are available to aid all the participants in the family: parent, child, caregiver. A compartmentalized approach continues to be taken to support the family. A special needs family, like any other family, would be better empowered if there was a united approach for the parent and the child. What children are not receiving through education and what parents are not being provided with in social support could be provided by a family intervention. A family approach would be positive to all people involved, including those in the extended community.

The Need

Families having a child with disability have increasing demands and stresses and need to be empowered from within to have the opportunity to experience success. Success will be achieved by decreasing the stress experienced when confronting the demands placed upon the family. Families are in need of resources that can aid them to function better within the family unit. Among these are children’s life skills programs that open doors to provide families with opportunities to have more positive interactions with one another. Programs can potentially be adapted to fit into a family situation in which the parent or caregiver can be the principle educator. It is necessary to increase both the caregiver’s and the child’s coping

strategies and mental life skills to promote positive family interactions. With consideration to social workers' attempts and the educational approach I believe a viable intervention could be added to existing strategies for special needs families. Integrating approaches of support, to families with special needs, along with the curriculum and ideas behind mental skills programs for children can provide a vitally resourceful tool for the family that faces unique stress and pressure. The grand vision of this project is to increase awareness and knowledge of the larger society and families facing daily disabilities with respect to viable resources so as to foster healthy families and help decrease the occurrence of "handicapped families".

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to introduce a positive life skills program to a family with special needs. Through the study I sought to discover whether these tools or resources might be advantageous to the family. The process through which the parents and the child met the challenges of unique situations and the subsequent use of mental skills was primarily under exploration.

Methods

Research Tradition

The method chosen for this study was a qualitative single case study. Creswell (1994) summarizes this type of research as consisting of “a single entity or phenomenon (‘the case’) bounded by time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group)[in which the researcher explores] and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time” (p. 12). The task was to build upon and explore each participant’s responses. Individual family members were asked to describe personal experience with an adapted life skills program and subsequent topics under exploration namely, mental skills and family functioning. With this single case study approach it was necessary to have a varied and fluid context, dependent on the family’s situation week by week.

My background with special needs populations and families has given me credibility and access to such a family. There was no concern with my ability to communicate and interact with such a family given my familiarity with the field.

The sampling decision in this study involved the selection of a single case, in this instance, an individual family with a child who has a disability. I chose to find the potential case family through the Ottawa Children’s Treatment Centre, knowing that the clients at the centre would be most representative of families who have a child with disability in the Ottawa area. I chose the time and location of the study with care, knowing that these decisions would play a crucial role in the information needed to answer the research questions and fulfill the stated purposes of this single case study (Maxwell, 1996).

The Family

The study was conducted with one family who has a child with disability. The family participants included a single child with a physical disability and a cognitive delay, and his parents. A part-time caregiver was also involved in the sessions when present in the family home at the time of our meetings.

The family was made aware of the study through the principal at the child's school: the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre (O.C.T.C.). The principal was able to provide me with information regarding which students would be cognitively able to participate. The principal sent letters describing the study to the homes of potential students. It was requested that families interested in participating in this study contact me via the principal. The first family that responded was able to confirm their willingness to participate. It was not necessary to follow other families interested, as this first family was sufficient for a single case study. During a phone call the first meeting was scheduled.

The family was verbally informed about the nature of this research, their confidentiality rights, and their privilege to terminate participation at any time during the study. They were also made aware of my agreement to comply with O.C.T.C.'s regulations for studies such as this and my subsequent responsibility to comply with O.C.T.C.'s ethical standards and considerations as reviewed by O.C.T.C. in my investigation (see Appendix-A).

The Life Skills Program

The program used during the sessions consisted of activities from Orlick's (1998) life skills training program including: Feeling Great: Teacher's Curriculum Guide for Children's Life Skills (Orlick & McCaffrey, 1995a) and the Feeling Great: Children's Highlight Book (Grades 3 to 6) (Orlick & McCaffrey, 1995b) and the Free to Feel Great: Children's Life Skills Audiotape Series 1, 2 and 3 (Orlick & McCaffrey, 1993). Not all the activities from Orlick's program were used. A brief overview of all the audio tape activities used during the sessions are presented in Table 1. The parents were given copies of two books: Nice On My Feelings (Orlick, 1995) and Feeling Great: Teaching Children to Excel at Living (Orlick, 1998) as well they were provided with a Feeling Great: Children's Highlight Book (Grades 3 to 6) (Orlick & McCaffrey, 1995b). This program is intended to teach children valuable mental skills through the use of games, activities, and audiotapes. I examined the program resources prior to meeting with the family and chose activities based on this family's needs and the child's level of functioning and mental ability; some of Orlick's materials were too advanced for this child.

Table 1 - Audio-taped Activities used during 10 Sessions

Activity	Length (mins.)	Description
Jelly Belly	4:09	fill up your jelly belly (stomach) and empty it (abdominal breathing).
Quiet Lake	2:20	imagine yourself relaxing next to a beautiful, quiet, calm lake.
Butterfly/Flutterby	2:00	imagine a butterfly fluttering and floating gently in the air
Floating on Clouds	3:20	imagine yourself floating on a big, soft, fluffy cloud.
Soaring	3:26	imagine yourself soaring like a seagull.
Special Place	3:28	imagine your own special place, one that is very relaxing.
Flowing Stream	4:51	imagine yourself flowing like a little stream around rocks and obstacles.
Relaxed Breathing	3:38	breathe easily and slowly in a calm and relaxed way.
Follow Your Breathing	3:45	breathe easily and slowly, following and listening to the sound of your own breathing.
One Breath Relaxation	3:37	take one deep breath in, let it out, and relax.
Star Track	6:49	imagine yourself on a space voyage floating in space.
The Peaceful Sea	3:13	listen to relaxing music with sounds of gentle waves and seagulls.
Tree It	3:17	put worries away (in a tree) and replace them with positive and happy thoughts.
Changing Channels	2:10	change mental channels from being negative to positive, worried to relaxed, unhappy to happy.
Laughing	4:33	listen to a young girl laugh at something funny, think of things that make you laugh.
Sounds	3:40	listen to the sounds and try to identify what you hear.
Great Listener	2:35	listen to the script as it describes how to pay attention and to focus.
Dual Focus	3:15	two stories are read by two different people, try to focus on only one story.
Magic Wands	3:08	remind your body that it is strong by using a imaginary wand on different parts of your body.
Rainbows	3:31	imagine that you are able to climb a rainbow and that the rainbow gives special powers to make you strong.

Data Collection Process

The family was taught a series of relaxation activities along with basic concepts about positive thinking, stress, and relaxation. The activities covered different modes of relaxation, including locating and relaxing specific muscles, diaphragmatic breathing, focussing, and mental imagery. The relaxation training was combined with refocusing activities to teach that positive thinking can effectively lead to positive actions and positive interactions.

Ten sessions were conducted in the participant's home situated in a rural area west of Ottawa. Meetings were conducted regularly on Saturdays during the months of February, March, April, and May 2000. The average time I spent in the home was one hour. During our time together we reviewed the events that had happened the previous week. Following this review I introduced a new activity for the family to try together (training both the child and parents). The family was encouraged to use the activities presented to them as they felt necessary during the following week. Taped interviews were conducted on the fifth and tenth session meetings. A typical session consisted of reflecting on the past week and identifying positive moments, identifying when the activities were used, introducing a relaxation activity or audiotape. We briefly discussed the new activity and when or how it might be used in everyday life.

Creation

Observation and interviews were my tools for examining the perspectives and impressions of the individuals relating to mental skills resources, themselves and their family interactions. During sessions five and ten (of the ten week program) we followed an

informal interview (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996) or what Rubin and Rubin (1995) termed the topical interview. This approach consists primarily of posing open-ended questions. The task is to build upon and explore the conversational partner's (in this case the individual family member's) responses to the questions along with a description of his or her experience.

It was necessary for the instrument of measure to be flexible and for me to observe situations with skill, tact, and understanding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). At the same time, it was necessary for me to have good listening skills and to adapt the discussion as needed. Ongoing feedback was necessary to gain detailed descriptions from the participants.

In addition to the interviews, nonparticipant observation, journals and field notes were used during every session. The observation was in the participant's home or another family member's home, given the particular circumstance. The parents and the child were encouraged to keep a journal throughout the course of our ten weeks together. I asked the family to pay specific attention to family functioning and the use of mental skills as a potential personal resource throughout the weeks of the study. Although a written journal was not kept by the parents, I gained information on weekly interactions through the parents verbal recollection.

Field notes were recorded following each session with the family. This was necessary to provide a trail of decisions made during all phases of the study, to display the vast amount of information gained and to promote transparency.

Data Analysis Process

The first step in the analysis was submersion in the data. This included transcribing

the interviews, reading my field notes and sharing information with my supervisor and peers. This analysis began immediately after my first meeting with the family. During this period of analysis memos were comprised as ideas and themes emerged. The family provided continuous feedback as they described their experiences with the life skills program resources and unique family functioning. The process of the data analysis was captured by Mostyn (1985): “since the basic problem facing the researcher who sets out to analyse open-ended material is that she/he has to classify data on which very little order has been previously imposed, the first prerequisite is that the analyst must let the data ‘do’ the work for him/her” (cited in Brenner, Brown & Canter, 1985, p.132). Over the course of the project, ideas and themes emerged, which in turn provided a framework for my research. For the analysis phase to be most effective it was necessary for me to learn more about the challenges of this child’s disability. I examined literature so as to gain a greater understanding of the particular case family.

Trustworthiness

The issue of reliability and generalizability of the family’s responses needed to be addressed. It was essential that I pay close attention to the meaning of the data, otherwise termed validity. Within a qualitative framework the notion of validity has been termed “trustworthiness”. So I asked myself the question: Are the responses that I obtained from this particular family trustworthy? I continually reminded myself that the interview as a tool, was not used in this situation to gain generalizable information. Rather, the interview was used to gain personal information relative to a certain time and a particular place. The focus

of this interview task was the process of understanding how the participants created meanings from the activities in the ten week experience. My intention was to give a detailed description of the individual's experiences, including my own.

Trustworthiness was aided by the interview approach. Holding the sessions and the interviews in the home added to each participant's level of comfort. Each individual was able to understand further the experience of how their family functioned and which life skills resources could be used with ease. This individual family was given the opportunity to regularly reflect on themselves and their interactions and my interactions with them through the progressive weekly approach. Much learning occurred as the family and I engaged in weekly sessions. This learning, as simple as recognizing terms and as complex as implementing the skill taught, increased the participants' understanding of the data given and thus increased my accurate interpretation. The increase of correct understanding preceded the conclusions made during the ongoing content-analysis undertaken in the study. Real insights to the meanings and experiences were gained as myself and each individual learned together. I am not able to say that this family's comments are valid for others, but they are valid for themselves.

My verbal and nonverbal communications may have biased the family's answers to some degree as they may have distorted responses to gain social desirability with me. This was minimized to some extent by the site of the intervention; the family's home. The family had the opportunity to meet outside of the hospital, school and professional world. My coming into the home could help eliminate the barriers that mark the special needs family. The home is a more safe, for the family, than the institutions of the larger supportive

community of hospital and school.

I examined the potential for misrepresentation of the interviews and the individual's expressed meanings. As the primary instrument, and the primary analyst it was necessary for me to be fully aware of any potential bias and assumptions that I might have toward the subject. It was not necessary for me to remain objective, but instead, to present all information as honestly as possible. The parents had an opportunity to read and respond to my descriptions and explanations and they verbally confirmed that their reality was presented accurately.

Results

There was a vast amount of information gained in this study through observations, conversations, interviews and interactions. To make the information more organized and therefore more understandable I have constructed two charts to display all the vital information in a logical format. Not all the activities from Orlick's (1998) life skills program were used during this study. The chart indicates the activities which were used from Orlick's materials. For clarity the activities from the audiotapes have been noted by capitalization of the entire word (CAPITALIZED). The activities that were found in Orlick's written materials and not on audiotapes were noted by the capitalization of the first letter (Capitalized). The descriptions of these activities are brief in the charts. However, detailed descriptions follow after the charts in the summaries of each session.

The weekly session overviews, presented in the following pages, are a combination of descriptive results and discussion. The choice to include the discussion with the results

was to maintain greater continuity and for ease of reading. Given the vast amount of information and the unique progression of interactions, I felt that presenting the information on a week to week basis would also be helpful. It is hoped that as a result of this format, the reader will have a good opportunity to gain further understanding of this particular case.

The major moments of learning and insight, which I have termed big moments or turning points, have been included in the session descriptions.

Extracts from the interviews have also been used to strengthen the depth of understanding. Where the idea or conversation is difficult to comprehend I have added my comment in italics. It was not my intent to interview and present complete interviews as an unedited collection, but rather to highlight themes important for gaining understanding. Complete transcripts of interviews conducted during week five and ten can be found in Appendix- D.

For reasons of confidentiality, names have been changed. The parents are referred to as “Dad” and “Mom” and the child as “Adam”. The caregiver is referred to as “the Caregiver” and not by name.

Table 2 - Overview of Activities and Interactions for Weeks 1- 5

Week	1	2	3	4
Date	February 12, 2000	February 19, 2000	February 26, 2000	March 4, 2000
Where	family home	family home	family home	family home
Who	Dad, Mom, Adam, Caregiver	Dad, Mom, Adam	Dad, Mom, Adam, Caregiver	Dad, Mom, Adam
Activity	initial meeting HIGHLIGHTS (simple pleasures, little treasures of life)	share HIGHLIGHTS JELLY BELLY (fill up your stomach and empty it- abdominal breathing) LAUGHING (listening to an audiotape of laughter) Workbook -Highlight pages for colouring	share HIGHLIGHTS CHANGING CHANNELS (change mental channels from negative to positive, worried to relaxed, unhappy to happy) JELLY BELLY Workbook -Cat Scales (a subjective measure of stress vs. relaxation. See figure 1.)	share HIGHLIGHTS STAR TRACK (imagine yourself on a space voyage floating in space) Imagine Light- Imagine Heavy (imagine holding different objects and the effect they would have on muscular response) Adam frustrated. He used Cat Scales to communicate then chose CHANGING CHANNELS to do together.
To Do	look for HIGHLIGHTS	Family choice	Family choice	STAR TRACK SOARING (Imagine yourself soaring like a seagull)
Notes		Mom gone all week "know-all-ogy" (Adam's definition of Mental Skills)	Mom gone all week Adam and Dad wrote and coloured Highlights in Workbook Adam understood personal quiet times and SPECIAL PLACE (Imagine your own very relaxing place) Adam taught JELLY BELLY to Aunt and Uncle and Caregiver. Adam defined family. Only wanted to do activities with entire family present.	Activities done before bed every day of the past week. Incorporation of CHANGING CHANNELS into everyday family language with examples given. Adam excited to share HIGHLIGHTS. Adam frustrated today but able to choose CHANGING CHANNELS to refocus.

Week 1

February 12, 2000

I arrived early and was invited to sit down in the kitchen while the family finished lunch. Introductions were made and there was a high level of excitement present in all of us. When lunch was finished Dad, Mom, Adam, the Caregiver and I moved to the living room for what Adam called our “chat”. Adam was prepared for my visit, and was very intent on asking me questions. Adam questioned me on who I was, why I was at his house and what I did in my life? I was struck by Adam’s comfort level with me, considering we had just met. However, I soon realized that Adam had joined me to his mental category of therapists, doctors, and professionals that he visited on a regular basis because of his disability level. I explained to Adam that I was going to be coming to his house every Saturday and that both his Mom and Dad would be participating with us. Adam was content with the idea that we would be doing activities together to improve our minds. Mom explained to Adam that I was there to teach them as a family how to “play” together and he liked this idea.

Adam explained a great deal to me about himself. He told me about his involvement at the Ottawa Children’s Treatment Centre (O.C.T.C.) and about his condition; he was born three months premature and along with Hydrocephalus, Adam has Cerebral Palsy. I noted that Adam was limited in his movements from the hips down, thereby being unable to walk. Adam uses his wheelchair very infrequently when at home, he prefers to crawl by using his arms. Adam had great difficulty sitting in a chair or on the couch because of his muscle limitations. Adam found it most comfortable to lay on his stomach on the floor and he had many pillows available for his comfort. Adam’s parents were required to help him with daily

living activities such as using the bathroom, dressing and eating. Many of these tasks were carried out with assistance from his parents using hand over hand movements.

