



Edward Gary Carr

by Xiaojiao Li

Born August 20, 1948 Toronto, Canada

Died June 20, 2009 New York, New York

Nationality Canadian-American

Fields Psychology

Institution Stony Brook University

Alma Mater University of California, San Diego

Known for Treatment of problem behavior in autism, Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), Positive Behavioral Support (PBS)

Edward G. Carr, who was known as “Ted” to friends and colleagues, was an internationally recognized pioneer in autism treatment research. Dr. Carr applied studies about the functions that self-injurious behaviors served and contributed substantially to the development and refinement of “Positive Behavioral Support” (Carr et al., 2002) In addition, he assessed the benefits of teaching sign language to children with expressive and receptive language disorders as seen in children with Autism. Dr. Carr was the Director of the [Research & Training Center on Positive Behavior Support for Autism & Developmental Disabilities](#) at [Stony Brook University](#).

Background Information

Dr. Carr secured his undergraduate and graduate degrees from the [University of California at San Diego](#), worked briefly at the [University of California Los Angeles](#), and was Medical Research Council of Canada Postdoctoral Fellow at UCLA. He joined Stony Brook University in 1976 as an Assistant Professor and quickly rose through the ranks to full Professor in 1985. Dr. Carr is survived by his only son, Aaron, and his brother, Allan (Anonymous author, 2009). He also has a sister, Rochelle. Dr. Carr and his wife Ilene Wasserman were killed in a car accident on June 20, 2009.

Early Work

Early in his career, Professor Carr began examining alternative explanations for why individuals with autism engage in self-injurious behavior (Weiss, 2003), publishing “The Motivation of Self-injurious Behavior: A Review of Some Hypotheses” in the prestigious journal, *Psychological Bulletin* in 1977. Over the years he and colleagues continued to research how self-injurious and other problem behavior might be controlled by factors in the children’s environments, in effect serving a communicative function (Anonymous author, 2009). He and others applied this knowledge to develop and refine the procedures of Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). The work on humane means of reducing problem behaviors using positive procedures (e.g., antecedent-based or preventative interventions and teaching functional

communication skills to replace the problem behavior) rather than aversive or punishment procedures, led Professor Carr and others to develop PBS.

Later Work

During his tenure at Stony Brook, Dr. Carr authored or co-authored scores of articles, chapters, monographs, and books; mentored many students; worked with organizations in the US and abroad; and founded and directed the Research & Training Center on Positive Behavior Support for Autism & Developmental Disabilities. His many publications include the books *How to Teach Sign Language to Developmentally Disabled Children*, *Communication-Based Intervention for Problem Behavior*, and the monograph *Positive behavior support for people with developmental disabilities: A research synthesis*. In 2005, Dr. Carr was named to the Panel of Professional Advisors of the Autism Society of America (ASA), a national association with 120,000 members dedicated to educating the public about autism. This panel helps set national standards for autism research, as well as practice and policy regarding the care of individuals with autism (Anonymous author, 2009).

Honors

Dr Carr was designated Leading Professor by the [State University of New York](#) in 2000 and was thrice selected "Teacher of the Year" in the Department of Psychology (2004, 2006, 2008) (Anonymous author, 2006).

Awards

Dr Carr received numerous awards in his field including the Applied Research Award for Outstanding Contributions to Applied Behavioral Research (American Psychological Association, 2001) and the Distinguished Research Award for Career Achievement (Association for Retarded Citizens, 1999). A Fellow, American Psychological Association and past president of the [Association for Positive Behavior Support](#), Dr. Carr was named in Who's Who in America (2005) and Who's Who in American Education (2004) (Anonymous author, 2006).

References

- Anonymous author. (2009). Stony Brook University Mourns the Passing of Edward G. Carr, PH.D, Leading Professor in the Department of Psychology. Retrieved September 17, 2009. http://commcgi.cc.stonybrook.edu/am2/publish/General_University_News_2/Stony_Brook_University_Mourns_the_Passign_of_Edward_G_Carr_Ph_D_Leading_Professor_in_the_Department_of_Psychology.shtml
- Anonymous author. (2009). Edward G. Carr, 1947-2009. Retrieved September 17, 2009. <http://spedpro.org/2009/06/22/edward-g-carr-1947-2009/>
- Anonymous author. (2006). Bio of Dr. Carr. Retrieved October 4, 2009. <http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/CAS/autism.nsf/pages/bio>

Carr, E. G., Dunlap, G., Horner, R. H., Koegel, R. L., Turnbull, A. P., Sailor, W., Anderson, J., Albin, R. W., Koegel, L. K., & Fox, L. (2002). Positive behavior support: Evolution of an applied science. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 4, 4-16, 20.

Weiss, J. (2003). Self- injurious behaviors in autism: A literature review. *Journal on Developmental Disabilities*, 9(2), 129-143.