

# FEAT AUSTIN

Families for Effective Autism Treatment



Parent Hotline: 512-656-6099

September 2008  
Volume II, Issue II



## FEAT Austin Parent Hotline

We are pleased to announce our new 9am-9pm hotline for parent support. When an email is not enough ... 512-656-6099

## New Board Members

We are pleased to announce our two newest board members:

### **Christine Robinson—Vice President of Fundraising**

I am married and a mother to a 7 year old son with PDD NOS, and two neuro-typical daughters that are 3 and 7 years old. My son is in an inclusion classroom, in the first grade, and he started baseball on the Miracle League. I just received my M.Ed. with a major in special education and am working as an ABA therapist at Children's Autism Center in Round Rock. I have been inspired by my son to complete my BCBA certification and will be finished with it soon.

### **Debbie Bridge—Vice President of Political Affairs**

I am a mother of 3 rambunctious young men. Their ages are 24, 17 and 13. I wasn't sure if I wanted any more children after having my first. He was enough to keep a full-staff busy 24/7. I can honestly say, "I lived through it and survived" and he is currently attending Texas Southern University in Houston Texas and doing quite well. My two younger sons are autistic and or have autistic behaviors.

I will be completing my bachelor's degree in Human Health Service in January of 2009. I owe much of my success to my children as they are my inspiration and the reason I returned to school to pursue a degree in Human Health Services. Upon completion of my program I plan to dedicate my degree to my sons and late mother.

## FEAT Austin 2009 Goals

Thanks to all of you that completed our survey in August. Your input helped to mold our goals for this year.

- Improve Adult Services through legislative means.
- Support efforts to maintain HB1919 for this legislative session
- Develop Web Casting support for all of our meetings and seminars to allow parents that cannot attend to view and interact from the comfort of their homes
- Host a Casino Night fundraiser after Spring Break in a local hotel to help local families with ABA services
- Focus on and increase the number of ABA Training events in the Austin area.
- Start a 9am to 9pm Hotline

## Plea to Members

We are in desperate need of distribution of this newsletter to families that do not have access to the Internet. If you could please help us distribute this newsletter to your doctors, lawyers, and especially your schools, it would be truly appreciated. It is a financial and time problem for our board and advisory board members to distribute to all of the schools and offices in the community. If you could make copies of this newsletter and just drop it off at all the usual places you go, many more families will receive the news that there are free and inexpensive ABA resources here in Austin for the asking.

FEAT-Austin Board



## Ask the BCBA

As a behaviorist, I am often asked to give advice on how to “fix” a specific challenging behavior. What most people do not realize is that I cannot provide them with a quick fix answer; even if I could for their particular situation, it would be professionally unethical for me to do so without knowing their child personally and having data to support my hypothesis. Most parents of children on the autism spectrum understand this, but I realize it can still be frustrating to not have a bag of magic tricks for all of those little (and some not so little) behavioral challenges you face every day. While a bag of tricks doesn’t really exist, there are some tips that I frequently give to any parent that can help to prevent challenges before they occur or address them more positively when they do. In this inaugural edition of Ask the BCBA, I thought I would share some of those with you. As a parent myself, I know that nothing works 100% of the time, but every now and then we get lucky.

### Give them Choice and Voice

- Children, with and without autism, will from time to time create power struggles. Two year olds tantrum when they can’t have a cookie; teenagers storm out of rooms when told they cannot go on a date. Sometimes the issue is less about the cookie or the date and more about exerting some control over their lives. Two year olds are told where to go, what to do, and what to eat/wear/play with all day. Teens feel that they are nearly adults, but rules prevent them from doing things they feel they should be allowed to do. Sometimes by providing simple choices (rarely open-ended; not more than two for very young children), we can prevent the power struggles while teaching our children valuable lessons about how to make choices.