Adam was excited to tell me that his birthday was March 17, 1992 and that he was born in London, Ontario. He if I knew where London, Ontario was. Adam was determined to teach me the names of all his doctors, therapists and teachers. Following each name he would instruct me, “you better write that down.” This statement: “you better write that down” enlightened me that this child has been required to share personal information many times, probably with numerous professionals.

In addition to Adam’s physical limitations he experiences cognitive delays. I noticed that he had a difficult time focussing on my initiation of discussion through direct questions. I knew from my past experiences with other special needs individuals that a significant amount of time was usually needed for effective communication to occur between the special needs individual and myself. It requires the learning of sounds and gestures on my part to have the ability to communicate effectively. Mom helped Adam communicate with me and me with him. Adam did understand that he can have large problems and frustrations and not know how to fix them.

Adam told me that he did not like to play. Mom explained that Adam found play could be hard work because of his limitations and so he preferred not to have this kind of work at home. School, in Adam’s mind, was equated with work in various forms because he attends school at a centre. At O.C.T.C., all levels of treatment are incorporated into the student’s educational plan. Physiotherapy, reading, and play all happen at school. For Adam and his family home was outside school, and therefore did not require structured play, which

was “hard work” for Adam. He was uncertain that our “play” time together would help him with his frustrations.

When I asked Adam what made his family special he said “that my Mom and Dad know how to support me.” Adam is a sensitive child who understands that he has limitations. He recognizes that his family is unique and that both his Mom and Dad have made good efforts to help him and the family. Mom and Dad care deeply for Adam and have been his greatest advocates. They recognized early that Adam has a brilliant imagination and that he likes musical toys and so the home is filled with toys that Adam uses as he pleases. Adam was glad to show me his play room and some of his favourite toys. He showed me his favourite toy which was a drum. He and I hit on the drum for a short time.

I noticed the ways in which Adam’s parents cope with having a child with disability. Most notably, Mom and Dad attempt to maintain a positive outlook even if somewhat frustrated either with Adam’s limitations or their own building pressures. Mom and Dad find it difficult to fully meet the needs of supporting Adam and have looked to outside help when available. They have found the support of the Caregiver a very useful form of relief.

After our time of acquaintance I presented the concept of HIGHLIGHTS. We discussed that looking for Highlights is to place emphasis on noticing, recognizing, feeling, appreciating and recalling simple joys, many of which otherwise go unnoticed or unappreciated (Orlick 1998, p.18). I asked Adam to remember one thing from the upcoming week to tell me next Saturday when we shared Highlights.

Week 2

February 19, 2000

Upon arrival, Adam was watching the end of a movie. After it had ended, the two of us sat on the couch and talked one-on-one for a little while. I asked Adam if he remembered what a Highlight was and that I had asked him to try to remember one to tell me. He told me that the one thing I should know was that “working with Dad on the bathroom” was his Highlight from the previous week. We were joined by Mom who informed me that she had been gone all week and that Adam had a full week at school with many fun and different things to do. Adam then remembered many fun Highlights and proceeded to tell us about Valentine’s Day, Pajama Day, Reptile Day and the Snow Carnival. We had a great discussion while we waited for Dad to come home. Once Dad arrived home we went to the basement together.

I asked Adam if he understood what it meant to feel scared, tense, afraid, or worried. He did not seem to be focussing on my questions and I probably asked too many. Dad shortened my questions and gave an example that Adam knew personally. Dad reminded Adam of his visits to the hospital and how it was that Adam felt when he had to have some tests. I expanded the discussion by asking Adam if he knew what it felt like to relax. Adam was now listening attentively, but did not seem to understand. This time Mom helped by asking Adam what he did on Friday afternoons after school. Adam told us that he would get out of his wheel chair and lay quietly on the couch. Mom asked him what he thought about when he was laying on the couch. Not much could come to Adam’s mind. Mom explained to Adam that laying on the couch was his way of relaxing after school and that relaxing was

letting our minds slow down from all the busy things that go on during the day.

I explained to Adam that one of the ways we can help our bodies relax is by breathing better. We practised our breathing together and I explained that we need to learn to breathe deeply. I proceeded to put in the relaxation activity audio cassette. We layed on the floor and listened to JELLY BELLY, an activity to help children learn how to do diaphragmatic breathing. Adam and Mom were laughing and had trouble focussing on the activity right away. I layed beside Adam and over-emphasized the breathing and had him mimic me in this. He seemed to like it, but hadn't caught on completely. Adam expressed that he would like to do it again, only later. I left him the audiotape and encouraged him to try Jelly Belly later in the week.

I asked Adam if he would like to listen to one more activity from the audiotape. He was more than enthusiastic. We talked for a minute or two about things that make us laugh and how we feel when we are laughing (i.e. happy or sad). I put in the audiotape LAUGHING which is a recording of a young girl laughing a lot. This is quite funny for the listener. After we listened to this part of the audiotape Adam excitedly asked, "are you coming back next week?" We all had fun with the Laughing exercise and were laughing ourselves.

Orlick's books Feeling Great and Nice on my Feelings were given to Mom and Dad along with an instruction sheet to accompany the audiotape (see Appendix- B). I gave Adam a Feeling Great Highlight Workbook for which he was thrilled. He began to colour in it immediately. While Adam was colouring I asked him what his picture was about. He had drawn a picture of what we had done that day and was describing our interaction and the

activities we did in the picture.

Adam created a word for what I had done with him and his family; he defined everything we had done as “know-all-ogy”. I asked Adam if he liked “know-all-ogy” and our time learning it together. Adam responded with a very positive “Yes!” I was encouraged to see that Adam was now taking ownership for the activities we were doing together and hoped that his dislike of play at home would change during our time together. That Adam was creating a word to describe our interactions was beneficial to his remembering what we had done together and for his subsequent learning of the positive mental skills we were doing. I was reminded that it is important to have fun activities in order for children to have enthusiasm when participating.

Adam, Mom and Dad were left with the task of listening to any of the activities on the audiotape along with the ongoing task of searching for and remembering Highlights to share with me.

Week 3

February 26, 2000

When I arrived at the home Adam was intently interacting with his Dad and grandad as “the boys” were undertaking the job of bathroom renovations. This has been an ongoing project and Adam has enjoyed this interaction greatly; it has been his greatest Highlight over the past weeks to work with Dad. Adam, with his Dad’s help, showed me the new shower stall and how everything worked. We interrupted the work to have our Saturday “chat.” It was apparent that my visit was an interruption when Adam asked at one point if we were

done and if he could go back and work on the bathroom with grandad.

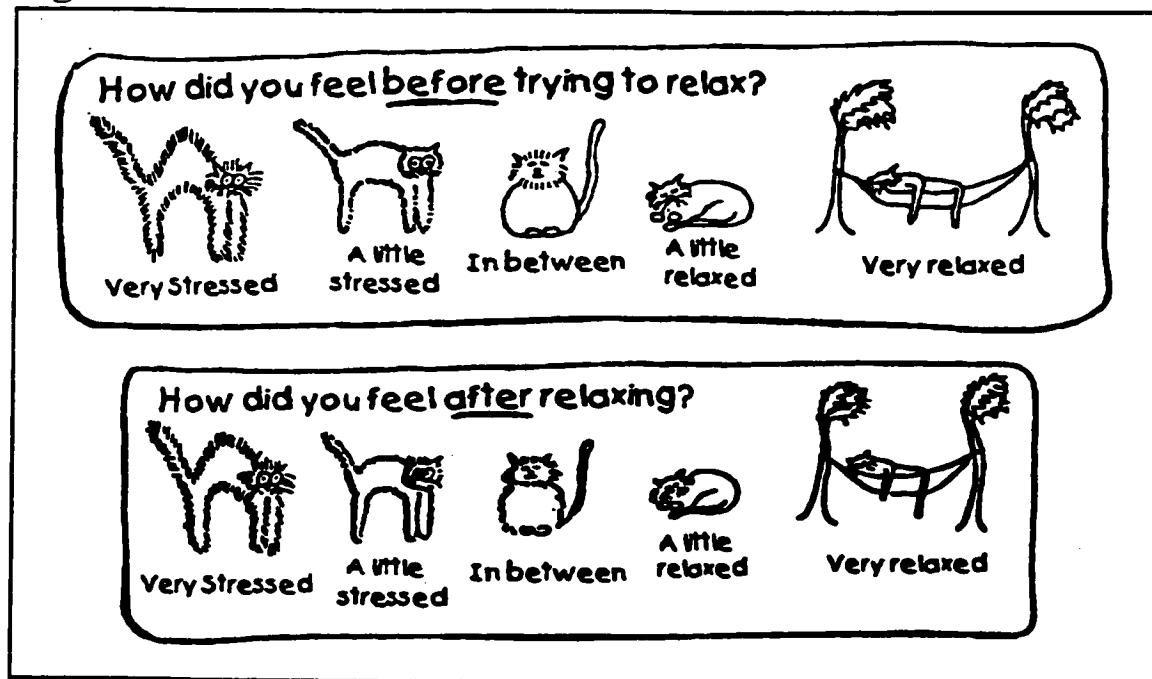
We started by sorting out what had happened during the previous week. Mom had again been away all week for work. I was told that the previous Saturday after I had gone, that Adam's aunt and uncle had come by for a visit and that Adam insisted on teaching them the Jelly Belly activity. On Adam's insistence they all went down to the basement: Mom, Dad, Adam, Aunt and Uncle; where Adam taught them Jelly Belly. The next day he was again determined to do the activity with Mom and Dad. Mom had gone out of town on Monday morning. Dad and Adam talked about the activities as they drove places during the week. Dad asked Adam if he would like to do them, but Adam said not until Mommy returns home. Dad and Adam then had a discussion about their family.

I asked Adam during this time of remembering, "How do you define a family?" Adam: "It is Mommy, Daddy and Adam" Dad continued to tell me how he chose to not force the activities on Adam, but rather to keep talking about the concepts, such as Highlights, tension and relaxation. It was very evident to me that Adam had been thinking about these concepts all week as Adam's attention and interaction during this week's session was more focussed and expressive.

We looked at his workbook together, and Dad had written Adam's Highlights down from the week. In particular, humorous ones had been recorded. Adam was proud of his book and I encouraged him to continue using the workbook, audiotape and chatting about "know-all-ogy". We then proceeded in the workbook and discussed the Cat Scales (see Figure 1.). With Mom and Dad's communication help Adam was able to explain that some of the cats looked "grumpy" and we discussed Adam's enjoyment of Jelly Belly or

FLOATING ON CLOUDS (imagine yourself floating on a big, soft, fluffy cloud) and what he felt like when he had finished those activities. Adam was able to describe that he was not a “grumpy” cat after listening to Jelly Belly or Floating on Clouds. When I asked how he felt, Adam pointed to the cat picture that he thought best fit his feelings. He was intensely concentrating as he looked at all the cat scales (four scales on a page) and sought to fully understand what was happening. Adam was very quiet and did not want any verbal interaction with others. Mom remembered that Adam was currently learning patterns at school and suggested that Adam was now trying to notice patterns and differences between the four scales. He verbally affirmed what she was thinking and requested that we wait until he had sorted things out before we continued our discussion.

Figure 1- Cat Scales



We talked about quiet times and SPECIAL PLACES and the necessity to close out distractions sometimes. When Adam needs to get some space he goes to his room and shuts the door. His parents can often hear him talking to himself in the mirror. Adam's parents have put mirror doors in other rooms in their home to help Adam access them more easily because of his physical limitations. Adam is able to crawl with his arms to a mirror door close by; he will look at himself, talk to himself. The mirror is a device that helps Adam to refocus his emotions and change his perspective.

I introduced the concept of mental channels, such as a television remote control. This was not a difficult concept for Adam to understand and he enjoyed explaining how the television works. We listened to the Channel Changers activity on the audiotape. Adam laid on the floor, very quietly and relaxed, listening attentively. He focussed well on the activity. Following the exercise we talked more about how we control our minds. Together, we tried to think of some specific examples of when we might need to change our mental channels. Mom was able to remind Adam that in the morning she often needs to change the channel that she wakes up on, in order to face the day more happily. Adam understood, but was unable to think of a personal example.

Adam was intrigued by the Cat Scales and wanted to continue using them together, but not to evaluate his feelings. So the Caregiver volunteered to use them before and after Jelly Belly to see if her feelings would change. Adam laid on the floor with the Caregiver and his Mom on either side of him. The audiotape played and Adam explained what the Caregiver should do. He showed her how to lay on her back and where to place her finger on her belly button. First, he had her point to the cat on the scale that most depicted her mood.

Following the audiotape he asked the Caregiver to show him what cat she then felt like.

Adam said that we had done enough and that it was time for him to go back to grandad. He then left with his Dad to go work on the bathroom.

Mom, the Caregiver, and I had a short discussion. I explained to Mom what was happening with the study, that there were no right or wrong responses, that there were no “perfect” situations, rather we are exploring process and experience. Mom was glad that she would be home for the coming week and would thus be able to increase her involvement with the activities, especially since Adam preferred doing them with the entire family.

Mom showed me a book that she had been keeping of all the great things that Adam had done or said since he was a little boy. She expressed how uplifting it was to consider the joy of Adam and not to let the pressures of his disability weigh them down as a family. We also talked about the challenge of finding time for family activities when life is very demanding. She felt that with an appropriate amount of effort quality family time can be found and activities can be enjoyed. She commented that it was beneficial to learning a way of thinking that promotes more quality interactions and a positive outlook on life and events: Life is to be lived as fully as is possible.

Week 4

March 4, 2000

Mom, Dad and Adam were present today and a friend of the family stayed upstairs doing some housework (this noise was distracting for Adam). Adam was very active today and wanted to wrestle with Dad until we started. Mom and Dad gave me an update on what

activities had been done and how well they had gone. The family was quite excited as they had reached a important moment during the past week. They found that doing the activities before going to bed helped Adam to fall asleep. At night Adam has difficulty relaxing in order to fall asleep because his disability makes muscle relaxation very difficult. Tight musculature makes closing his eyelids almost impossible and he has had great difficulty falling asleep quickly because of this muscle tightness. The family discovered that for them the best time to wind down with the relaxation activities was at bedtime. During the week the family listened to Jelly Belly, Floating on Clouds and Changing Channels everyday before bed. At one point during the week Adam was asleep before the audiotope was finished (the audiotope I made for him had only the three activities on it: Jelly Belly, Floating on Clouds and Changing Channels). Mom and Dad were ecstatic to have discovered a way to help Adam sleep and thus help them function better as a family.

The effect that Adam's falling asleep had on his parents was very encouraging. As a family the parents then had more time to devote to other things, including each other, instead of trying to help put Adam to sleep by reading him stories and continuously rubbing his back.

The effect on Adam and his capability to fall asleep better was positive. He even commented that he liked to do the activities before bed. He also told me that he had looked at the cat pictures (although he refused to colour or draw in the Workbook) before and after the activities. He described how he would lie in bed with the workbook on the page of the Cat Scales and: "I would point to the cat to tell Mommy what mood I was in. Then after the tape I would point to the sleepy cat." Mom would then watch as he drifted off to sleep every evening.

There were other Highlights from the week that were special to Adam too. He felt it important to share with me that he had gone to his Grandmamma's for dinner, and that he had a new math book. Adam then asked if he still had a camera. Mom dismissed the question as it was interpreted as a distraction. Adam continued to ask. So she answered, "Yes, you have that camera." Adam replied, "good because that is a Highlight to me." Adam and his family have included the practice of sharing Highlights with one another everyday.

