

The Palm Beach Post

Monday, November 19, 2007

Final Edition



RICHARD GRAULICH/Staff Photographer

A child's mind is 'different from that of an adult and needs to be treated appropriately,' child psychiatrist Jeryl Dansky Kershner says. She lets her young patients play with the hand puppets.

Jeryl Dansky Kershner

Name: Dr. Jeryl Dansky Kershner

Child psychiatrist, Alpert Jewish Family & Children's Service

Distinction: First child psychiatrist to join the Alpert Jewish Family & Children's Service

Place of business: West Palm Beach

Recent accomplishments: There are very few child psychiatrists in Palm Beach County, but the number grew by one recently when Dr. Jeryl Dansky Kershner joined the staff at the Alpert Jewish Family & Children's Service.

Born in Maine and trained at Harvard, Kershner was a practicing pediatrician for 20 years.

Executive Director Neil Newstein said there is a tremendous need for effective psychiatric care for children.

Kershner's appointment, he added, allows the agency to provide a broader array of services to clients.

"I am delighted to be joining the staff of AJFCS with its team of seasoned professionals," Kershner said.

"It's a setting where we can provide so much for children and support families who require assistance.

"Just as a child's body is different from an adult's body, so is a child's mind

different from that of an adult and needs to be treated appropriately," she said when asked about the difference in treating children and adults. "Children are not little adults. Children are constantly developing or changing. What may be true when a child is 5 may not be at 7."

Certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and the American Board of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, Kershner served on the clinical faculty at Harvard.

She offers a variety of services for children, adolescents and parents, including psychiatric and developmental consultation and treatment.

She specializes in providing ongoing psychopharmacology, medication management and psychotherapy, and has experience treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorders, sleep disorders and other problems in children.

"I love dealing with families," she said. "Most doctors who specialize don't get to deal with the whole family unless there is a crisis, whereas I get to. It makes it very special."

The Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family & Children's Service is a nationally accredited social service agency serving Palm Beach County.

Among the many services the agency provides are information; and: referral; counseling and support groups; geriatric and child

psychiatry; case management; and companions for the elderly; and a domestic abuse program.

Education: A graduate of Cornell University and the University of Vermont College of Medicine. Received postgraduate medical education as a resident in pediatrics at the University of Arizona. Fellowship in developmental and behavioral pediatrics at the Developmental Medical Center of Children's Hospital in Boston. Fellowship in child and adolescent psychiatry in the department of child psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

Personal: Married to Robert Kershner, an ophthalmologist and private consultant who teaches at Palm Beach Community College. They have two daughters, ages 19 and 23. They live in Palm Beach Gardens.

Hobbies: "Travel, reading, gourmet cooking, and I just took up golf."

Career highlight: "I'm also a sleep specialist, and when I was in Boston I had the opportunity to train for three years with Dr. Richard Ferber, the director of the center for pediatric sleep disorders at Children's Hospital Boston." Ferber is known for his methods — popularly called Ferberization — that teach young infants to learn how to fall asleep on their own.

— Mary Thurwachter