



Who's New Member Spotlight

Kathy Kelchner

[Kelchner Education Consultants, LLC](#)

[Golden Child Resources](#)

Dallas, TX

Member since June 2008

Biography:

Kathy Kelchner has more than 25 years of experience teaching autistic and developmentally disabled children. She has also spent a considerable amount of time consulting and developing resources to benefit students with autism and developmental disabilities. Currently, Ms. Kelchner holds a master of education (1992) and a bachelor of science in elementary education (1979), both from the University of North Texas, and a Life Teaching Certificate from the State of Texas in elementary education and generic special education. She is an ambassador for the Autism Tissue Donor Program for the Autism Society of America and has received the Civitan Citizen of the Year Award from the Bluebonnet Civitan Club (2007), Angel Award from the Autism Society of Collin County (2003) and several Teacher of the Year awards (1985 - 1988). To date, Kathy has published several works. Her recent publications are *Golden Ideas for Golden Students* (2004) and *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* (2005). She is in the process of writing another book, *Golden Ideas for Golden Children*.

Ms. Kelchner is the co-owner of Golden Child Resources and also has her own consulting company, Kelchner Education Consultants, LLC. Golden Child Resources provides educational materials for students with autism and other developmental disabilities. These resources help teachers to structure their classroom environment with visual aids and CD-ROMs. Kelchner Education Consultants, LLC serves school personnel, students and families by designing the appropriate curriculum for students with autism and developmental disabilities. It offers staff development and training, instruction for parents and individual classroom support for students and teachers. Throughout the years, Ms. Kelchner has also served as a workshop presenter, speaker and consultant for various organizations.

Interview:

Tell me a little about what you do...

I specialize in working with students with autism and other developmental disabilities. As a consultant I assist students, teachers, families and administrators with various aspects of programs for students, especially for those with behavioral challenges. I also give presentations about programs, working with students with autism and developmental disabilities and serving as a life coach for a few adults with autism.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your career?

Helping students and adults experience success.

What is your greatest professional accomplishment to date?

Co-writing *Golden Ideas for Golden Students* because we can leave this book and the accompanying CD-ROM in the hands of teachers to put the best practices in place for student success. It saves teachers time and provides structure for the students.

What are your short-term and long-term goals and what steps have you taken toward achieving them?

Finishing the writing of the family book, *Golden Ideas for Golden Children*, then writing several other books and producing more instructional materials.

What is the most difficult obstacle or challenge you have faced in pursuit of your goals?

Finding time to complete the writing and production of the book while working as a consultant and volunteer. I love the hands-on work and experiences I've had in the field and have a hard time saying "no" to volunteer opportunities in the autism community. I also love to speak to groups and work with teachers in staff development settings. Although these events take time to prepare and take time from writing, I find them rewarding because they lead to student and adult success.

What are you passionate about?

Autism and people and families who are affected by this condition. My sister, Sharon, was my inspiration. Her story is on my website at www.kelchner.net.

What makes you a valuable resource in your industry?

I have been working with students with autism and developmental disabilities for over 25 years as a teacher, administrator and consultant. I have personal experience as a sibling of a sister with autism for over 40 years. My sister lost her battle with a rare neurological disease over three years ago, so the time I don't have to spend with her, I devote to volunteer work. Otherwise, I spend it as a professional in the field of autism and other developmental disabilities.

What topic(s) do you consider yourself to be an expert on?

Autism, developmental disabilities and the right to live a self-determined life regardless of abilities or disabilities.

What steps did you take/are you taking to establish yourself as an expert in your field?

I have a master of education, and I have extensive training in autism and self-determination through reading and workshops that I continue to attend on a regular basis. I also present at various state, national and international conferences. I just returned from another Autism Society of America conference where I was a presenter and participant. I learned more about some of the latest research in the field.

Have you published any work?

Golden Ideas for Golden Students, which is basically a classroom in a book that simply tells teachers how to structure a classroom for students with autism and other developmental disabilities. It also contains a CD-ROM with more than 200 PDF files

containing all of the visual aids and materials to set up the classroom. General education teachers have found it helpful as well. I was the co-author of *The Arc's Self-Determination Assessment Scale, Whose Future Is It Anyway?* and numerous journal articles related to self-determination.

What is the most significant issue facing your profession today?

Currently we are faced with the mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and meeting the individual needs of students with autism and other developmental disabilities. Professionals are struggling with finding the appropriate assessments to meet the needs of the students and the requirements of the mandates while providing free, appropriate, public education for students in the least restrictive environment. Schools and families also must find ways to communicate effectively to work in harmony in an area of education that is highly litigious. Added to the equation is a high turnover in the professionals who are willing to work with students who have significant support needs.

What advice can you offer members who work in a similar profession or industry?

Stay current with research in the field and have high expectations for the students and those who work with them. A sense of humor goes a long way too.

“Who’s New” welcomes and introduces members who are new to the Cambridge Who’s Who community. Three new Cambridge Who’s Who members are featured in this section per newsletter.

Who’s News

Cambridge Who’s Who Newsletter
newsletter@cambridgewhoswho.com

Issue 2, August 2008