This family has incorporated Channel Changing into their everyday vocabulary. The family was glad to gain a common expression to use in frustrating family situations. They commented that using a verbal cue such as "let's change channels" along with the gesture of snapping their Channel Changing fingers was effective for them all. The family explained how they had used the activities twice in the past week. The first was a time when Adam was somewhat upset about his homework; Mom and he talked about Channel Changers. Adam and Mom agreed to have a wrestling match in the living room to get some of his frustration out (Adam loves to wrestle and finds this a stimulating activity) before getting back to work. This study break was all that was needed to enable Adam to achieve a concentrated effort toward his homework. This homework seemed too difficult and too long for Adam to attempt for a sustained period of time. Having a study break wrestle session was our incentive to keep his mind on-task and to change his mental perspective of his task. The second use occurred that morning when Adam was very upset about leaving the house with Dad so that Mom could do some house cleaning. Dad reminded Adam of Channel Changers which helped Adam have a different focus. Unfortunately, Adam continued to be bothered

by this and later on in our session he said that he was not happy that morning because he and Daddy had to leave. When this came out in our discussion Mom had another opportunity to explain the situation to Adam.

Today we also discussed our imaginations and playing pretend. We played Imagine Light and Imagine Heavy to get our minds thinking about how we imagine. In this activity one person closes their eyes and holds out a hand, the other person places something imaginary into their partner's hand (i.e. "imagine that I give you a heavy book to hold"). We talked about what kind of pretend play children and adults could do. Adam commented that he didn't do that anymore. Dad reminded Adam by asking, "Adam what do you play in the bathtub?" Adam replied, "I play ships and sinking." Adam then went into an elaborate acting exposition of what he did regularly in the bathtub. Mom commented that this was one of Adam's greatest pleasures and that sometimes they would have to fill the tub three times, as he often wanted to stay in it for over an hour. Adam agreed that he did have an imagination and enjoyed playing pretend.

I introduced the audiotape imagine activity of travelling in space: STAR TRACK. Adam struggled to be still throughout our listening to the audio taped activity. At the end Dad commented that Star Track could be a lot of fun. Mom commented how difficult it was for Adam to concentrate: This was very evident. Recognizing Adam's distraction level, I asked him to show me how he felt by using the Cat Scales. Adam showed us how he felt on the Cat Scale by pointing to the frustrated cat. He then moved himself over to the side wall and said that he was not in a good mood and wanted to be alone. I asked his parents if this was a typical response or if it might have been due to my presence. Mom and Dad explained

that this was a typical response and that they encourage Adam to express his feelings and thoughts. Mom and Dad said that Adam usually goes into his room, shuts the door and “talks it out” with the mirror. There are many mirrors in the home and there is one in the basement, but because we were near it he moved to the other side of the room. The basement is also Adam’s play room and the mirror is set on the floor. When Adam came away from the wall he mentioned that he was trying to change channels from being frustrated for having to go away with Daddy in the morning. To talk about his feelings Adam used a Fisher-Price microphone and spoke in the 3rd person: “the child is upset”. Adam was able to express how he felt by talking into the microphone. Mom and Dad again reminded him that he sometimes needed to go with Dad in order for Mom to have some undistracted time to get things done. After a discussion with his parents his mood had improved and we played again.

Note:

On Tuesday March 7, 2000 I dropped by Adam’s school to give him an audiotape of Star Track and SOARING (imagination activity following the flight of a seagull) to take home. Adam was having Recess and was very excited to see me. I went over and talked to him and his friends. Adam introduced me as his friend. I found this to be a significant distinction from all the professionals that are in his life (who he had named to me the first time we met).

Week 5

March 11, 2000

The choice to conduct an interview during week 5 was motivated by my curiosity to see how Adam would describe what we had done in the previous weeks. I chose to do this first interview at what was the halfway mark of our time together. The second interview would be our final interview during week 10. This first interview was done with the entire family where as the final interview was done with Adam individually and then with the entire family. I decided to conduct the first interview with the entire family because I did not know Adam very well and I had some difficulty understanding all that he would try to express. As the weeks went by and we became better acquainted, I felt much more confident that I could understand him. Thus, part of the final interview was done without Mom and Dad present. Not knowing how Adam would be with a taped interview, his parents purchased a toy microphone and had him practice speaking into it the week before our actual interview discussion. When I arrived at the home Adam was thrilled to use the microphone and we amused ourselves by speaking into it to see how our voices sounded amplified. Adam was also very excited to listen to the audiotape of his voice and our discussion. He asked often throughout the discussion if we could listen to the audiotape.

Aware that Adam had a short attention span from our previous weeks together, I chose to keep the interview informal, as a discussion. I followed his lead in the conversation. The objective of this interview was to discover how well Adam could answer questions by his remembering the activities we had done together. I hoped to learn what he could recall from the ideas and concepts we had examined together. I was interested to see how much

Adam remembered from the past weeks and how well he could describe our time together.

By the end of our talk Adam was extremely tired and fell asleep on Mom's lap.

Although Mom had been away all week for work, it was still possible for the family to find Highlights. Adam remembered some of the most immediate ones, such as going out to get the mail that morning, and the happenings of the week, such as his first homework, Dad getting a job promotion, and having a shower in the new shower stall. The ease with which Adam brought these events to mind indicated that he clearly understood what Highlights were. This is an excerpt from our discussion:

Adam-I think that I might say that Highlight was a huge one

Mom-What Highlight was a huge one?

Adam-The homework one

At one point Adam and I spoke about his homework and it was evident that he understood what qualifies as a Highlight because he mentioned something that could happen, but had not necessarily happened that week. Adam's thoughts about potential homework Highlights:

Me-That is excellent and you took it back to school the next day?

Adam-Ahhh yes, I did because my teacher always wants to see it.

Me-And was she happy with what you had done?

Adam-Ahhh yes.

Me-What did she say to you?

Adam-She always writes "good work" because I do the right answers you know...so

Ahh that is one of the Highlights.

Me-That is a good Highlight.

It was also evident that Adam had an understanding of when he could mentally change channels. The family used the snapping of fingers as a special signal for changing channels. It was a Highlight for both Dad and Adam that neither one had formally Changed

Channels this week. Remembering that Dad was the only physically-present parent this week, as Mom was away with work, it is positive to recognize that Dad and Adam functioned well in the midst of many demands and responsibilities:

Dad-But we didn't have to switch channels this week, did we bud?

Adam-We didn't have to switch channels once this week!

It also became clear though, that Adam was still unable to transfer what he had learned at home with his Mom and Dad to school. Even though Adam and his parents could use gestures and reminders to Change Channels, Adam still felt that he was still very reliant upon the audiotape to help him implement the concept of changing channels:

Me-Yes, do you ever think about changing channels or doing relaxation at school?

Adam- No, I might use the tape.

Me-Just when you have the tape, eh?

Adam-I don't even do it at school, because I might use it.

Mom-Do you think you could think about changing channels without the tape, or do you think you need the tape to help you change channels?

Adam-Mmm. need the tape.

When asked if he had done Changing Channels at home without the audiotape Adam remembered that he had and he also remembered that the family had a special signal to help them remember:

Me-Okay... I think you have done it before without the tape. Haven't you, with Mom and Dad reminding you: Adam gotta change the channel?

Dad-How do we change the channel?

(Adam shows with fingers)

Dad-Yep!

Mom-That is very good.

Me-Cool. That is a good move.

Adam-When I move my fingers...

Me-That is a good idea. Good job!

Dad-Do you ever stop to snap your fingers at school?

Adam-To get their attention sometimes.

Dad-Oh, but not for you to change channels?... when you snap your finger...

(Adam snaps fingers repeatedly)

Adam was also able to describe a time during the past week when he had been upset, because his mother was not home. Mom was surprised to discover that Adam had used the Cat Scales as part of his plan to remedy the situation and thus to feel better:

Mom-You haven't looked at any of those pictures of those cats that look, umm, rather upset.

Adam-Yah!

Mom-Did you have to look at that this week while Mommy was gone?

Adam-Yes, I did.

Mom-Oh you did.

Me-When did you look at them? Do you remember?

Adam- Mmm...

Me-Were you upset that day?

Adam-Umm, kind of.

Mom-Can you think of why you did? What made you upset? And after looking at the pictures did you...[Adam interrupts]

Adam-Because you weren't there.

Mom-That is a good reason I like that reason.

Me-So you looked at the cats and said "I feel like this cat"?

Adam-Yeah.

Me-Did you think that in your head?

Adam-I thought that in my head.

Me-Then, did you do anything different? Did you think differently or did you talk to Mommy on the phone and then look at the cats again?

Adam-Umm, yes. And I watched a bit of movie and did homework and umm watched some more of the movie.

Me-That made you feel better?

Adam-Yeah

In an attempt to see if Adam could define relaxation I asked him directly if he could tell me what relaxation was. Adam began to describe the concept in an abstract way and then completed his explanation using an example of an overexcited dog as an example of not being relaxed. His understanding of relaxation is very good. I was impressed with his

creative way of describing relaxation:

Me-Okay Adam, I know we have talked about this before many times. Can you, into the microphone, cause it likes to hear what you say, can you tell me again what relaxation is? How you relax and what does that mean?

Adam-Ahh well much of it means that you don't do as much that you don't get hyper sometimes because Gerry has a dog that is really very hyper.

Me-And it is not very relaxed? [the dog]

Adam-No.

Me-What word would you use to describe the dog?

Adam-I would describe hyper.

Me-Hyper. Stressed?

Adam-He kinda is.

Adam further described the concept of relaxation with a more personal example. He was able to identify when he had not been overexcited, hyper or stressed and told about those moments. He understood that those moments were relaxing:

Me-When are times when you like to feel relaxed?

Adam-Umm, well on the day that I feel like it.

Me-Okay, what about when you are in bed? Before bed do you like to feel relaxed?

Adam-Ahh, yeah.

Me-Yeah.

Adam-Like on Friday nights.

Me-Friday night, that is a good night for you?

Mom-What do you do on Friday nights?

Adam-I lie on the couch; that is a real Highlight.

Lying on the couch on Fridays after school is wind-down-time for Adam. He plays an imagination game to help him relax and he spends time alone before supper:

Mom-When you are lying on the couch hey what are you playing? Couch...

Adam-Potato.

Mom-Right.

Me-Oh, that is a great name for it! You feel like a big sack of potatoes, do you?

Adam-Because I go (acts out a potato by laying as flat as he could)...

Mom-Potato!

Adam- Then I go (acts out a stretched potato by putting his arms and legs in a star shape)...

This first interview was very beneficial for gaining understanding of the present stage of learning of Adam and his family. In four weeks the family was able to incorporate some major conceptual ideas into their everyday living. Highlights were shared in abundance, Channel Changing was used as a positive reminder when people were beginning to become frustrated, Relaxation was included before bed and at other times during the week and Cat Scales were used to help Adam visualize emotions. The family had made great efforts thus far to embrace the learning of mental skills for the increase of positive family functioning. The family has integrated the new activities and concepts into what they have previously used. Wrestle study breaks, tub wars, mirror time outs and Friday couch potato are activities that the family has used to cope with their situation. Now they have included new understandings to these activities.

Table 3 - Overview of Activities and Interactions for Weeks 6 - 9

Week	6	7	8	9
Date	April 1, 2000	April 8, 2000	April 15, 2000	April 22, 2000
Where	Grandmamma's	family home	family home	family home
Who	Mom, Adam, Caregiver	Mom, Adam Caregiver	Dad, Mom, Adam (sick)	Dad, Mom, Adam, Caregiver
Activity	share HIGHLIGHTS Sound Listening (attentive to the sounds around us) GREAT LISTENER (teaching children how to focus in listening) SOUNDS (audiotape of sounds for identification)	share HIGHLIGHTS Visual Connection (focus on an object such as a leaf, in order to choose it from a group of the same) Shadow Movement (focus on the movement of another and repeating it) DUAL FOCUS (audiotape of two stories overlapping, need to focus on one story) SOUNDS	share HIGHLIGHTS Adam showed me what he did every night before bed: got the audiotape, listened to Jelly Belly, Changing Channels and Floating on Clouds. MAGIC WANDS (story to help children have some sense of control over their lives and how they feel physically)	share HIGHLIGHTS MAGIC WANDS QUIET LAKE RAINBOWS (story to help children have some sense of control over their lives and how they feel physically)
To Do	Family choice	Family choice Imagery exercises in Workbook	QUIET LAKE (Imagine yourself relaxing next to a beautiful, quiet, calm lake)	Family choice
Notes	Last two weeks missed because of a flood in the family home, leaving them living in other homes. Adam's attention and focus increasing. Adaptability of activities continues to be a key component of interaction. Adam challenged his parents to see Highlights.	Adam chose favourites this week: Jelly Belly, Changing Channels, and Floating on Clouds Adam integrated thinking of Floating on Clouds into everyday situation of driving in fog. Adam used Cat Scales to show how he feels regularly Adam imagined and expressed a story of living on the bottom of the ocean.	Adam described "dark side" and fear. Adam eager to show what he did with audiotapes and relaxation. Adam felt badly that he was sick. Adam initiated and reminded parents of the activities.	Activities done before bed every day of the past four weeks.

Week 6

April 1, 2000

For the past two weeks we were unable to meet due to circumstances such as illness, travel, and a flood in the family home leaving the hydro and heat off. The family was living at Adam's Grandmamma's.

As I walked up to the house Adam was sitting in his wheelchair watching out of the window for me. Once in the house I saw that Adam was very involved in a cutting task and that there were pieces of red construction paper all around him. He was cutting out a tree, resembling the very large one in the front yard, a gift for me. Mom greeted me and thanked me for the adaption of plans and made it clear that even though Dad could not be there they felt it was really important not to miss another week. Adam's Caregiver was also in the house.

We started by talking and catching up for the weeks we had missed. Adam's Highlight amidst the trials that the family was experiencing, was the news that he was going to attend a different school the next fall (2000). He would be finished at O.C.T.C. and would move on to a public school. On Friday he, Mom and Dad had visited the new school to look around. Mom was not as enthusiastic, as Adam, about the change and recalled to me what Adam had told her the previous day, "you have to have faith in other schools, Mom!" This was great insight from a 7-year old who has faced many difficult challenges. Adam has grasped the concept of positive thinking and of finding Highlights in all areas of life. Adam's perspective is positive for this change of schools even if it means leaving the familiar and suitable school at O.C.T.C.. Other Highlights included his birthday party a few

weeks ago and the party that he had with his cousins.

Adam was then helped out of his chair and we sat down on the floor to browse through the box of toys which Mom had brought over from the house for our time together, (I had requested some familiar toys). We amused ourselves exploring the toys from the box together. The toys were small and silly in nature: things such as “treat’s of the week” from McDonald’s or “dinkie” cars or items from the “dollar” store. They were perfect for the lesson of the day. We talked about sounds and listening and then I presented Adam with the eye mask that I had brought for him, aware that he is unable to close his eyes. I asked him to listen without looking and try to guess what sound he heard and what item it might represent. I started with his toys and their sounds which he had no trouble identifying. I then pulled out some of the items I had brought that he had not seen and tested his response to new sounds. He did very well with these new sounds. I clanked two spoons together, opened and closed a zipper, and swished a water bottle with water. He was able to identify water, but was confused as to how the water was in Grandmamma’s living room. He peeked to see what was going on! Then I had a challenging sound for him: a jar with some nails in it. Adam had no idea. I told him to take off his blindfold and to look at what I had. We examined the jar with the nails and the sounds that came from it. Then we looked at the other jar I had which was the same jar, only empty. He was very keen to continue the game with me wearing the blindfold. I agreed, but asked him to give me a chance. I was not as familiar with his toys as he was. He did not give me much of a chance and the second sound he presented me with was a clacker toy for which he insisted I give him the exact toy name! I had lost and now it was his turn to try and trick Mom. Mom did very well and Adam

enjoyed trying to trick her with the help of his Caregiver and I.

We finished the game and then sat as quietly as we could to see what we could hear at Grandmamma's house. All we could hear was the furnace and Grandmamma moving around. We talked about listening and Adam said that he was a good listener. He asked Mom how his eyes were. Adam has poor vision so Mom was able to encourage him by saying that his ears were very good, but that his eyes could be better.