### Set Them Up for Success

- I know that I am guilty of this: I reprimand my kids after-the-fact rather than telling them the expected behaviors ahead of time. When we tell our children (using visuals or social stories for children who need them), we are setting them up for success rather than waiting for them to fail. Success is always preferable!
- Another way we set up success for children on the autism spectrum is to use visuals to prepare them for changes or events of the day/week. Visual schedules are commonly used to provide information on what is going to happen in a day; visual notification of a change in expected or usual schedule is useful as well for preventing meltdowns related to resistance to change. Here again, knowing what “sets him/her off” and working to prevent that is another example of setting him or her up for success.

### “Catch ‘em Being Good”

- Whenever your child is displaying appropriate behavior, making good choices, responding to requests, it’s a good time to reward them for that behavior. The principles of behavior tell us that behaviors that are reinforced will at the very least continue, and at best may increase. If the only time we address our children’s behavior, we may be missing opportunities to reward good behavior; we may also inadvertently teach them that our attention comes mostly from the not so good behaviors (something we certainly do not want to teach!).

For children with good receptive language skills, sometimes catching your

other children being good can serve as an indirect (and positive) reminder to others on how you expect them to behave. For example, when my son gets up from the dinner table when he shouldn’t, he will sometimes correct his own behavior when he hears me praise my daughter for how well she is sitting at the table. Younger children especially seem to respond well to this sort of indirect redirection; and it gives nice positive reinforcement to the child who is making the appropriate choice.

E. Amanda Boutot, Ph.D., BCBA  
Owner, Amanda Boutot Consulting & Mother of Two  
[www.amandaboutotconsulting.com](http://www.amandaboutotconsulting.com)

## Political Corner

### Putting things in perspective, America is in serious financial TURMOIL.

The question is which presidential candidate will take this troubled economy and turn it around? Does it matter which candidate is voted the next President of the United States? You will be the judge of this issue on November 4<sup>th</sup>!

History is in the making because for the first time America could have a female Vice President or an African American for President. Yet, neither race nor gender should be the motivating force, instead knowing the views of the parties and their plans to get America out of this pitfall should be the deciding factor.

Either you have been following your candidate’s strategies and his views of the economy or you are among many undecided voters following both candidates to help you decide which party will receive your vote.

Either way, we are all aware of the importance of exercising our rights to vote. Bottom line: know your candidate’s positions regarding the special needs population, health care, and economical issues. These topics are at the forefront of American’s list of concerns. Let’s take a stand and exercise our right by voting for the best candidate to move this country in the right direction to ensure a prosperous future for our children and generations to come.

Editor  
Debbie Bridge

[groups.yahoo.com/group/Texas-Autism-Politics](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Texas-Autism-Politics)  
[www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)  
[www.factcheck.org](http://www.factcheck.org)

# FEAT-Austin Calendar of Events

All of the monthly FEAT trainings listed are FREE.  
Full-day workshops require a registration fee.

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- ☺ **September 18: Natural Environment Training**  
6:30-8:30pm, Bluebonnet Trails MHMR Center  
Phyllis Sample, M.Ed., BCBA
- ☺ **September 20: ABC's of ABA Workshop**  
9:00am-4:00pm, Bluebonnet Trails MHMR Center  
Mandy Rispoli, M.Ed., BCBA
- ☺ **October 16: Toilet Training**  
6:30-8:30pm, Central Texas Autism Center  
Cara Brown, M.Ed, BCABA
- ☺ **October 18: 123's of ABA**  
9:00am-4:00pm, Bluebonnet MHMR Center  
Rany Thommen, M.Ed., BCBA
- ☺ **November 6: Play and Socialization**  
6:30-8:30pm, Bluebonnet Trails MHMR Center  
Monique Vallario-Erickson, M.A., BCBA
- ☺ **December 2-4: 17th Annual Texas State Autism Conference**  
<http://www.autism.esc2.net/conference.asp>  
Arlington Convention Center
- ☺ **January 15: Challenging Behaviors**  
6:30-8:30pm, Children's Autism Center  
Amanda Boutot, M.Ed, BCBA
- ☺ **February 21: TBA**  
6:30-8:30pm, Children's Autism Center  
Phyllis Sample, M.Ed., BCBA
- ☺ **March 21: Social Skills for HFA/Aspergers**  
6:30-8:30pm, Children's Autism Center  
Ashley Schexnayder, M.S., BCBA
- ☺ **April 15: ABA in the Classroom**  
6:00-8:00pm, Central Texas Autism Center  
Kelle Wood Rich, M.Ed., BCBA
- ☺ **May 13: Introduction to Verbal Behavior**  
6:00-8:00pm, Central Texas Autism Center  
Kelle Wood Rich, M.Ed., BCBA

