

# AUTISM & Special Needs Seminar

November 10, 2018 - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Moraine Valley Community College  
Building M, Conference and Business Center  
9000 W. College Pkwy.  
Palos Hills, IL 60465-0937



**\*KEYNOTE SPEAKER** **Room 2 + 3**  
**Dr. Val L. Scaramella-Nowinski** **10:00am-12:00pm**  
**Pediatric Neuropsychology Diagnostic and Treatment Center**  
**Neuropsychology Autism Initiative**

Dr. Nowinski is committed to children, their health, learning and development. She has worked as a clinician and researcher regarding pediatric brain-behavior development for greater than 35 years. Dr. Nowinski's doctoral research was titled "Systemic Analysis: A Neuropsychological Investigation Of The Psychological Structure And Cerebral Organization Of Mental Processes". Dr. Nowinski has been deeply involved in developing Neurosystems Biology understanding of child brain development and learning. She founded and directs the Pediatric Neuropsychology Diagnostic and Treatment Center and Neuropsychology Autism Initiative. Dr. Nowinski has spoken at multiple local, national and international conferences, often an invited speaker/keynote and has authored numerous child brain development papers. She is a member of multiple professional organizations including the International Neuropsychology Society, National Academy of Neuropsychology, American Psychological Association-Neuropsychology Division, Society of Pediatric Psychology Division, The Illinois Psychological Association and Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology, among others. She is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of Advanced Brain Technologies. Dr. Nowinski is actively involved in health and education policy regarding child development and learning, especially early age intervention. Dr. Nowinski is blessed with her family - her husband and four children. All are involved in professions that espouse ideals that promote health and well-being. Their six grandchildren are very special joys!



**Drina Madden, M.A., C.A.S.** **Room 2 + 3**  
**Neurodevelopmental Specialist** **10:00am-12:00pm**  
**Pediatric Neuropsychology Diagnostic and Treatment Center**

Since her initial graduation from college, Drina's path has been filled with children, families and child-related professionals. Her mission has always been to improve the quality of life of children and their families through direct contact or sharing my knowledge with affiliated professionals. Hers has been an exciting journey as she consistently pursues broader ranges of current knowledge and practice as a life-long learner, teacher and advocate. My experience includes: 35 years of teaching 0-6 child development at the college level with emphasis on whole child development and presenter to various professional groups re: child development, autism, dyslexia, attention disorders, etc.; 30 years as an evaluator and consultant with preschools concerning environments & special needs children; 25 years as a neurodevelopmental specialist

working with children of all ages; 14 years as administrator of a nonprofit Montessori preschool; Have also taught preschool and elementary school, led parent rap session, and been a family counselor. Membership and consultant support in numerous professional organizations - especially - American Montessori Society, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Chicago Metropolitan Association for the Education of Young Children, and International Dyslexia Society.



**Dr. Jennifer Palmer, Ph.D** **Room 2**  
**Advocate Children's Hospital** **1:00pm-2:15pm**

Dr. Jen Palmer is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in Illinois. She completed her graduate education at Midwestern University and specializes in assessing and treating individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental concerns. She works as a clinical psychologist within the Advocate Autism Treatment Program, which is part of the Advocate Medical Group Developmental Pediatrics department at Lutheran General Hospital. Within this program, she provides parent training and behavior therapy to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. Additionally, she collaborates frequently with patients' school teams and other providers to ensure comprehensive behavioral support.



**Ms. April Hall** **Room 2**  
**Advocate Children's Hospital** **1:00pm-2:15pm**

April Hall is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Illinois. She completed her Master's Degree at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology with a concentration in Latino Mental Health. She is practicing as a bilingual, bicultural behavior therapist at Advocate Children's Hospital, Illinois Masonic- Pediatric Developmental Center. April specializes in working with families of patients on the autism spectrum and children with behavioral and emotional needs. She uses a variety of modalities which incorporate best practices from, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Play Therapy, Psychoeducation and Applied Behavior Analysis techniques. April's approach emphasizes the importance of culture when providing treatment.