We then listened to the Great Listener audiotope. The Great Listener recording discusses how we can focus and listen better to the sounds around us. Adam sat very attentively on the floor and watched the audiotope player. No discussion was had after the audiotope was finished, but I introduced the next activity which was Sounds. Sounds is a recording of many different sounds such as a dog, rain, or doorbell. For this, Adam sat on his mother's lap and we listened to the audiotope and tried to identify the sounds. We missed some the first time we listened, so we rewound it to hear it again and to count with his Caregiver's help how many sounds we could identify. Grandmamma joined us the second time through and commented at the end on how relaxed and attentive Adam was with the activity.

Adam was very inquisitive to know how many more times I was coming and was sad to hear that only four more meetings were planned. It seemed that he had missed our meetings over the last three weeks.

It was a very good session and most encouraging as Adam's attention was completely focussed for the entire time. I felt much more comfortable with the length of activities and the adaptation required to keep Adam interested. I realized how important it was to have a

good mix of hands-on and still activities as well as a good balance of talking. Adam is very focussed when listening to the audiotape which is useful for his learning of activities and concepts. Adam is not distracted when listening and wants to listen to the audiotape activities on his own. Adaptability continued to be a key component of our interactions. I had to be ready to follow Adam's lead for discussions and for his attention. I found it useful to have set out what the session would include but to be flexible with the order in which the activities are done.

Week 7

April 8, 2000

Arriving at the home I was excitedly greeted by Adam. He moved around busily on the floor, telling me all about what he was doing. He had almost finished watching a Star Wars movie and was thrilled. The movie was completed about 10 minutes later. During that time, Adam was listening to the television but watching me and telling me all about the movie. Adam's hearing is much better than his eye sight and he can focus with his ears on many different things, but can only focus on one visual cue at a time. Knowing that Adam's hearing was better than his vision, I chose to do hearing focussing the previous week and leave vision focussing for this week.

We talked about what had gone on through the week and Adam was excited to tell me that his favourite audiotape sessions were still Jelly Belly, Changing Channels and Floating on Clouds. Mom recounted a time this past week when it was extremely foggy out and Adam had imagined while they were driving that they were walking on the clouds. He likes

to do the activities while lying in his bed in the evening, with Mom and Dad present. He looks intently at his Workbook but has trouble drawing in it because he doesn't want to "spoil" it by drawing on the clean pages. The Highlight's of the week were learning to read and not having homework because he had worked so hard at school.

We started off by playing a visual connection game. We were each able to pick a fork out of a pile and describe it. Then we put the forks back into the pile and Adam had to re-identify his fork, by picking it out of the pile. He was able to do this on his first attempt. Mom then rearranged the forks. Adam insisted that this would make the game too tricky, yet he was able again to pick out his fork on his first try.

We then started looking at some fall leaves that I had brought to do a visual leaf connection. This leaf connection was the same as the fork game, but with leaves. We were describing our leaves when we were interrupted by visitors. Unfortunately we had to pause working together for approximately half an hour. During the half hour I stayed and interacted with the family and visitors.

Adam and I talked for a short while which was a good opportunity for me to ask Adam about some of the things we had done together. I had previously noticed that Adam would occasionally touch his belly button when I was over and Mom had commented that he did this at other times. During our short talk I asked Adam what he thought about when he was doing Jelly Belly. He said nothing. I asked further, and he described that he uses bedtime as an opportunity to really focus on listening to the audiotape, his breathing and his belly button. Adam finds that Jelly Belly is a relaxing activity for him. Adam would touch his belly button as a reminder to breath better when he needs to relax.

Adam has a wonderful imagination and during our talk he told me that it would be great to live in an underwater city because one could see all the beautiful fish. We also talked about when we use our imaginations: he said that the bathtub wars are his favourite play times.

Wanting to continue working with visual focus and making connections I started a game of shadow movement with the Caregiver, one of the visitors, Adam and myself. I started by putting my finger on my nose and having Adam copy. Adam went next by making a movement and we all followed. He did fairly well at this activity, but his muscle limitations made the movements very challenging for him. Things like sticking out his tongue, and putting his hands to his face and ears are very difficult for him. When it was his turn he tried some hand movements such as folding them, but this was quickly abandoned for imitating what others were saying.

Once the visitors left, Adam was really getting tired so we agreed to listen to one new activity. We selected DUAL FOCUS from the audiotape. Adam's task was to listen to only one story as it was read and to block out a second story read at the same time. Adam did well considering he was tired. He commented that he was able to listen to the man's story easier than the lady's story. I had thought he would hear the lady better because she read a familiar script: the Changing Channels script. Adam asked if I still had the Sounds audiotape and if we could listen to it. So we listened to Sounds and tried to guess what the sounds were. He did very well as he sat on Mom's lap.

I outlined some visual imagery tasks for Adam and his family to try for the week from the Workbook. Adam continued to show good concentration and interest this week.

Week 8

April 15, 2000

Today when I came to the home I was greeted by Dad, Mom, and Adam, who was sick. Mom commented that they did not want to postpone our meeting because they thought that something good would come out of us getting together. Adam was “hanging out” with Dad by putting up mirror closet doors in Adam’s room. Adam continues to enjoy mirrors and talking to his image on them.

We all went into the living room and sat down to chat. Adam commented that he was not feeling well and did not think he would like to do the activities today. With this as a starting point and his parents coaxing because I was there, I decided to spend some time chatting with Adam and to gauge how things were going by his participation in conversation. He did not present any Highlights at first. He had stayed home most of the week and seemed under the weather. Mom suggested that the closet doors were a Highlight. Adam agreed with Mom; they were a Highlight. He got down from the couch and started to move across the room. He said that he was going to show me something. He went over to some items beside me and showed me some pictures that he and his Caregiver had found on the Internet the previous day when he had felt “yucky”. Adam said that these were a Highlight. The pictures were of a character from Star Wars and I asked him all about this character. Then he showed me a toy he had that was also from Star Wars. He began talking about “the force” and “the dark side” which enabled me to ask him what meaning these had. He was somewhat distracted, but Dad asked him to pay attention to the questions and try to answer. Adam discussed that “the force” was good and that it was within. We engaged Adam in

discussing this “force” and how it could be that it was inside people. He further described “the dark side”, what “the force” was not, and who did not have “the force” and why.

Mom and Dad both caught on to how I was trying to incorporate Adam’s knowledge of Star Wars and the forces into his understanding of himself and mental skills. To try to make a connection Mom asked Adam, “what side are we on?” Adam paused to consider. Dad tried to build another bridge by asking, “can you describe how someone goes over to the dark side?” Adam went into a detailed description of fear being at the root of people who go to “the dark side”. Dad asked Adam if he had fear. Adam pondered the question and said, “yes, sometimes.” Dad agreed that indeed, sometimes we have fear. Dad asked what we do when we are afraid. Adam answered that we need to think better. Adam then moved over to the audiotape player and rewound the audiotape. He looked at me and said “ I am going to show you what I do”.

Adam wanted to demonstrate for me what he does to think better and how he has learned to relax with his fears. As Adam was busy with the tape player buttons Mom, Dad and I discussed that Adam had not worked on anything new but that every night he had listened to the audiotape. Mom and Dad commented: “He likes to start with Changing Channels, then Jelly Belly, and finally Floating on Clouds. He even does the wiggling of his fingers and holds his finger to his belly. It has been great! He had trouble falling asleep for years, but he is asleep within 5 minutes of listening. You can hear him focussing on his breathing. It is so encouraging, we have even listened to the tape after midnight to get to sleep. Always on Adam’s initiative!”

Adam displayed knowledge and understanding of mental skills and how certain

resources such as Jelly Belly were useful for him to think positively, relax and face his fears. Mom and Dad were really glad to discover something that has been so effective with Adam. This was also encouraging for me to see some benefits to our time together. I was also challenged to consider fear and “the force” that Adam described was in us.

Adam pressed play and layed down on his back to follow the instructions of Jelly Belly. It was great to watch him get into a comfortable position, wiggle his fingers, put his finger on his belly and breath. Once the audiotape was done he seemed proud of what he was able to do. Adam wanted to do the new activity that I had brought and he was intent on preparing the audiotape and pressing play. Afterwards, we talked about “the force” within us again and found magical light sabres, an imitation of Star Wars light sabres. We listened to Magical Wands, a recording intended to help children realize that they have some control over their lives. The recording taught that people have control over how they feel physically even when they are sick. Adam was quite attentive to the new activity, and followed the instructions, incorporating his “light sabre” as a physical prop. When the audiotape had finished Adam was physically tired.

Rather than get into trying any more activities with Adam I asked him if he had ever been to a cottage. He remembered very well that he had been to one of his uncle’s cottages and recalled to me, with help from Mom and Dad, about all the things he had done there. We talked about the water and the lake and I told Adam that there was something special on the audiotape that I was leaving him about a lake. I asked him to try to listen to it the following week. His enthusiastic response: “Sure Melissa!” He moved off to the bathroom and wanted to show me his shower head and how “cool” it was. As I said goodbye and was

walking down the hall I heard him ask Mom if I was okay with our session and that he felt “yucky”. Mom assured him that I understood that he was not feeling well and that he had done a great job.

As they showed me to the door, Mom and Dad both thanked me again. We talked about repetition and how important repetition was for Adam. Mom and Dad were encouraged that Adam had found three activities that he enjoys repeating. Dad commented that they never force it and that Adam always initiates the activities. The activities that Adam is learning have been very helpful for Adam and for them, especially the relaxation activities. They felt it wonderful that regularly, Adam would remind them of things that I have worked on with them and that he would want to include more and more activities into their bedtime routine.

Week 9

April 22, 2000

Upon my arrival the family as well as the Caregiver were ready and prepared for me. Adam was ready to share Highlights and to do a few activities. The Highlight of the day was the new television that was to arrive soon. Adam was very excited about its arrival. Adam prepared the audiotape that he wanted us to listen to together. First, was Magic Wands followed by Quiet Lake; both activities we had done for the first time last week. Adam was very keen and attentive to the activities. I introduced our last activity together: Rainbows. Rainbows is a story to aid children to understand the control they have over how they physically feel. The recording encourages children to think positively about their bodies and

their family. Although Adam is not considered sick but rather disabled, it is valuable to help him think about himself and his disability. Adam enjoyed the discussion about who he was and why he was special. He was very eager to express why his family was special.

Mom commented that Adam was persistent with the activities before bed each day. Adam had discovered that this time was not only family time, but it also helped him get to sleep. The family felt equipped to face their apparent challenges at this point and were able to now choose the particular activities that met their needs. Before I left the new television arrived and Adam was thrilled.

Week 10

May 6, 2000

This week was our final meeting. It had been arranged for us to record some of our discussion time. As we started our discussion Mom and Dad were in the room, but quietly left once Adam was comfortable with the tape recorder. I noticed that prior to Mom and Dad's departure Adam was preoccupied with both the tape player and his parents' presence. Adam paused frequently and did not focus until his parents had relocated to another room.

Me-What kind of things might we be afraid of?

Adam-Ahh...

(Pause)

Adam-Ahh, Mmm...

Mom-What makes you scared, honey?

Adam-I'm trying to think.

(Pause)

Mom-I can think of one thing and then you can think of another. I remember when we went to the hospital, and what happened? You didn't want to go some place because you were afraid. Do you remember?

Adam-Yeah.

Mom-Do you want to tell us about it?

(Adam-fumbling with tape player)

Me-Do you remember that we talked about stress and relaxation?

Adam- Yeah.

Me-I thought you did. What kinda things make us stressed?

(Pause)

Me-Not sure? Okay well then what kinda things help us relax?

Adam-(Unrecognizable words)

Me-We can talk into there (microphone) and then later we can listen to it. So let's think about relaxation for a minute, Adam. What kinda things help us to feel better and relax?

(Pause)

Me-Did we do anything together that helps us remember what it is like to relax?

(Pause-parents leave room)

Adam-Why did you go. Mom?

(Pause)

Adam-Yup (*answering my previous question about remembering what it is like to relax*).

Adam and I were both sitting on the floor for the rest of our discussion. Following his parents departure Adam took the tape recorder in hand and turned his back to me. I had seen Adam do this before in our discussions and I understood it to be a strategy for decreasing the number of distractions that were in his visual field. Adam faced the wall with the tape recorder in his hand so that he could speak directly into the microphone. I proceeded to ask Adam if he could recall the many activities we had tried together:

Me-Remember, we lay on the floor sometimes and we do some special breathing?

(Adam-starts to breathe)

Me-What were we trying to do? Were we trying to make ourselves feel better?

(Pause -Adam continues to practice breathing)

Me-Adam?

(Pause-Adam is completely focussed on breathing and his hand is on his belly)

Me-Were we trying to make ourselves feel better?

Adam-Ahh.

This made it very evident that Adam remembered what we had done with breathing. It was also evident that he had practised the breathing exercises many times and was now

able to do them without the aid of the audiotape. His hand on his belly demonstrated what we had done many times together when we did Jelly Belly (a breathing activity on audiotape).

I continued to probe Adam's memory regarding the activities we had done together. My intent was to discover what Adam could tell me about our time together during these past months. Adam remembered what we had done and expressed that he did the activities before bed and that this was helpful for him in trying to fall asleep.

Me-Can you press the buttons by yourself on your tape player?

Adam-Um, no because I am usually lying in bed.

Me-Is it good to lie down and listen to the tape?

Adam-Yeah.

Me-What are your favourite ones on the tape?

Adam-They're really secrets.

Me-They're secrets?

Adam-I said they're secret-ish.

Me-Do you like Jelly Belly?

Adam-Yeah.

Me-What about Floating on Clouds?

Adam-I do.

Me-What do you think about when you Float on Clouds?

Adam-Hmm. Not really nothing because I'm usually asleep by then.

Me-You are usually asleep by then? What about when you are listening to Jelly Belly what do you think about?

Adam-I am usually asleep by then too.

Me-Oh, okay. Did you listen to Quiet Lake, the one with the lake and the birds and the water?

Adam-Yeah.

Me-Did you like that one?

Adam-Um, I am usually asleep by then.

Me-They put you to sleep!

Adam-Yes.

Adam and I spent a large amount of our discussion time on the topic of family.

Family is very important to Adam and he has consistently defined his family as his Dad,

Mom and himself.

Me-Can you remind me and tell me what a family is again?

Adam-In this (tape recorder)?

Me-Yeah, you can talk in there.

Adam- Ahh it is when you... why do you sometimes forget?

Me- I do, I sometimes forget. And I know that you have a very good memory.

Adam- It is when people go together and pick out some stuff or something like that.

Me-Who is in your family?

Adam- My Dad, my Mom and me.

Adam, when asked, did not think that his family had any stress, a very different perspective from that of his parents. Adam went into a lengthy discussion with me about what his family would be afraid of:

Me- What do you think is one stressful thing about your family?

Adam-Nothing stressful in my family.

Me-No? It is all happy all the time?

Adam-Yeah.

Me-Is there something that your family is afraid of?

(Pause)

Adam-Tiggers.

Me-Tiggers? Are there tiggers around here?

Adam- In the forest.

Me-Tigers?

Adam-Tigers, yes.

Me-Wow, have you seen one?

Adam-Wolves...

Me-Wolves. Yes, that is what they are called I think.

Adam-Vicious dogs...

Me-Yeah I would be scared of those too!

Adam-They are like a vicious pet.

Me-They are, aren't they.

Adam's age, combined with his parents' priority of putting family first and the supportive community around them made it unlikely that Adam would recognize the unique strains on his family. Adam's parents have done extremely well in their pursuit of providing

him with a supportive environment. Adam's parents often have put him first, and their own needs second. When Dad and Mom filled out a questionnaire of their individual Life Time Zones (see Appendix-C.) it was apparent that Adam's needs took priority over their own. The first question was for Dad and Mom to record when they had time for themselves individually. Both parents left the space completely blank. It was evident that Adam's parents sought to put Adam and family life as their priority.

Adam verified this family priority when I asked him if he liked that Dad and Mom listened to the audiotapes with him before bed. Adam had chosen the time and place for the activity as well as insisted from the beginning that the whole family be together to do the activities.

Me-Do you like it that Mom and Dad listen to the tapes with you, listen to Jelly Belly?

Adam-Yes. Maybe we could listen to it.

Me-We gotta wait Is it good that Mom and Dad listen to the tape with you?

Adam-Yeah.

Me-Are you glad that they know what you do?

Adam-Yeah.

