

**Dr. Richard E. Shores** by Jessica L. Degol

Richard E Shores, Ph.D

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Dr. Richard E. Shores is a nationally respected researcher in behavioral modification for children with developmental disabilities and/or emotional and behavioral disorders. His work has influenced a great number of leading researchers and educators in the field, including Drs. Philip Gunter, [Mary Margaret Kerr](#), [Phillip Strain](#), Jo Hendrickson, [Bob Gable](#), Ken Denny, Joe Wehby, [Michael Brady](#), [Rob Rutherford](#), Richard Simpson, and Matt Timm among others.

## **Background**

Dr. Richard E. Shores grew up in Osawatomie, Kansas. He graduated from [Baker University](#) in Baldwin, Kansas in 1960. While at Baker University he played linebacker for the football team, was named a Little All American, and was subsequently inducted into the university's football hall of fame in 2003. Dr. Shores received an Ed.D. in special education from the [University of Kansas](#). In the 1970s he held a position at the [University of Wisconsin in Madison](#) and later became the head of the Department of Special Education at Peabody College, later to be merged with Vanderbilt University, during which time he headed the Social Integration of Autistic Children Project. He later held a position as a senior scientist at the University of Kansas's Life Span Institute, Bureau of Child Research.

Regarding all of Dr. Shores' professional accomplishments, his greatest achievements, in his mind, were truly his students (Gunter, 2010). He took great pride in all of their

accomplishments and loved them as if they were his own children (Gunter, 2010). Many of his former students and colleagues affectionately refer to him as “Ole Pops” (Gunter, 2010).

Currently, Dr. Shores is retired and living in Fort Scott, Kansas.

## **Publications**

Dr. Shores has had an extensive career – spanning well over three decades – researching children with behavioral disorders. During that time, he has published nearly 100 articles in peer reviewed journals, which has enabled the work of both himself and his colleagues to reach a vast number of individuals within the field of special education. The journal article, “Social interactions of normal preschool children: Using normative data for subject and target behavior selection” (Tremblay, Strain, Hendrickson, & Shores, 1981), which he coauthored with several colleagues, is the third most frequently cited article from the journal of *Behavior Modification* (SAGE Journals Online, 2010).

Throughout Dr. Shores’ illustrious career, much of his work has focused on researching methods in which special education teachers could learn to better manage their classrooms, especially when faced with children with behavioral disorders. The main goal of his research, therefore, was to provide teachers with the appropriate tools for successfully reducing disruptive behaviors and successfully increasing prosocial peer interactions among children with behavioral disorders. His early experiments demonstrated that by simply prompting children to initiate contact with their peers and subsequently reinforcing these behaviors, teachers could increase the frequency of positive peer contact and reduce the frequency of negative peer contact among behaviorally disruptive children (Strain, Shores, & Kerr, 1976). Dr. Shores and his colleagues even extended this research into successfully teaching children how to initiate and encourage prosocial contact with their socially withdrawn peers (Strain, Shores, & Timm, 1977).

Subsequent publications also revealed that training children to initiate and maintain contact with children with autism and other behavioral disabilities resulted in increases in unprompted peer initiations from these children (Brady, Shores, McEvoy, Ellis, & Fox, 1987; Hendrickson, Strain, Tremblay, & Shores, 1982).

Dr. Shores and his colleagues also pursued research examining the A-B-C sequence, the antecedent stimuli – behaviors – consequences sequence (Gunter, Jack, Shores, Carrell, & Flowers, 1993; Shores et al., 1993). These studies led to emerging knowledge in the field regarding the types of events that elicit appropriate vs. inappropriate behaviors from children and the reinforcing consequences that follow. Understanding the events that reinforce children's behaviors can then lead to strategies for reducing/eliminating negative behaviors and increasing positive ones. Through all of this work, Dr. Shores and his colleagues were able to contribute substantial insights for teachers, parents, and other professionals regarding how to increase prosocial behaviors and reduce negative behaviors among behaviorally disruptive children.

## **Awards**

During his distinguished career, Dr. Shores received numerous awards for his dedication and contributions to the field of special education. Among these awards he received the [Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders](#) (CCBD) Outstanding Leadership Award at the [Midwestern Symposium for Leadership in Behavioral Disorders](#) and the CCBD Lifetime Achievement Award at the [Council for Exceptional Children](#). The Richard Shores Award for Excellence in Teacher Education from Vanderbilt University was also named in his honor. [The Teacher Educators for Children with Behavioral Disorders](#) (TECBD) also has a Richard E. Shores Research Strand at its annual conference.

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