**Ann L. Rigby, MSW, LSCW, BCN** **Room 3**  
**Director, The Neuroconnection** **2:30pm-3:30pm**

Ann L. Rigby, LCSW, BCN is the founder and director of The Neuroconnection, a Neurofeedback clinic that specializes in addressing neuropsychological symptoms with Connectivity Guided Neurofeedback. Ms. Rigby has used Neurofeedback since 2001 and has over twenty-five years' experience as a supervisor and psychotherapist in mental health settings. She is President of Board of Directors for the Autism Society of Illinois.



**Amy Schellekens** **Room 4**  
**Gwendolyn J. Sterk and the Family** **1:00pm-2:00pm**  
**Law Group, P.C.**

Amy Schellekens is an attorney who currently focuses her practice in the area of family law as well as supporting families with children who have special needs. Amy's passion is to assist clients during what is likely one of their most trying times. She appears in court to handle status calls, motions, arguments and trials. Amy has experience working with various agencies for the benefit of children. In addition, her background in business makes her a unique asset in navigating all aspects of a client's case. Amy has five years of experience in family law and joined our team at Gwendolyn J. Sterk and The Family Law Group P.C. in 2015. Amy is very excited to be a first time speaker at the Special Needs Seminar this 2016 year. Please stop by to listen to her speak about Family law as it relates to children with special needs. Our number one priority is to be an effective advocate for our clients, while moving toward the goal of an equitable resolution. In some instances, that resolution is reconciliation. In other cases, the resolution is divorce or a related action requiring the parties to separately move forward with their lives. In our role as counsel, we encourage our clients to conduct themselves in a manner which maintains their integrity during a very difficult and emotional time.



**Adriana Schmidt, MA, BCBA** **Room 2**  
**Autism Specialist** **3:45pm-4:45pm**  
**Easterseals Comprehensive Autism Services**

Adriana Schmidt (MA, BCBA), has been working with individuals with Autism and related disorders since 2008. Adriana began her studies with a Bachelors in Special Education from Northern Illinois University and continued on to receive her Masters in Education as a Reading Specialist from Saint Xavier University and her BCBA recertification from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Adriana has held the role of Paraprofessional, Special Education Teacher and Instructional Specialist. She has successfully coached and trained teachers and paraprofessionals for over 2 years. In her tenure Adriana has found success in not only supervising students from accredited special education programs but supervising future behavior analysts and building data based instructional programs for struggling readers.



**Caroline Leonczyk, Ph.D** **Room 2**  
**Rush University Medical Center** **2:30pm-3:30pm**  
**Autism Assessment, Research, Treatment and Services**  
**(AARTS) Center**

Caroline Leonczyk, PhD, is a clinical psychology postdoctoral fellow at the AARTS Center. She completed her doctorate at the University of Alabama at Birmingham as a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental



**Michelle Cole** **Room 3**  
**Personal Vacation Advisor** **3:45pm-5:00pm**  
**Magical Vacation Planner**

I first started visiting Walt Disney World with my family as a child. I've grown up as Disney has expanded, and have enjoyed experiencing each new park and property. My love for Disney grew tremendously when I was fortunate to spend time as a Cast Member at the The Emporium in Magic Kingdom as part of the Walt Disney World College Program. That experience was one of the best decisions I've ever made and has been very influential. I met my husband while participating in the Walt Disney World College Program, and we've enjoyed making many memories with our two sons on many Disney vacations over the years. We have found vacationing at various Disney properties to be a haven, as we are the parents of a child with autism and multiple food allergies. Disney assists guests with all needs very well and provides an opportunity to truly "forget about your worries and your strife." I enjoy helping other families experience the same magic we've experienced.



**Colette Gillis, BCBA** **Room 3**  
**Autism Home Support** **1:00pm-2:15pm**

Colette has been a BCBA for a little more than 4 years now, but her experience in the field of ABA spans over a decade. She provided services to clients with autism from age 2 to 18 in both center and home-based environments. Colette found her passion for helping those on the spectrum and their families through her older brother who has autism. When not working, Colette dedicates herself to fostering dogs as they search for their forever home.

**CE, CEU's & CPDU's Available**

The cost is an additional \$10 per CEU or CPDU credit. See Moraine Valley Community College's booth for credit.

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\*all speakers are subject to change.