Me-Are you glad that you do it together?

Adam-Yes because that I know it is my choice to do it with the whole family around.

Me-You like your family. don't you?

Adam-Yeah.

Knowing that Adam had learned and discovered much during our sessions, I thought it would be helpful for Adam to try summarizing our entire time together, if he could. I discovered that he initially had difficulty putting his ideas into complete sentences and engaging in directed conversation.

Me-I have one more question for you: If you wanted to teach me one thing, what would you tell me?

Adam-Something is in my memory... the only thing I think about is my family.

Me-Okay, that is good.

Adam- If I was yours (teacher), I would ... I would give you all that I remembered and more remembers. I would do that.

Me-Would you?

Adam-But if anybody had something else to do I would let them do it, if they were busy. Then they don't know that they are doing it is a little bit of work a problem, but so far it has been umm good. But in all this somebody is working or something, you gotta let them do that if you don't you'll get in big trouble and if guess what's going to happen? You are going to get into deep, deep trouble.

I thought it might be a good approach to ask Adam what other children would find useful from all the activities we had done together. Adam was very focussed on this discussion and let me know that he understood the primary purpose of my time with him and his family. The discussion we had was very lengthy given the difficulty that Adam has in communicating. The following are some excerpts from our discussion to help show how well Adam understood:

1. Me-Do you think other little boys and girls would like to learn what you and I did?
 Adam-Yup!
 Me-Yup.
 Adam-Just tell them ... make a tape for them (*activities and speaking*) ... record a tape of themselves.
 Me-Is that the fun part?
 Adam-Yes.
 Me-Little boys and girls like to do that?
 Adam-Yes. So you should do it with other kids. Record tapes.
2. Me-Is it important for little kids to listen to that (*activities*)? What does it teach them?
 Adam-To teach them how to relax .
 Me-Kids like that. Don't they?
 Adam- Yup. Don't go to kids that already know how to relax, go to kids that don't know how to relax.
 Me-What kind of kids are those?
 Adam-They were like me I couldn't (*relax*).
 Me-Now can you?
 Adam-Yeah.

Me-That is great. Isn't it?

Adam-So, you will have to teach the other kids that (*activities*) ... I would do that if I were you.

Me-Will that help them be more positive and see more Highlights?

Adam-Ahh, if they know what you mean by Highlights if they're smart kids they will know what Highlights means. They will know what you are talking about, so you'll have to be careful looking for other kids that don't know how to relax.

3. Me-Do I tell them a Highlight is something bad?

Adam-Good!

Me-Something good that they think about in their day?

Adam-Yes.

Me-Would you like to help me teach sometime?

Adam-I could now that I am smart!

4. Adam-If you let the child know what he doing (*in the activities*) you will discover what the child is doing (*in s/he's mind*). If you don't discover it (*what the child is capable of doing*). there is going to be a big problem.

Me-That is for sure. Isn't it?

Adam-So, it's your only choice to discover the child's possibility.

Me-That is right. Did I discover Adam's possibility?

Adam-My possibility would be different than theirs. If their possibility is different than it would be sensitive that you would let the child know what he is doing (*it would be necessary for the child to know what they needed to learn to discover their possibility*). If they don't understand just tell them (*help the child learn the activities*). So they know what you are doing and they know what you are up to, but if you don't tell them they won't understand what a Highlight is.

Me-That is right. Did I tell you?

Adam-Yes.

Me-Did we discover what your possibilities were?

Adam-Yes.

Me-Yes. What are your possibilities?

Adam-My possibilities are what we are talking about.

Adam and I had a very good discussion and he spoke clearly about the ideas that he had racing through his mind. He communicated the importance of my spending time with his family. He summed up the process of discovery that we had ventured into these past months. It was evident that Adam had been empowered through our time together and that he was

keen to continue learning about himself and others (“now that I am smart!”). Adam understood that he was a unique child, not because of his special needs but because he was a special person, just like others are special and unique.

After our special discussion time together, Adam and I invited his parents and his Caregiver to join us in the living room. We had a good discussion and Adam was very keen to help his parents in their use of the microphone. I intended for this discussion time to provide a taped response from Adam’s parents to a few key questions. The questions were important to gain a better understanding of the parents perception of the usefulness of our time together.

The first areas we explored were the importance of me coming into their home and having all the familiar home supports, and the importance of the family working together. Mom commented that there was greater comfort and confidence available by meeting at the home. She also felt that doing things together as a family allowed for the preservation of all information and experience. This in turn would allow for a better reinforcement of relevant program concepts and activities.

Mom-I think so (*both are important- at home and family involvement*). There are often cases when you try and do things when the family is not all together. Then you have to try to share the information with the other individual (*who wasn't present*). It (*the information*) can get kinda lost. Doing it at home also makes things a bit more comfortable and confident, probably even more relaxed in his (Adam’s) own environment so that he can do the exercise.

We then discussed whether each participant felt that their individual involvement in the sessions was beneficial. Both parents agreed that the consistency and the time together was beneficial:

Mom-For each one of us, Dad or I, have taken on the role of lying with him (Adam) when it comes to the evening and listening to the tapes with him. It becomes so relaxing that we fall asleep.

Dad- I think it was important that there was consistency because we keep the same strategy. When we got upset we knew, or we just talked about this or that. So, to try that strategy as a family was good.

The family noted that their participation together aided greatly in their communication with one another and particularly with Adam. They were able to try different strategies to help improve individual situations:

Mom-One person could relay it (*the information*) if we found out that one (*activity or strategy*) wasn't working. We wind up communicating that to each other. We would ask each other...(interrupted by Adam)

Adam- You (mom) have to talk into the microphone.

Mom- Okay. So, I would ask the question to Daddy: Did you find that that (*activity or strategy*) was working better than the other? Then we would discover: yeah, one was working better than the other and then we would stick to it (*the activity or strategy*).

The family described what resources or activities were most useful for them. They discussed what resources or activities promoted mental skill concepts that we were trying to teach and learn:

Mom- The book that you had (workbook), the scribbler in which he could relate the pictures with his feelings, that we found useful. Mind you, Adam couldn't use the tool (workbook) like we had anticipated but found a way to express his feelings. Although he could easily express it verbally, he found it almost exciting to see the feelings through a picture (i.e. Cat Scales).

Me- Yes.

Mom- Adam, I think is very visual. Also, the book for him was his so it was ownership.

Dad- The same with the tapes to, but more so with the book.

Dad said that the resources were good because it was possible to use some activities and to leave some activities for another time. He was impressed in the flexibility and

adaptability of the resources and activities. This flexibility was useful for Adam and for particular family situations; it was not necessary to do more than was needed.

Dad- I think that this resource is a good resource because some (*activities*) are used more than others. This (*use of different activities*) will probably change from child to child.

Me- It would change from stage of life to stage of life too.

Dad- Yes, exactly.

Mom noted that with Adam and many special needs children there is a need for great repetition to achieve learning, even in small areas. For Adam the learning was a gradual process and it was important to have much repetition to help him discover what activities could help him in different situations.

Mom- One thing with Adam, is that you introduce something and he becomes familiar with it right away. If you try and change him and introduce him into something else too soon you have already lost it. So, you have to continue on with one thing for a little while and then you can make the change. Jelly Belly for instance has stayed because it was the first one that he had listened to. It has stayed with him throughout the whole ten weeks and he still talks about it. He is more familiar with Jelly Belly then Quiet Lake, for instance. Floating on Clouds is the other one.

Dad- For him to interpret them and the other ones (*will take time and repetition*). We will just keep trying and there will be times for the others (*activities*).

Mom- Magic Sword is starting.

One of the greatest benefits of participation for this family was the positive time it provided for them to spend together. This family was pulled and stretched in many directions with multiple challenges; participating in these activities as a unit brought them together. Adam clued into this early on and set the rule that he wanted all of them to participate in the activities. If everyone could not participate then Adam was not as interested.

Me- Can you describe any changes that might have happened either individually or as a whole family since we started?

Mom- While we're lying on the bed!

(laugh)

Mom- If I look at in the sense of where it has brought the unit together, at a special moment for him (Adam), which is his resting time. It is Mommy or Daddy or all of us, we all lie together and listen to the tapes. In a good sense it makes him calm-down as well as us calm-down. At the end of the day we are all exhausted, we realize we have a lot of things to do still, like we have to get supper or lunch ready and we have to get clothes ready, but at the same time it brings the unit together and it actually calms you down and makes you relax....What do you think hon?

Dad-I agree. I agree, I think it also makes us a little more aware during stressful times. We actually think about it (activities) and we remind ourselves and we remind him to use some of the methods to calm down and to think about it. It just adds another dimension to think about which is good.

For this family finding time, for things other than daily living, was and continues to be the most difficult thing to do. Whether it is finding the time to read a book, spend time alone, spend time together as spouses or spend time doing meaningful things as a family. That time is hard to or sometimes impossible to find. Time together, as a family, had been allocated in these past 10 weeks. Adam was attempting to maximize and extend this time together in the evenings before bed. Adam and his parents found the time together to provide great benefits for them all and they found it to be meaningful time.

1. Mom- I think that is why right now the comfort zone is that bedtime, because that is the quiet time, that is the time to tone down. The rest of the day is a busy time and he has other things on his mind and so do we, but then that time brings us together.

2. Mom- The one thing we can't do right now is take the time out to read the books that you gave us to read, It is all a matter of trying to...

Dad- ...Make time.

Mom-I think that has always been the hardest (finding time). When you have a child that is physically challenged your arms and your legs, as a Mom and a Dad, need to become eight instead of four. *(It is necessary to help your child accomplish daily living tasks that his arms and legs are incapable of, i.e.*

eating or using the bathroom). For both of us, I think that is the biggest challenge that we find. Perhaps bringing in those times when we can all lie down and listen to Jelly Belly or Floating on Clouds makes you realize that we all have to tone down. That we all have to realize you can have control, that you can make it better, you have to make it better.

Me- I'm sure you can sometimes feel that you have ten other arms that you need when trying to meet all the needs of Adam. Some days you can't even stop and consider what your hands and feet are to supposed to do.

Mom- Oh, exactly.

Me- It is good to know that there is a space, however small to just stop together, for however long and to be refreshed by that time.

Mom and Dad- Um Hmm.

Mom-What he (Adam) has wound up doing is not just having us listen to two at the night time. Now it has turned into four or five.

Dad-He is trying to extend the time.

From the parents and Caregivers perspective, activities such as the one's we had tried together should be included in school and in other homes with families who have special situations. It was expressed that a partnership of home and school would be the most effective for the children and families.

1. Caregiver- I think it would help some of the teachers to know about Changing Channels and stuff like that. So, that when Adam is stressed out they can say something that might trigger something (*to help him refocus*).
2. Dad- It might be something for the school to consider. I know Adam's first two years there (*at school*) were really heavy in the social skills and how to handle complex situations or stressful situations. This type of resource will be good at that time too.

Personal Reflections on the Journey

It was a cold winter day when I arrived at this new and different home in the country. As I pulled in the drive I considered how much I didn't know and curiously awaited the discovery of these things. Parking the car I breathed out my anxiety and breathed in the confidence of knowing that all experiences provide depth to life. Now was the time to dive in. I looked up at the house, which could be anyone's home, but noticed something which set it apart from other homes. Beside the front step through the snow a wheelchair lift was visible. I was quickly reminded that this house was special to me and that I was on the verge of discovering how. This house contained three people who called it home. I treaded up the steps with excitement to meet this family. As I did this I reminded myself that I was here to learn and that thought thrilled me.

I was fifteen minutes earlier than we had arranged; As I rang the bell I contemplated whether I should have or not. Weighing the option of driving around in the snow or moving ahead and starting what I had set out to do; I chose to arrive early and begin this encounter. What lay behind the door I could only imagine and my imagination was failing me.

Upon ringing the bell there was a flurry of activity from within. After waiting a brief moment the door was opened to me and I was greeted by enthusiasm. Mom promptly greeted me and instructed me to join them in the kitchen, not really paying attention to my apologies for being early. "Never mind that, we are finishing up lunch, come and join us." She turned and led the way. Entering the kitchen was a superb moment as I was introduced to Adam who was wide eyed and bursting with questions for me. He did well to hold his questions back as I took my seat at the table. Little did he know that I too was bursting with

questions. We quickly discovered our questions were of the same intent. Mine to discover him. His to discover me. Over the next few months Adam and I, along with Mom and Dad, would attempt many ways to answer some of our questions. We would soon discover though that some of the answers came before we knew that we had questions. Our journey to learn was the same and the path we discovered continues to grow.

Adam was interested in knowing why I was there and what it was that I do. Explaining to a seven year old child with multiple disabilities of which I know not the limitations was my first and deepest challenge. It was a profound challenge because it demanded that I simplify my task for the one whom it mattered most. It demanded that I have a clear intent, however unknown the means and the end would and had to be. It demanded that I embrace our interactions and believe that the end really didn't matter but that I was there to learn and to discover with this particular little boy and his parents. I expressed to Adam the importance of being aware of our situations, of knowing what we faced, of the challenges and the joys of our individual lives. Having come from such different places, we were able to agree to start out on a journey. Our journey was one of learning to live better in the midst of all the different things we faced. We agreed to try some new things together.

To Adam this was initially a process of learning to play some new things. How quickly the play turned into an every day necessary reality. How quickly Adam discovered that this play was different and how he desired and orchestrated this play to meet a need in himself. What was initially unknown became known and termed as "know-all-ogy" by Adam. He finalized our intent as being the process of discovering possibilities through

knowing new things about ourselves. The one to whom this mattered most, namely Adam, was the one who defined the process most profoundly and simply. Towards the end of our time together, I asked Adam what I should do if I were to offer the program to other children? His response: "it is your only choice to discover the child's possibility!" For Adam, our time together was the discovering of possibilities. This is the journey we found ourselves in and this is the journey that will continue beyond our time together. Adam had a deep interest in knowing all that he could about himself and others. Our task each week was to deepen the "know-all-ogy" and to discover our possibilities.

The everyday reality of incorporating the mental skills play, thoughts, words, and activities did not take Adam long. Our meetings every Saturday started with the sharing of Highlights from the previous week and a discussion on how possible resources or play activities had been used. The sharing of Highlights was a special time, it enabled Adam to learn that play didn't have to be work as he had previously thought. A child with particular mental and physical needs finds that simple play or thought takes much work and thereby requires constant effort; play can become work. Adam though was able to prepare for Saturday morning Highlight sharing and so it was not work. He had already formulated the thoughts and the words to share and was now able to focus on the excitement of sharing his particular Highlights. The discovery here was that the possibility existed to communicate more easily and to more effectively communicate things which were important; things that he and his family desired to share when adequate time was provided along with a specific purpose.

The discovery of a common language was valuable to this particular family. Having

an understood vocabulary with some key phrases which prompted important strategies for stressful situations promoted more positive family functioning. The use of changing channels was effectively used by Adam and his parents. Adam created a physical symbol to help him remember to change his mental channel. When he was cued either by a parent or by his own initiative, Adam would attempt to snap his fingers as best as his muscles would allow him to. The process of changing his thoughts and behaviour from one that felt and acted out of control, to one that was in control was of great value. This required that Adam discover how much time he needed to accomplish something. It further required Adam to be patient with himself in order to behave in an unfrenzied way. Adam was able to spend less time calming down from a high level of frustration and instead attempted to take the time to recognize the situation he was in and his specific limitations and needs. In doing so Adam discovered that he was able to problem solve within his abilities.

The presence of a common language also emerged when the family was moving through daily living. Simple imagination which can bring much joy moved out of blowing up ships in the bathtub to more complex and profound uses. One morning as he and Dad were driving to school in a dense fog Adam commented: "clouds". Dad, not being sure what Adam was commenting about, continued to question and dialogue with him. Adam had made a connection between a cloud imagination activity that he had done with me and was now integrating the idea into life. Adam was able to see beyond the fog and it's driving frustration and to remind his father that they were in the clouds, that they were driving on the clouds, that they could relax at this very moment as they thought of the Floating on Clouds activity and relaxation.