## September 18: Natural Environment Training (NET)

**Location: Bluebonnet MHMR Center**

1009 Georgetown St., Round Rock, Texas 78664

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

**Presenter:** Phyllis Sample, M.Ed., BCBA

This presentation will cover teaching children in the natural environment versus structured learning environments. This training will address how to teach individuals concepts in the environment in which skills naturally occur. The presentation will also address teaching individuals towards maintenance and generalization of skills.

**Directions:**

Take I-35 North and exit #253 towards 79/Taylor. After exiting, turn right at first light and then go straight until you see Georgetown Street to your right (at Walgreens). Bluebonnet Trails will be on your left hand side. Park to left side of building and enter 1<sup>st</sup> door.



## September 20: ABC's of ABA

**Location: Bluebonnet MHMR Center**

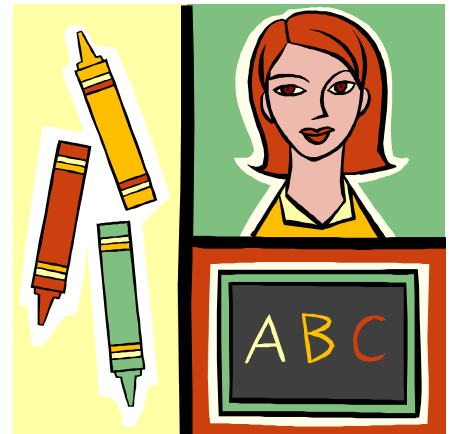
1009 N. Georgetown St. Round Rock, Texas, 78664

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

**Presenter:** Mandy Rispoli, M.Ed., BCBA

This workshop is an introductory workshop for parents, teachers, therapists, and others who want to learn basic principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and how to implement these principles at home, school, and community. Space is limited so register early. Registration form can be found on following pages.

**Directions:** Take I-35 North and exit #253 towards 79/Taylor. After exiting, turn right at first light and then go straight until you see Georgetown Street to your right (at Walgreens). Bluebonnet Trails will be on your left hand side. Park to left side of building and enter 1<sup>st</sup> door.



## October 16: Toilet Training

**Location: Central Texas Autism Center**

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

**Presenter:** Cara Brown, M.Ed., BCABA

This presentation will cover an overview of toilet training procedures based on the principles of ABA. This overview will include assessments before toilet training begins, research based interventions to address toilet training, and how to monitor

progress and collect data during training. The presentation will end with a question and answer period with the presenter.

**Location:**  
Central Texas Autism Center  
3006 Bee Caves Road, Suite B-200  
Austin, Texas 78746  
512-328-5599  
<http://www.ctac1.com>



## November 6: Play and Socialization

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**Location:** Bluebonnet MHMR Center  
1009 Georgetown St., Round Rock,  
Texas 78664

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

**Presenter:** Monique Vallario-Erickson,  
M.A., BCBA

This free presentation will discuss why play and socialization are difficult for children with autism by analyzing play skill pre-requisites. The presentation will also cover the use of pairing, requesting, following commands, video modeling, and game playing during intervention at both home and school.

**Directions:**

Take I-35 North and exit #253 towards 79/Taylor. After exiting, turn right at first light and then go straight until you see Georgetown Street to your right (at Walgreens). Bluebonnet Trails will be on your left hand side. Park to left side of building and enter 1<sup>st</sup> door.



