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Conference Will Highlight Advances in Autism Intervention and Treatment

Autism experts from around the world will gather at UC Santa Barbara next month for the 6th Annual International Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) Autism and Asperger's Conference.

Sponsored by UCSB's Koegel Autism Center, the conference will take place Thursday and Friday, September 19 and 20, at the campus's Corwin Pavilion. Open to the public, it will feature scholars, health care professionals, educators, and parents discussing autism, Asperger's syndrome, and cutting-edge intervention and treatment strategies.

"This year's conference will include PRT techniques for teaching every aspect of autism spectrum disorder, ranging from first words, to socialization, to social conversation, and across the age span from treatments for infants to employment strategies for adults," said Lynn Kern Koegel, clinical director of the Koegel Autism Center and the Broad Asperger Center.

Developed at UCSB, PRT is a protocol based on principles of positive motivation. Researchers have found that increasing children's participation in activities they enjoy -- and avoiding as much as possible those they do not -- can actually lessen the severity of autism spectrum disorder symptoms. Their work with infants was highlighted in the April issue of the Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions.

In addition to Lynn Koegel, presenters at the conference will include Robert Koegel, director of the Koegel Autism Center; Ty Vernon, director of the center's assessment clinic; and Grace Gengoux, clinical assistant professor at Stanford University's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research Program.

Additional information about the conference, including a complete schedule and registration details is available at <http://www.education.ucsb.edu/autism>.

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