Quite moving was the wisdom of this seven year old boy. A common language along with the patience and opportunity to explore his thoughts was discovered to be useful in promoting family understanding. His parents were able to see more clearly the struggle it was for Adam to express himself. His parents to recognized the depth of thought that existed in their child's mind in the form of imagination and his growing philosophy of life long discoveries. Adam, in responding to the program activity of Magic Wands and integrating his thoughts on the movie Star Wars, was able to share his fears. Adam expressed to us his knowledge of how a Star Wars character moved from the side of light to the dark side. He, for our benefit, simplified the moving factor to fear. Adam then went on to describe his own fears and how he would choose not to go to the dark side in his thoughts. He described Highlights as a way of keeping himself free from fears.

Many of Adam's fears showed when thoughts of hospital visits or activities that seemed too difficult to understand were talked about. Highlights and common language were such a valuable discovery for Adam. Adam and his family were told by his present school that the coming school year would have Adam in a new school. Upon visiting the new school with his parents and hearing his parents expressions of concern for Adam at this much larger school, Adam was able to express that he was not afraid. He was able to express that, yes this was new and unknown, but "Mom it is a Highlight for me." Mom was not as enthusiastic about the change and recalled to me what Adam had told her "you have to have faith in other schools Mom!" Great insight and words from a seven year old who has faced many difficult challenges in living. Adam had discovered that he was able to embrace a new challenge and to see the positive in this move, even if it meant leaving the known and

suitable school.

Adam's physical limitations made it incredibly difficult for him to close his eyes, because of this attaining sleep was a long and frustrating process. Adam's parents had decided to give Adam the freedom to decide when and where they would participate in the activities that I presented to them. Adam decided that he would like to do them lying in his bed. Adam was able to inform his parents of the particular activity on the audiotape that he would like to listen to. First he might choose Changing Channels, then he might choose Jelly Belly or Floating on Clouds. One night in the process of this choosing, the chooser became silent. Mom and Dad looked at each other with smiles. Adam had fallen asleep on his own in less than fifteen minutes. This had never happened before in his seven years. The following Saturday the parents were filled with thanks to me for helping their family, most especially Adam realized a solution to a problem that until then had always seemed a mystery to solve.

Other unsolvable problems which found solutions existed for this family over our time together. Adam's limitations had him very congested and at times he found it difficult to breathe. Rather than have a panic attack, be it Adam or his parents, they were all able to put the breathing techniques that they had learned to good use primarily through Changing Channels.

Of immeasurable value was the discovery by this family that despite their many demands, there was time to spend together which could re-energize each of them. Although the parents were stretched beyond what they could manage effectively, they could recharge for a half hour each day with Adam before bed. Although there were still numerous tasks to

complete for the day, the family could pause and enjoy a few joyful moments together. This family discovered the joy of relaxing and learning together. The coping of this family was improved and they viewed themselves as functioning at a much greater level than before this program began and before they chose to take this time together. Discovering their possibilities for these weeks was a true exercise in “know-all-ogy”.

Discussion

The findings in this study clearly indicate that it was beneficial to take a family systems approach. The context of the family home as a meeting place for learning promoted the ease and flexibility necessary for this family to embrace new methods for facing their situation. Petr, Murdock, and Chapin's (1995) study drew attention to the need for applied work with special needs families with the primary focus on training the trainer; the parent. This study was set up to explore the process of training the trainer. Adam's family was presented with mental skills activities on a weekly basis. It was the intent to have the parents implement those portions of that presented throughout the week with the family. Adam's family worked out for themselves good times and methods for learning. The parents were able to discover the appropriate time for certain activities, whether it be Jelly Belly before bed or Changing Channels during a stressful moment. Other research supports the family as a starting place for support. Cohn, Miller, and Tickle-Degern (2000) proposed interventions that relate to children's participation in contexts in which they live, learn and play. When the context is one that empowers and builds on the strengths of the family then the family is better supported and equipped to meet their unique needs.

Some of the activities included in Orlick's (1998) life skills training program were not suitable for this particular child given his disabilities. For instance an activity called Spaghetti Toes was not even possible as this child had limited sensory functions and was unable to use his legs. Alternatives to Spaghetti Toes could have been an adaptation maybe called Spaghetti Fingers, but I chose to use different activities that achieved similar relaxation outcomes. There were activities tried from the program that were far too complex for this particular child. For instance Star Track and Dual Focus did not work with Adam. Adam's level of functioning both physically and mentally were key factors in activities that worked and one's that did not.

Adam's father noted at the end of our time together that he anticipated that Adam could use the more complex activities at a later stage in his development. Adam's father saw the presence of more complex activities as something that could be used later and thus he felt equipped with a resource for the future. Throughout the study the family was not only trained for the moment but they were trained for future encounters and situations. The family recognized the need for adaptability and flexibility as they strove to meet their needs in the best possible way.

A brief look into other children and families facing unique situations shows that they face similar stresses to those that Adam's family faced. It is possible that other children with sleeping problems (Bruusgaard, Smedmaten, & Natvig, 2000; Owens, Spirito, McGuinn, & Noble, 2000; Palermo, 2000) could be helped through learning relaxation techniques, such as Adam did. It is also possible that families facing uniquely stressful situations such as acquired brain damage (Ramritu, & Croft, 1999) or critical care injury (Leske, & Jiricka,

1998) could be helped through the learning of mental skills together. Items such as how the family interacts with these stresses or how the family communicates with one another could be aided through a family systems approach with differing mental skills as potential resources for meeting specific unique needs.

The Path Ahead

Participation in this research study was enlightening for this family. The family enjoyed the Feeling Great program and were very pleased with how well they could incorporate the activities into family life. Orlick's program provided valued, fun activities for Adam and his parents. The program was adaptable to their specific needs and the parents felt confident in their ability to use the activities together. Adam was excited to participate and when he discovered that the activities were beneficial for helping him to relax; he used them on his own initiative. Throughout this program the family learned more effective methods of communicating with one another. For example, Adam was able to express his feelings in a more visible way by using the Cat Scales. As well, activities such as Changing Channels allowed the family to communicate in stressful situations through the use of cues and gestures.

Of great importance was how the program empowered the family. From the beginning, Adam was inquisitive and creative with the information presented to him (creating a word for it: know-all-ogy). In our final discussion Adam expressed that he had become a "knower" and that he perceived himself as smart ("I am smart"). It is valuable for Adam, a child with many challenges, to consider himself as smart and able. Adam exhibited

great learning and insight with respect to mental skills and their use in many different situations throughout our weeks together. For Adam's parents the use of the activities provided greater opportunity to meet the needs of their family and to support one another.

The knowledge of how this one family experienced this program can be of value to other families who may have similar stresses and demands. Each family is a unique combination of individuals and thus unique demands and stresses exist in families. How individual families interact and relate with one another is different, but it has been discovered that the activities and resources used in this study have great adaptability. Individuals have the capability of learning mental skills, regardless of their personal demands or stresses.

The information gained in this study could be of value to professionals who work with and support families who have children with disabilities. It is clear from this study that it is possible for parents to become the teachers in their homes with respect to mental skills. Families supporting a child with disability, are interact often with professionals for things such as treatment or care support. Professionals, such as teachers or doctors, can present mental skills as a viable resource to families in helping the family cope effectively with demands and stresses.

At the beginning of this investigation I was challenged to consider that children are intimately and directly impacted by the people who are closest to them. From my family experience, as a daughter of parents who continue to directly involve themselves in my life, I am profoundly aware of their impact on my outlook and subsequent life choices. From my work experience, supporting persons with special needs, I have witnessed the impact my involvement with them can have on their lives. My Thesis experience with Adam and his

family provided further evidence on how much our lives can impact on others.

Families with increasing demands and stresses can have the opportunity to be empowered from within to experience success in dealing with the pressures. Not only is success increased when the family is able to confront the demands placed upon them, but success can be achieved by decreasing the gap between home and other supports. Mental life skills programs can potentially be adapted to fit into any family situation, with the parent or caregiver as the principle educator. In meeting the many needs and demands on families, it is necessary to move forward in integrating the roles of all supports: home, school, or medical. All areas of support need to strive to work together in finding the best means of support for individuals in families. if our society is to see more positive ways of functioning. In my study I have seen how beneficial the learning and use of mental skills has been. I hope that this family is able to communicate to the larger support community how best to help them face the unique stresses of living with a child who has a disability. In turn it is my vision that this project will increase awareness and knowledge for the larger society in the continuing attempt to foster healthy families and to help decrease the occurrence of “handicapped families.”

This Thesis is just the beginning in examining how special populations can use mental skills. Future endeavours could examine the role of parents, as teachers, combined with examining the effect of collaborative efforts between home, school, or hospital in helping children with disabilities learn relevant mental skills. In an integrative, de-compartmentalized context it would also be useful to examine differing perspectives of stress, given the unique demands. as viewed by parents, teachers, doctors, and children.

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Appendix - A

Letter of approval from the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre



Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre
Centre de traitement pour enfants d'Ottawa
 Founded in 1951 Fondé en 1951

**Serving children and youth with physical disabilities and
 associated developmental and learning difficulties**

**Au service des enfants et des adolescents ayant une incapacité physique
 ainsi que des difficultés associées au niveau du développement et de l'apprentissage**

January 7, 2000

To Whom It May Concern:

Melissa Klingenberg has made a proposal for a qualitative research project investigating the use of mental skills training when the presence of a physical disability exists with a child in the family. The mental skills training will be incorporated through an adaptation of Terry Orlick's "Feeling Great" programme.

In discussion with Ruth Koch-Schulte, Executive Director of the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre, regarding the nature of this research project, the proposal was accepted and permission was given for the participation of a family in the School programme.

Melissa has completed an O.C.T.C. Confidentiality Form.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely

Jeanie Hicks

Jeanie Hicks
 Principal

Appendix - B

Example of a Session Handout

1. Jelly Belly

Point: When you are worried or stressed your heart beats faster and you breathe in and out faster. When you slow down your breathing or breathe from your belly (diaphragm breathing), you relax. Most great athletes and singers do Jelly Belly breathing even when they are running or singing because it helps them to relax.

How did you feel doing Jelly Belly? Did you feel tense or relaxed?

When could you use Jelly Belly? Could you do it to feel better if you are worried, or to relax if you are tense?

2. Floating on Clouds

Point: When you imagine peaceful, quiet, special places, or pretend you are doing something very relaxing, like floating on clouds, it is a great way to relax.

Can you tell us what it was like to float on a cloud. What did it feel like, what were you doing, what did you see?

3. Umbalakiki

Point: We can sometimes get rid of bad feelings or worries looking for a highlight, by doing something happy, or by putting our worries away somewhere- like in a tree, or in a jar, or in an envelope.

What did the story on the tape talk about? What was the voice saying? Probe for details

How could you use what you heard? Probe for an example of when and how Tree-it could be used.

4. Laughing

Point: Laughing is a good way of taking away stress or tension and feeling better. Have you ever laughed a lot? What made you laugh?

Appendix - C

Life Time Zone Question and Answer Sheet

MOM

LIFE TIME ZONES

84

time for me (personal space)

one-on-one time with Adam

- after school (homework time or sitting on couch watching TV)
- weekends (outside)

time alone with spouse

time for family unit together

- out for dinner

time for Adam to play with other children

- Cousins come over for visits
- School
- Caregiver has other children

DAD

LIFE TIME ZONES

85

time for me (personal space)

one-on-one time with Adam

- After school until Bed.
- Friday night special time
- Sundays

time alone with spouse

- after Adam's bedtime

time for family unit together

Sat + Sundays
Sundays

time for Adam to play with other children

School

Bedgolds

Extended family - cousins, we have frequent family gatherings.

Appendix - D
Interview Transcripts

1. Session 5

March 11, 2000

With the family: Dad, Mom and Adam

Me- Did you take that package that I gave you at school? Did you take it home?

Adam- Ahhh yah

Me- Yah. Did you listen to the tape?

Adam- Mmm not yet

Mom- No I was away all week

Me- Okay

Mom- So that puts things pretty tight for daddy eh?

Adam- Yah

Dad- But we had some good stuff happen this week eh Adam?

Me- Did you have some highlights this week?

Adam- A few

Me- A few (I was sitting on the couch beside Adam and he had started to play with my hair and was a bit distracted from the questions)

Laughing

Mom- What a little Romeo eh?

Caregiver- What are you suppose to tell her? Do you remember?

Mom- What about her hair?

Caregiver- What do girls like to hear about their hair?

Adam- Nice hair!

Me- Thanks

Laughing

Mom- Mommy has her hair short because Adam used to play with my hair all the time and it used to drive me Crazy.

Me- You like long hair do ya. To play with it like this

Adam- Yah

Mom- It is so funny cause one time we went to go to a friends place and their son brought a girlfriend who's hair was blond and it was long down to her lower back And all he (Adam) could do was sit across from the dinning table and just sit there and go (gazing longingly)... and you could just tell his fingers were dying to touch the hair.

Laughing

Mom- Something about hair eh? Good ol dolly your favourite friend.. What is with her hair? What do you like about dolly's hair?

Adam- Ahh I get to play with it.

Me- So you had fun stuff happen this week Dad said. What fun stuff did you guys do?

Adam- Well I got to go out and get the mail today.

Mom- Yep that was one of the fun things. What else did you do? All week ... Was there things that happened while mommy was away?

Adam- While I can tell you something.... I can tell you not much.

Me- Not much happened while mom was away? I don't believe that?

Dad- What did Your teacher send home?
Adam- Well...
Dad- What did we work on this week?
Adam- Homework.
Mom- Now can you tell us about the big numbers? You were telling me on the telephone and I was so happy tell me about those big numbers you know.
Adam- Oo okay..... Ahhh..... Okay
Mom- Okay lets hear it.
Adam- Zero ahhh plus a hundred equals I guess a hundred
Mom- Very good can you tell me some more of them?
Adam- Sixty six plus zero equals sixty six.
Mom- Very good those are big big numbers
Me- Wow
Adam- eighty eight plus eighty eight
Mom- eighty eight plus eighty eight whoo yah
Adam-.. ahhh zero
Mom- Yes
Adam- equals eighty eight
Mom- Very good and what else happened this week? Mommy was very proud too this week because?
Adam- because.....
Mom- Who came over to visit you when mommy was gone?
Adam- grandma
Mom- Yah and what did you do with grandma?
Adam- homework
Mom- Very good.. And what did grandma do while she was here? Why did grandma come over?
What did grandmamma do?
Adam- she stayed for supper, and after supper and she made us the supper
Mom- That's right
Adam- Maybe you could re-a-cord that on the thing!
Mom- It is already recording you... it is already listening to you
Adam- Maybe we could hear it then
laughing
Me- You know what... after we are all done I will rewind it and we can listen to it
Mom- Cool
Adam- I think that I might say that highlight was a huge one
Mom- What highlight was a huge one?
Adam- The homework one
Mom- Ya the homework one with daddy with grand ma or what?
Adam- with grandma
Mom- Ya
Me- Did you do math homework? Adding numbers?
Adam- Ahhh yep

Me- That is excellent and you took it back to school the next day?

Adam- Ahhh yes I did because my teacher always wants to see it?

Me- And was she happy with what you had done?

Adam- Ahhh yes

Me- What did she say to you?

Adam- She always writes good work because I do the right answers you know....so ahhh that is one of the highlights.

Me- That is a good highlight.

Adam- That is a long one

Mom- Ya that is a long one... wasn't there something that happened for daddy and that was kinda good?

Adam- Ya that was kinda good anyway

Mom- And wasn't there something that daddy could celebrate when grandmamma came over?

Did he have some good news?

Adam- Ah probably I guess.

Me- What was it? Do you remember?

Pause

Dad- Who's the boss?

Adam- Daddy's the boss at work now.

Me- Yah is that good news?

Adam- yah the boss.....

Mom- What does the boss mean, like your the boss what does it mean.

Adam- Somebody who tells you what to do.

Mom- Right and are you the boss at the house, sometimes?

Adam- Ahhh yah

Mom-.laughing... and what was the big highlight today? This morning what did you do this morning? Do you remember it? For the first time in the bathroom... you got to use the

Adam- Shower stall

Dad- did it leak?

Adam- ahhh It used to leak but that time it did not.... maybe we could listen to that?