## January 15: Challenging Behaviors

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**Location:** Children's Autism Center

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

**Presenter:** Amanda Boutot, M.Ed,  
BCBA

The presentation will cover addressing challenging behaviors including physical aggression, verbal aggression, noncompliance, and other behaviors that interfere with learning. The presenter will discuss how to prevent behaviors from occurring in the first place, determining the functions of challenging behaviors,

and how to develop plans to address these behaviors using research-based strategies.

**Location:**

Children's Autism Center  
1717 N. Mays  
Round Rock, Texas 78664  
512-248-0644



## February 19: TBD

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**Location:** Children's Autism Center

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

**Presenter:** Phyllis Sample, M.Ed.,  
BCABA

Topic TBA

**Location:**

Children's Autism Center  
1717 N. Mays  
Round Rock, Texas 78664  
512-248-0644

## March 19: Social Skills for HFA/Aspergers

**Location:** Children's Autism Center

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

**Presenter:** Ashley Schexnayder, M.S., BCBA

**Location:**

Children's Autism Center

1717 N. Mays

Round Rock, Texas 78664

512-248-0644

Topics include: the challenges individual's with autism face in social interaction, assessing a child's social skills before implementing interventions, ideas on intervention including child-guided strategies instead of just teacher-guided strategies, with a Q & A session afterwards.



## April 15: ABA in the Classroom

**Location:** Central Texas Autism Center

**Time:** 6:00-8:00pm

**Presenter:** Kelle Wood Rich, M.Ed, BCBA

behavior challenges, collect data, and teach in the classroom environment using research-based strategies.

This presentation will discuss how to apply principles of ABA in the classroom. Teachers often face the challenge of applying ABA when it is difficult to provide a 1:1 ratio between student and teacher. This presentation will be presented by a teacher for teachers and parents and will cover ways to reinforce, prompt, address

**Location:**

Central Texas Autism Center

3006 Bee Caves Road, Suite B-200

Austin, Texas 78746

512-328-5599

<http://www.ctac1.com>



## May 13: Introduction to Verbal Behavior

**Location:** Central Texas Autism Center

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

**Presenter:** Kelle Wood Rich, M.Ed., BCBA

child's vocal behavior, beginning a verbal behavior program, and collecting data for students of different levels.

This presentation will cover an introduction to Verbal Behavior, a specific component of behavior analysis that addresses speech and language. First introduced by B.F. Skinner, behavior analysts believe that vocal behaviors have the same controlling variables of any other behavior. This training will provide information on assessing a

**Location:**

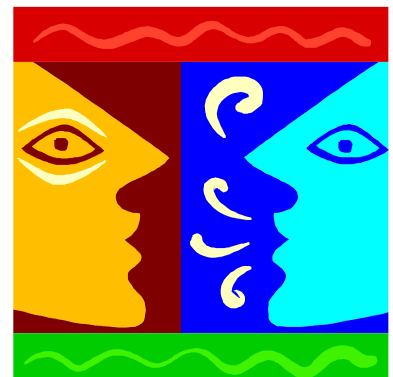
Central Texas Autism Center

3006 Bee Caves Road, Suite B-200

Austin, Texas 78746

512-328-5599

<http://www.ctac1.com>





Saturday, November 15, 2008

Location:

The Dell Diamond

3400 E. Palm Valley Road  
Round Rock, TX 78664

Time:

Registration opens: 8:30 am  
Resource Fair opens: 8:30 am  
Walk Start: 10:00 am

Parking: Lots of free parking

To participate in the walk you can start your own team or join an existing one at [www.walknowforautism.org](http://www.walknowforautism.org) and click on "Greater Austin."

Activities: Bounce House, face painting, and the Rock Wall!

Additional information:

The walk route is about a mile and a half in length around the ballpark. There are plenty of exit routes if you need to take a break or need a quiet area.