Mom- Yah we will listen to it afterwards... we'll let Melissa ask you some questions okay?

Me- Did you listen to any of the other things on your tape this week?

Adam- Not really because it was a busy week, I didn't have time to listen to it though

Me- With all that homework, my goodness, I can't imagine how you would and a celebration...

Adam- Ah yes

Dad- But we didn't have to switch channels this week did we bud?

Adam- We didn't have to switch channels once this week!

Mom- What about relaxing... I noticed you were touching your belly button their (Adam had been touching his belly button off and on throughout our discussion and seeing if he could get his had to rise while we were talking)for a minute.

Adam- yes

Mom- to do Jelly Belly

Adam- yes
Mom- did you have to do any of that?
Adam- ahhh no
Mom- you haven't looked at any of those pictures of those cats that look umm rather upset
Adam- yah
Mom- did you have to look at that this week while mommy was gone?
Adam- yes I did.
Mom- oh you did
Me- When did you look at them? Do you remember?
Adam-
Me- were you upset that day?
Adam- umm kind of
Mom- can you think of why you did? What made you upset? And after looking at the pictures did you...
Adam- Because you weren't there
Mom- he he that is a good reason I like that reason
M so you looked at the cats and said I feel like this cat?
Adam- yes
Me- or you thought that in your head?
Adam- I thought that in my head.
Me- and then did you do anything different did you think differently or did you talk to mommy on the phone and then look at the cats again?
Adam- Umm yes and I watched a bit of movie and did homework and umm watched some more of the movie.
Me- that made you feel better
Adam- yes
Me- yes Ok
Adam- lets listen to that in there (tape).
Mom- yes it is listening to you alright
Me- ok Adam I know we have talked about this before many times can you, into the microphone cause it likes to hear what you say, can you tell me again what relaxation is? How you relax and what does that mean?
Adam- ahhh well much of it means that you don't do as much that you don't get hyper sometimes because Gerry has a dog that is really very hyper
Me- and it is not very relaxed?
Adam- no
Me- What word would you use to describe the dog?
Adam- I would describe hyper
Me- hyper, stressed
Adam- he kinda is
Me- does he need to do jelly belly?
Adam- maybe
Mom- he can't do jelly belly Maybe he should find his belly eh?
Adam- maybe he should find his belly

Mom- what should he do honey if he finds his belly?

Adam- well if he doesn't find his belly he (doesn't think what he is doing) [not heard]

Mom- he doesn't what

Adam- he doesn't think what he is doing

Mom- he doesn't think what he is doing yes

Adam- yes (not understood words.....)

Me- I missed that?

Dad- don't worry about it.

Mom- you have to speak clearly (Adam) because the words are hard to hear on the microphone... speak very clearly.

Adam- ahhh

Mom- so are you finished telling us what it means babe?

Adam- ahhh yep

Me- yes good thank you. When are times when you like to feel relaxed?

Adam- umm well on the day that I feel like it

Me- ok what about when you are in bed, before bed do you like to feel relaxed?

Adam- ahhh yes

Me- yes

Adam- like on Friday nights

Me- Friday night, that is a good night for you?

Mom- what do you do on Friday nights?

Adam- I lie on the couch that is a real highlight
laughing

Mom- you betcha

Me- thumbs up eh

Mom- yep thumbs up for that one

Me- after school do you do that?

Adam- only on a Friday night

pause

Adam- that makes me very busy on a Friday night.

Mom- yes it does when you are lying on the couch hey what are you playing? Couch.. Couch

Adam- potato

Mom- right

Me- ohhh that is a great name for it you feel like a big sack of potatoes do you

Adam- cause I go (act out)

Mom- potato

laughing

Adam- then I go like....(act out)

Mom- gotta be light honey, gotta be light

Me- gentle. Okay I have another question for you. It is going to take you a bit to think about. I have been here for five weeks can you believe that, this many (show fingers), one, two three four five....wow eh..... what have you liked the most, what do you remember doing?

Adam- I don't remember much

Mom- laugh

Me- can you think of one thing
Adam- laugh
Mom- what have you... sweetheart we've been working on a lot of things with Melissa. What is it that we are doing?
Adam- we are doing.....ahhh.....
Mom- what did she give you?
Adam- a tape
Mom- yes and what else that you get to look at?
Adam- a book
Mom- right, and do you remember using it?
Adam- mmmmmmm not much
Me- is that the truth
Laughing
A lot of laughing!
Mom- do you remember listening to someone else that laughs?
Laughing
Mom- you know what I noticed that you were touching your belly button, why were you touching your belly button?
Laughing
Mom- how come you were touching your belly button
Adam- I don't know
laughing
Mom- what are you practising. What are you practising? What are you practising? What is it called?
Laughing
Adam- nothing
Mom- Nothing? Remember when you lie on the bed and you listen to the tape darling?
Adam- no I don't
laughing
Me- why don't you ask mom if she remembers? You ask mom
laughing
Mom- yes, ask me so that I can talk into the micro phone okay?
Adam- no
Mom- ohh I know what the answer is.
Adam- you can use this
Mom- I can use it
Adam- no you can't
Mom- ohh okay because I know what the answer is, so I need to use the microphone, cause I know that when I lie in bed and listen to that tape I am listening to something and I have to and it helps me calm down, so can I tell the story or do you know it?
Adam- umm
Mom- do you want to? Do you want to tell the story? We lie in bed and we turn the tape on and you are lying in bed. What is the tape all about?
Adam- I think relaxation ha ha

laughing

Me- I think you have jumping beans in your tummy today?

Mom- I'm going to give the answer, can I give the answer? Mommy is concentrating and she knows what the answer is. Okay listen honey. When mommy lies in bed and I'm listening to the radio and the tape and it tells me what to do with my hands and I touch my belly button we are listening to what? What are we listening to? Do you remember?

Adam- (Un-understood word)

Mom- uhh yes we are listening to jelly belly, mommy is going to answer it then:
(into the microphone)

Mom- I am going to answer it we listen to.....

Adam- the tape

Mom- laugh okay sweetie lets try and do this... let`s try and answer the question

Adam- Umm jelly belly

Mom- and we also listen to another one

Adam- The changing channels

Mom- Very Good

Dad- And what about that one that makes you laugh all the time? It is called laughing

Mom- I think you sounded just like that girl who was laughing

Me- I should tape you sometime. ohh we are taping you. We will have to listen to it later. So when you listen to Jelly Belly and you are trying to relax what do you need to do with your hands?

Adam-. Hm Mmm do this

Me- yes put it on your belly button and what do you have to do to your finger? What do you have to try and make it do?

Adam-. I didn't want to do that?

Me- you didn't want to do that you don't have to, but you can tell me how to do it. So you want to make it sink down and how do you do that? Do you hold your breath? Or do you breath?

Or do you wiggle your toe? Or do you blink your eye? Which one?

Adam- I am going to need to make a choice on that

Mom- Do you remember what it tells you to do while you are touching your belly button.

Adam- I don't really know that. I don't usually do that any more

Me- no. What about changing channels?

Laughing

Me- you are being goofy

laughing

Mom- what about changing channels honey? Do you listen to that one?

Adam- IIII I do

Me- Okay I have a different question for you. Remember that I came to visit you at school this week?

Adam- ahhh yes

Me- yes, do you ever think about changing channels or doing relaxation at school?

Adam- No I might use the tape

Me- ooh just

laughing

Me- just when you have the tape eh

Adam-I don't even do it at school, because I might use it

Mom- do you think you could think about changing channels without the tape, or do you think you need the tape to help you change channels?

Adam-mmm need the tape

Me- okay.. I think you have done it before without the tape. Haven't you with mom and dad reminding you: Adam gotta change the channel.

Dad- How do we change the channel?

(Adam shows with fingers)

Dad- yep

Mom- that is very good

Me- Cool that is a good move

Adam- when I move my fingers

Me- that is a good idea good job

Dad- do you ever stop to snap your finger at school?

Adam- to get their attention sometimes

Dad- oh but not for you to change channels... when you snap your finger

(Adam snaps finger repeatedly)

pause

Me- pretty good Do you want to ask mom and dad a question through your microphone for me?

Adam- What do you do?

Me-. Whispers to Adam

Adam- Do you do Jelly Belly changing channels?

Mom- who do you want to answer first.

Adam- you

Mom- mommy, okay when mommy gets frustrated and I don't want to get mad I don't change channels quickly. I leave the room... ha but I try.

Me- she changes locations

Mom- I try to change channels

Adam- how come you leave the room?

Mom- cause that helps me calm down and then when I calm down I come back in. Just like changing channels

Adam- (Unrecognizable question)

Mom- what is that? We can't hear you. Your tired of answering eh

Adam-Do you change channels dad?

Dad- oh yes I do it a lot like mommy. When I usually get annoyed I say "gotta take a break" and I try to think of happy things

Mom- there you go there is your answer

pause

Adam-(unrecognizable words)

Mom- now what about your caregiver? We have the tape going and we don't know who your caregiver is. Who is your caregiver?

Pause

Mom- Adam.. Who is your caregiver?

Adam- what she does to you

Mom- what she does to you? Is that an answer? Your getting tired aren't ya

Dad- yes

Me- you did really well Adam

pause Adam moves over to mommy

Me- yes do you want to listen to it

Adam- yes

Me- Do you have any other things you want to say

Adam- no

Me- no. Okay

2. Session 10- Adam

May 6, 2000

With Adam alone

Me- Okay Adam I am going to ask you a few questions and you are going to have to think about them okay. We have talked about all these things before, alright. Remember that one time we talked about fear and you tried to explain to me how ah the good guys on the starwars film go to the bad side? Do you remember we talked about that and we talked about fear?

Adam- yes I can

Me- remember I asked you then do we sometimes ourselves have fear? What kind of things might we be afraid of?

Adam-.ahhh

pause

Adam-ahhh, mmmmm

Mom- what makes you scared honey?

Adam- I'm trying to think

pause

Mom- I can think of one thing and then you can think of another. I remember when we went to the hospital and what happened? You didn't want to go some place because you were afraid.

Do you remember?

Adam- yes

Mom- do you want to tell us about it?

Adam- (Fumbling with tape player)

Me- Do you remember that we talked about stress and relaxation?

Adam- yes

Me- I thought you do. What kinda things make us stressed?

Pause

Me- not sure. Okay well then what kinda things help us relax?

Adam- (Unrecognizable)

Me- We can talk into there (microphone) and then later we can listen to it. So let's think about relaxation for a minute Adam. What kinda things help us to feel better and relax?

Pause

Me- did we do anything together that helps us remember what it is like to relax?

Pause (parents leave room)

Adam- why did you go mom?

Pause

Adam- yep

Me- yes we did, what did we do?

Adam- umm

Me- remember we laid on the floor sometimes and we did some special breathing.

Adam- (breathing)

Me- what were we trying to do? We're we trying to make ourselves feel better?

Pause

Me- Adam?

Pause

Me- were we trying to make ourselves feel better?

Adam- ahhh

Me- sometimes eh? Remember the tape I gave you that you play in your big tape player?

Adam- yes

Me- when do you play it?

Adam- most of the time

Me- most of the time when? At night?

Pause

Me- can you press the buttons by yourself on your tape player?

Adam- umm no because I am usually lying in bed

Me- is it good to lie down and listen to the tape?

Adam- yes

Me- yes. What are your favourite ones on the tape

Adam- their really secrets

Me- their secrets

Adam- I said their secretish

Me- Do you like Jelly Belly? Eh

Adam- yes

Me- yes what about floating on clouds?

Adam- hmmm I do

Me- yes what do you think about when you float on clouds?

Adam- hmmm not really nothing because I'm usually asleep by then.

Me- you are usually asleep by then, what about when you are listening to Jelly Belly what do you think about?

Adam- I am usually asleep by then too.

Me- ohh Okay. Did you listen to quiet lake, the one with the lake and the birds and the water?

Adam- yes

Me- did you like that one?

Adam- umm I am usually asleep by then.

Me- they put you to sleep!

Adam- yes

Me- What about changing channels?

Adam- umm yah

Me- You like that one don't ya?

Adam- (mumbling)

Me- It helps you go to sleep? Remember when we listened to the sounds? Do you remember that?

Was that fun and we had to guess what sound were?

Adam- yah umm that keeps me awake

Me- Yes that one keeps you awake. What does it help you do?
Adam- not really nothing
Me- does it help you think, remember
pause
Me- sometimes eh?
Adam- yes not all the time
Me- not all the time
pause
Me- I am glad that I could come and learn some new things with you? Are you glad I came?
Adam- yes
Me- yes
Adam- I heard this is your last day though.
Me- yes. what do you think about that?
Adam- ahhh pretty good because that would give us some time to get our house organized.
Me- yes you feel like your house isn't organized?
Adam- no it is not our basement is a mess
Me- it certainly is and we can't go down there now can we?
Adam- no it is too messy you should see the mess, it is too messy to go down there right now.
Me- Right. Can you think of a highlight that you have had this week?
Adam- the new TV
Me- the new TV yah that is a good one isn't it? That is a big one? So did you go with dad to pick it out?
Adam- the whole family
Me- the whole family
Adam- yes
Me- can you remind me and tell me what a family is again?
Adam- in this
Me- yes you can talk in there
Adam- Ahh it is when you... why do you sometimes forget?
Me- I do, I sometimes forget. And I know that you have a very good memory.
Adam- It is when people go together and pick out some stuff or something like that
Me- yes, who is in your family?
Adam- My dad, my mom and me.
Me- what is special about your family?
Adam- I have more aunts and uncles
Me- is that special?
Adam- yes
Me- yes, what do you like most about your family?
Adam- most about my family ahhh that we sometimes go out together.
Me- What do you think is one stressful thing about your family
Adam- nothing stressful in my family
Me- No it is all happy all the time?
Adam- yes

Me- yes is there something that your family is afraid of?

Pause

Adam- Tiggers

Me- Tiggers? Are there tiggers around here?

Adam- in the forest

Me- tigers

Adam- tigers yes

Me- wow have you seen one?

Adam- wolves

Me- wolves yes that is what they are called I think

Adam- vicious dogs

Me- Yes I would be scarred of those too.

Adam- they are like a vicious pet

Me- they are aren't they.

Pause...

Me- do you like it that mom and dad listen to the tapes with you, listen to Jelly Belly?

Adam- yes maybe we could listen to it

Me- oh we gotta waitis it good that mom and dad listen to the tape with you?

Adam- yes

Me-yes are you glad that they know what you do?

Adam- yes

Me- are you glad that you do it together?

Adam- yes because that I know is choice to do it with the whole family around.

Me- you like your family don't you?

Adam- yes

M and it is good to do things with them right?

Adam- yeeep

Me- Are you glad that I cam and visited you at your house instead of at school?

Adam- At school was fine as if you dropped of a tape its okay. but if you don't come on Saturdays you could always drop it off at my house or something.

Me- Did you like that I came to the house and hung out with mom and dad and you and your caregiver?

Adam- yes

Me- Yes we had fun didn't we?

Adam- I hear this is your last day though.

Me- Can you tell me one thing you learned?

Adam-yes

Me- or one thing you liked that I did with you?

Adam-ahhh not really much left to tell.

Me- One thing though... what is one thing that we like to do together?

Adam- listen to tapes or something

Me- yes and what was your favourite tape to listen to?

Adam- ahhh I learned how to do star trek kinda keeps me awake

Me- you liked the star trek one didn't you? It reminded you of Star Wars.

Adam- umm actually it reminds me of Star Trek

Me- ohh Star Trek , the TV show

Adam- yes

Me-ohh well thank you very much

Adam- how do we listen to that?

Me- I have one more question for you. If you wanted to teach me one thing what would you tell me?

Adam- me somethings in my memory... the only thing I think about is my family

Me- okay that is good

Adam- if I was yours I would ...I would give you all that I remembered and more remembers. I would do that

Me- would ya?

Adam- But if anybody had something else to do I would let them do it if they were busy then they don't know that they are doing it is a little bit of work a problem, but so far it has been umm good. But in all this somebody is working or something, you gotta let them do that if you don't you'll get in big trouble and if guess what's going to happen? You are going to get into deep deep trouble.

Me- Do you think other little boys and girls would like to learn what you and I did?

Adam- yep

Me- yep

Adam- Just tell them-.. make a tape of them... record a tape of themselves

Me- that is the fun part?

Adam- yes

Me- little boys and girls like to do that?

Adam- yes. So you should do it with other kids. Record tapes

Me- and do you think I should put Jelly Belly on the tapes for those kids?

Adam- yes

Me- yes what about clouds?

Adam- yes

M what about changing channels

Adam- yes they would

Me- is it important for little kids to listen to that? What does it teach them?

Adam- to teach them how to relax

Me- kids like that don't they

Adam- yup don't go to kids that already know how to relax go to kids that don't know how to relax

Me- what kind of kids are those?

Adam- they were like me I couldn't

Me- and now can you?

Adam- yes

Me- yes that is great isn't it?

Adam- So you will have to teach the other kids that.... I would do that if I were you.

Me- and will that help them be more positive and see more highlights?

Adam- ahhh I If they know what you mean by highlights if their smart kids they will know

what highlights means and they will know what you are talking about so you'll have to be careful looking for other kids that don't know how to relax.

Me- What is a good way for me to teach them?

Adam- Here's a good way. If you let them do what they want to okay

Me- yes

Adam- and then once they are ready to do you, you'll fist they gotta get settled and then they are done doing their thing for a few minutes and then they start doing it.

Me- and that's how I need to do it?

Adam-yes, you teach them your way and they'll find out what you

Me- and then they will remember it?

Adam- ahhh yes they'll understand what highlights and stuff is

Me- okay What would you tell them a highlight is?

Adam- well if I were telling them, in this situation it would be telling them what you are going to do or something like that. Once you tell them what you are doing they will understand what you are talking about. If they don't understand you'll have to tell them

Me- again. Tell them again?

Adam- yes

Me-yes. do I tell them a highlight is something bad?

Adam- good

Me- something good that they think about in their day?

Adam- yes

Me- yes would you like to help me teach sometime?

Adam- I could now that I am smart

Me- yes you have learned it well haven't you?

Adam- so

Me- are you an expert?

Adam- Yes I been an expert in I've been for my life ever since I was born in London. I was born in London in 1992

M that is right and how old .. how many months were you when you were born?

Adam- one month

Me- Is there anything else that I should tell these kids?

Adam- there is not very much to tell them, in this situation I would say" yes there is but if you let them do their thing first then they will be settled more because they will know you are new to them. So the first day you have them let them do their thing first and then once their done their thing you can keep going on yer

Me- and then the next week I can do my thing? We'll remember what we did before?

Adam- yes just tell the other kid that your teaching, the new kid that you are teaching tell the boy that you are teaching him what a highlight is.

Me- and then how will that help him? How will I tell him it will help him?

Adam- Tell him in your way

Me- and what will make him..

Adam- My way is going to be sounding this

Me- oh I understand

Adam- My way is this

Me- okay

Adam- If you let the child know what he doing you will discover what the child is doing. If you don't discover it there is going to be a big problem

Me- that is for sure isn't it

Adam- If.... so it's your only choice to discover the child's possibility

Me- that is right. Did I discover Adam's possibility?

Adam- My possibility would be different then theirs. If their possibility is different that it would be sensitive that you would let the child know what he is doing. If they don't understand just tell them. So they know what you are doing and they know what you are up to. but if you don't tell them they won't understand what a highlight is.

Me- that is right. Did I tell you?

Adam- yes

Me- and did we discover what your possibilities were?

Adam- yes

Me- yes and what are your possibilities?

Adam- my possibilities are what we are talking about

Me- that's right.. That you are a smart kid

Adam- yes so just tell the kid what you are doing. If you don't...

Me- Then he won't get it

Adam- then he won't get it

Me- what about the moms and the dads what do they need to know?

Adam- the moms and the dads are going to be different. Their possibilities are... if a child is around and if you are teaching them what a highlight you must look into the child's possibilities. If you don't

Me- then you will miss it

Adam- yes

Me- and what about the moms and the dads how can they help

Adam- they tell you what the child's possibility is

Me- ohh the child doesn't tell me?

Adam- no

Me- no

Adam- they only know once you are new to them they don't know what is going to happen what you are going to do to them... sooo

Me- they need their parents to help them then?

Adam- yes

Me- oh I see

Adam-. Once you are new to a kid you must talk to the parents because the child knows that you are new to the child you are visiting to help them relax. If you don't look into the child's possibility ahhh then their is a big problem.

Me- and the parents help us in that, don't they? They help to make the child comfortable with the new person.

Adam- yes

Me- good job-. Well is their anything else?

Adam- not besides that

Me-.do you want to listen to it now?

Adam- yes

3. Session 10- Family

May 6, 2000

Family present: Mom, Dad, and Adam

Mom- so ahhh does it just stay there in the middle of the floor?

Adam- no I hold it and you talk into it, you'll have to come down here

Mom- really

Adam- yep

move to the floor

Mom- what about daddy?

Adam- you'll get a turn, daddy will get a turn, your caregiver will get a turn.

Mom- okay

Me- we will all get a turn right?

Adam- yes

Me- I am only going to ask one question and everyone can answer it if they want, how does that sound? A little different then when I talked to you. Does that sound okay?

Adam- yes

Me- alright so the first one is looking at the whole aspect of us together as a family unit and wanting to know if you thought that it was beneficial or important that I came here and did it with all the supports involved?

Mom- oh I think so There are often cases when you try and do things when the family is not all together and then you have to try and share the information with the other individual and it can get kinda lost. But doing it at home also makes things a bit more comfortable and confident probably even more relaxed in his own environment so that he can do the exercise.

Me- yep that is how you hold it

Mom- super

Me- good work

Mom- thanks helper

Me- In addition to that do you think that your individual participation was beneficial?

Mom- umm for each one of us, Dad or I, have taken on the role of lying with him when it comes to the evening and listening to the tapes with him. It becomes so relaxing that we fall asleep.

Dad- I think it was important that there was consistency because we keep the same strategy when we got upset we knew, or we just talked about this or that so to try that strategy as a family was good.

Me- you had the same language

Dad- umhm

Me- talked the same, and you all understood what was going on eh Adam?

Mom- and one person could relay it you know if we found out that one wasn't working and we wind up communicating that to each other. We would ask each other...(interrupted)

Adam- you have to talk into the microphone

Mom- okay so I would ask the question to daddy did you find that that was working better than the other and then we would discover yah one was working better than the other and then we would stick to it instead of thinking it'd change.

Adam had a physical jolt and a big sneeze

Mom- there goes my tea... bless you

he he

Mom- can you get a kleenex hon

Adam- what kinda tea?

Me- it is sneeze tea now

Mom- yah

he he

Mom- mommy had nuts and umm what else an herbal tea honey and it is probably why it made you sneeze.

Pause

Mom- are we still on

Me- yes okay perfect you are such a big help (to Adam)

Mom- and if your arm gets tired you can rest it on my knee there there we go

Me- that is handy What particular tools or resources , not sure how to call it because it is not... don't want to call it tools and resources because you don't have to use every single one of them, which ones did you find, and we may have only looked at them once or twice, but did you find them most helpful.

Mom- the book that you had. the scribbler in which he could relate the pictures with his feelings (phone rings) that we found. mind you Adam couldn't use the tool like we had anticipated but for him he found that a way to express his feelings although he could easily express it verbally he found it almost exciting to see the feelings through a picture.

Me- yes

Mom- caus Adam I think is very visual and as well the book for him was his so it was ownership.

Dad- and the same with the tapes to. but more so with the book
(Adam blows into the microphone)

Mom- sweetie did you want to go to the kitchen?

Adam- I want to teach

Mom- I know but mommy and daddy are talking on the tape and we are going to be hearing that nose and it won't help Melissa it will be interrupting our voices on the tape.

Dad- Do you want to play with that (a toy) bud?

Mom- yes cause you could go in the kitchen. Mom could send you and your caregiver in the kitchen while mom and daddy have this discussion.

Adam- no

Me- One of the things I noticed was making a tape of his own was really a lot more useful than having all these.

Mom- oh yah

Dad- umhm

Me- the favourite ones on a tape.

Dad- I think that's resource and good resource because some are used more than others and that will probably change form child to child

Me- it would change from stage of life to stage of life too

Dad- yes exactly

Me- which is why we are calling them resources because they adapt with and for the child. Once we learn there is no need to keep going over them.

Mom- and that is the one thing with Adam is that you introduce something and he becomes familiar with it right away and if you try and change him and introduce him into something else too soon you have already lost it, so you have to continue on with one thing for a little while and then you can make the change and um Jelly Belly for instance has stayed because it was the first one that he had listened to has stayed throughout the whole ten weeks and he still talks about it. He is more familiar with Jelly Belly then for instance Quiet Lake. And floating on Clouds is the other one.

Dad- for him to interpret them and the other ones probably you know we will just keep trying and there will be times for the others

Mom- magic sword is starting.

Me- you had mentioned to me that you would like to listen sometime again to the star trek

Adam- yes

Me- can you describe any changes that might have happened either individually or as a whole family since we started?

Mom- while we're lying on the bed
laugh

Mom- If I look at in the sense where it is brought the unit together at a special moment for him, which is his resting time, so it is almost a mommy or daddy or all of us can we all lie together and listen to the tapes and in a good sense it makes him calm down as well as us calm down at the end of the day we are all exhausted we realize we have a lot of things to do still, like we have to get supper or lunch ready and we have to get clothes ready, but at the same time it brings the unit together and it actually calms you down and makes you relax.

Laughing

Adam- Can I go to the washroom?

Mom- What do you think hon?

Dad- oh I agree, I agree I think it also makes us a little more aware during stressful times we actually think about it to and we kinda remind ourselves and we remind him to use some of the methods to calm down and to think about it. It just kinda adds another dimension to think about which is good.

Dad takes Adam to the washroom

Mom- and I think with Adam it is his ahhh at school or in an environment that he doesn't have control over what is happening he still has a hard time fitting in changing channels or the how to calm down and take a deep breath and that is still difficult for him to do yet and yet you know when you are trying to talk to him when he is stressed he is trying very hard to bring it in, but it is difficult. You can see his gears working, but it is not going to work in that environment yet and he just tells you I'm not ready for that yet.

Me- And it is helpful to if he can learn it in a safest place which is presumably where you live with your family then you can learn it there and be confident with it.

Mom- Hopefully, that is our goal anyway to be able to take it with you into those other places

Me- umhm

Mom- Especially now that he is eight years old and there are bigger things that are ahead

Me- oh yes

Mom- I think that is why right now the comfort zone is that bed time cause that is the quiet time, that is the time to tone down. The rest of it is a busy time and he has other things on his mind and so do we, but then it brings us together.

Adam returns to the room

Mom- Now the one thing we can't do right now is take the time out to read the books the resources that you gave us to read and it is all a matter of trying to

Dad- make time

Mom- and I think that that has always been the hardest. For a child that physically challenged your arms and your legs as a mom and dad become eight instead of four for both of us and I think that is the biggest challenge that we find and perhaps bringing in those times when we can all lie down and listen to Jelly Belly or Floating on Clouds- It sure makes you realize that we all have to tone down and realize you can have control, that you can make it better, you have to make it better

Adam making silly sounds

Me- I'm sure you can sometimes feel, I know I do working in the field that like you say you have ten other arms that you have to be and some days you can't even stop and consider what your hands and feet are to do

Mom- oh exactly

Me- and it is good to know that there is a space, even how small it could be to just stop together and however long it is to be refreshed by that.

Mom- and Dad- umhm

Mom- now what he has wound up doing is not just having us listen to two at the night time now it has turned into four or five he he

Dad- ha he is trying to extend the time

Mom- but they are all his four favourites so what we're finding is that we are just going to have to put those four on one tape. instead of getting up and changing and trying to find that one

Me- so those four would be Jelly Belly. Clouds,

Adam- yes

Mom- quiet lake

Me- oh quiet lake

Mom- yes quiet lake and which other one

Adam- magic wand

Dad- magic sword?

Adam- magic wand not magic sword

Mom- your right

Me- that is great. Have the resources aided in increasing coping, I know that we have just talked about it, but rather for a general coping like family life or things that are special here?

Mom- while I think for Adam and for bring us

Dad- it is something we are going to have to work on I would say it is starting

Mom- yes

Me- Ten weeks is just a small window into which to change

Mom- well you have asked us those questions like when is it time for you and when is it time for us and when is it time for Adam and we go ahhh yeah when you answer those questions

you realize that we don't have much time he he

Me- and it isn't something to get down about it is just the realization of what life is

Dad- yep exactly

Me- and what your responsibilities are.

Adam- is it recording

Mom- it sure is

Dad- yes

Mom- you are the closest one to it so you are going to be the loudest

Me- and it helps you because you are pulled in so many different directions it helps to actually take and inventory a mental inventory of where attention is being given.

Dad- exactly

Mom- Adam you are sounding like a monkey

Me- the last question I have is do you think that this type of thing that we have done should be incorporated or expressed to other professionals or other families?

Mom- I would think so. Have you approached the school?

Me- Jennie has asked me to wait until after we had finished and the possibility exists to either do a parent workshop or a little bit of classroom work with the kids and to maybe just teach one thing as opposed to overloading

Mom- and ah there is a psychology area there although I find that it tends to be more educational as far as we are concerned we have only had what you can do given Adam's level of understanding is. But this is different because we learn how to handle stress and most of us can learn to handle

Dad- yes and we just adapt it that is all

Caregiver- I think it would help some of the teachers to know about changing channels and stuff like that so that when Adam is stressed out they can say something that might trigger something.

Me- so that they are talking the same language.

Dad- oh it might be something for the school to consider, I know Adam's first two years there were really heavy into the social skills and that and how to handle complex situations or stressful situations and this type of resource will be good at that time to.

Mom- cause there is a time frame in the school when they do have a quiet time and it is after lunch and so the teachers found that that was an important time although some of the kids they couldn't get to have a quiet time and understand it, but I would think that just listening to the persons voice is going to calm them down anyway, like no matter what he says you know. He could be saying cut the grass and it is calming laughing

Mom- yes I think it would be valuable for the school and I think the parents to. First I would almost bring it into the school that would be my suggestion. Get the teachers to consider the quiet time and in that time if they wanted to teach the children how to learn how to control stress and then get it into the parents, if the school finds that they can use it well then perhaps the parents can to.

Me- Jennie asked me to set up a meeting after we were all finished just to kinda see how it had gone and if it was a good process to go through or if Adam enjoyed it.

Mom- my gut feeling is that if you did go through it and ask the parents first which is still

valid, it is probably the right way to go verses going through the school first, but my feeling is that kids at the school want to be bringing information to the parents. That sort of makes you want to ask... Oh you did hee oh what did you do? And if they are curious enough then you could start at home.

Me- that was really great and I appreciate so much your availability for taking out Saturday for a couple hours, because I know that weeks are crazy

Mom- and it worked out good that it was during the winter time, if it was through the summer time it would be a lot harder

Dad- yes we seem to be running around a lot more

Me- and you want to be outside

Mom- exactly

Dad- oh we probably would have done this outside

M which would have been just as well to

Mom- yes

Adam- so is this your last time?

Mom- yes but she might come visit

Dad- yes

Mom- maybe when she comes to visit we will finally have our basement back together

Me- is there anything else that I haven't touched on. Pros or Cons or coming every week

Mom- the one thing I found is that there are times when you just can't get his attention

Dad- umhm

Mom- and no matter how soft or calming or relaxing that tape is you just can't do it.

Me- it is all timing, individual timing to

Dad- yep exactly

Me- and it was helpful for me to realize that at the beginning just in my own self, I can't just snap and alright

Dad- yes switch channels

Me- from one extreme to another it is hard enough to do that.

Mom- and I am sure that it is like that with most kids, but Adam's attention span can be really long at one time or really short at another which makes it hard that was the only thing that I found was the biggest challenge.

Dad- whether he was going to be into it

Mom- and keeping him into it

Dad- whether he was going to be in or not mentally

Adam interjects to ask again about it being my last time

I decided to stop and to let Adam open a gift that I had brought for him