# 123's of ABA Workshop

Presented by: Rany Thommen, M.Ed., BCBA  
Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Sponsored by **Families for Effective Autism Treatment-Austin**

Date: Saturday, October 18, 2008

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Check-in and light breakfast at 8:30 am

Location: Bluebonnet Trails MHMR Center

1009 N. Georgetown Street; Round Rock, Texas 78664

Directions: From Austin take I-35 North to Round Rock. Take exit #253 towards 79/Taylor. Turn right at first light E. Palm Valley Blvd. Turn right on Georgetown Street near Walgreens. The entrance to Bluebonnet Trails will be on your left.

Description: This workshop will cover more advanced principles of ABA. Previous attendance at an ABC's of ABA workshop is required. It is assumed that attendees will be able to demonstrate delivering reinforcers, shaping, prompting, fading, and chaining, which are all covered in the ABC workshop. This workshop will teach practical applications of ABA techniques for gaining and maintaining an individual's attention. It is very difficult to teach someone if they will not attend to you, they are actively avoiding you, they are aggressive toward you, or they are running away from you. This workshop teaches a collection of specific procedures which behavior analysts have found to be consistently effective in working with a variety of challenging clients and behaviors.

**Space is limited so register early!**

**Registration and Fees: Register by 10/11/08 to save!**

Individual \$40.00 (\$45 if after 9/06) Student (with documentation) \$20.00

Married Couple \$50.00 (\$60 if after 9/06)

Please send check made out to **FEAT-Austin** and registration form to: FEAT-Austin

15305 Whistling Straits Dr.  
Austin, Texas 78717

Confirmation of receipt of payment will be sent via e-mail. Questions may be sent to: [info@feat-austin.org](mailto:info@feat-austin.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you new to ABA? \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Therapist \_\_\_\_\_ Other? \_\_\_\_\_

Total Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ Names of Others Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

# Classifieds Section

This is a very affordable option. Please note that FEAT-Austin does not in any way screen families, therapists, or organizations that place ads. Inclusion in the classifieds in no way implies an endorsement or certification by FEAT-Austin.

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## WANTED: DRIVER for SPECIAL NEEDS TEEN

Help needed for transporting 15 years old female to and from therapy.  
fgirl20002000(at)yahoo.com

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## WANTED: TUTOR and LIFESKILLS COACH

I am looking for a full time individual with some experience working with children with disabilities, to help me continue to home school my 13 year old son with Down Syndrome/Autism, and his typically developing sister that is 16. I will be working from home most of the time.

This person will be responsible for everything that a home school family does during the day, including teaching cooking while preparing lunch, and cleaning up. (That mom kind of stuff) Applicant must absolutely adore animals and children above all else, and have a proven method in place for both managing those stressful days that can happen with special needs children, as well as redirecting problem behaviors.

Must be at least 18 years old, legal work status, clean criminal history. Salary range from \$9.50-\$11.00/hour based on experience. Contact Pat in Northwest Austin on the Metro rail stop near Wells Branch Parkway and Mopac by email at cdebellis(at)austin.rr.com.

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## WANTED: ABA THERAPIST

Family looking for therapist to provide in-home ABA therapy for 8 year old child with Autism. Must have experience working with children with autism. Please contact Mary at mcabrera2000(at)sbcglobal.net

## WANTED: ABA THERAPIST

ABA therapist required at home for 4 year old child diagnosed with PDD. She is verbal and follows directions and easily interacts with adults. Need therapy to facilitate peer interaction. 2 days/week is required and salary is negotiable according to qualification and years of experience. 512-248-0339 or krits\_876(at)yahoo.com

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## AVAILABLE: ABA THERAPIST

I am an ABA therapist with 3 years experience providing ABA in home and center based settings under a BCBA. 4 years total experience working with this population, experience with ages 5-17. Experience with dual diagnoses and the full range of severity. Relocating to Austin at the beginning of September. Available for in home ABA programs or center based programs and social skills groups. References/resume provided upon request. Andrew Penner, B.S. apenner(at)gmail.com

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## WANTED: LIFE COACHES

Currently setting interview dates for Community Coaches to work with young adults with Autism. As a coach you will work with a young person with Autism and his/her family ,supporting home living and employment skills enhancement, local recreation, fitness, social and leisure activities. Coaches will receive training and ongoing support through The College of Community Living. Future plans are to also provide health insurance and merit bonuses for coaches.

Contact: Cheryl Wallace /The College of Community Living (include CofCL in the subject line) at lakelizards5(at)sbcglobal.net

## WANTED: ABA THERAPIST

I am a mom of 2 boys, Jack and Will, ages 6 and 4. We live in Schulenburg, TX. My boys have autistic characteristics but have not been diagnosed PDD. There is limited access to treatments here, please help hooperdeeann hooper(at)cvtv.net

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## WANTED: RESPITE PROVIDER

Family looking for respite provider for 13 year old child with Aspergers. Must have experience working with children with autism. Please contact Nicole at scootieface(at)gmail.com

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## WANTED: ABA THERAPIST

I am looking for an ABA trainer in Austin/South Austin area and in North Houston area: Spring, Woodlands. Thank you for your help and referrals. Marcela Pinzon mpr2432(at)yahoo.com

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## WANTED: ABA THERAPIST

Looking for ABA help for daughter. She has an autism spectrum disorder, but is verbal, and able to learn and function quite well with direct teaching. I will need help from 3-5 for at least 3 days per week and other than that the times are negotiable. MHMR will pay 8.50 per hour, but we may be able to get an increase in that pay as well. They can contact me via email at: ambernicolemc(at)yahoo.com

\*\*Looking for an in-home therapist? Are you a therapist yourself that can provide ABA services in the home? If you would like to place an ad, simply email the text to classified@feat-austin.org and put "Classified" in the subject heading . There is no charge for this service.

# Local ABA Centers, Consultants and Government Services

ABA4Kids  
www.aba4kids.com  
888-802-4ABA

Amanda Boutot PhD, BCBA  
www.amandaboutotconsulting.com

Autism Center for Education  
www.aceautism.com  
9600 Escarpment Blvd, Ste 745-222, Austin, TX 78749  
512-895-9570

Austin Autism Consulting  
512-417-5104

Bluebonnet Trails MHMR Autism Program  
www.bluebonnetmhm.org  
1009 N. Georgetown Street, Round Rock, Texas 78664  
512-244-8209

CARD  
www.thoughtfulhouse.org/cardservices  
3001 Bee Caves Rd, Suite B-200, Austin, TX 78746  
512-732-8400

Central Texas Autism Center  
www.ctac1.com  
3006 Bee Cave Rd., Suite B-200, Austin, TX 78746  
512-328-5599

Children's Autism Center  
1717 N. Mays, Round Rock, Texas 78664  
512-248-0644

Explore Autism  
www.exploreautism.com

Moore-Weis Children's Center  
www.moore-weis.org  
1303 Lorrain Street, Austin, TX 78703  
512-472-6080

Spectrum—Social and Recreation  
www.spectrumsocial.net  
1509 W. North Loop Blvd, Austin, TX 78756  
512-524-5482



If you are close to a university, you may also be able to find graduate students in training to become Board Certified Behavior Analysts. This is a very affordable option to run an in-home ABA program. Currently Texas State offers an Autism/ABA program as well as The University of Texas at Austin. Contact professors from these programs to see if you can find help.

For a full listing of all BCBAs (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) in the Greater Austin area, complete a search on the Behavior Analyst Certification Board website at [www.bacb.com](http://www.bacb.com). Click on "consumer information," then "certificate registry."

## Government Services

Austin-Travis County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center  
www.atcmhmr.com  
512-472-HELP

Bluebonnet Trails Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center  
www.bluebonnetmhm.org  
512-244-8209

Region XIII Education Service Center  
www.esc13.net  
512-919-5313

Texas Education Agency  
www.tea.state.tx.us  
512-463-9734

Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services  
www.dars.state.tx.us  
800-628-5115

Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services  
www.dads.state.tx.us  
512-438-3011