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Book Offers Positive Thinking Approach to Improving Child Behavior

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (May 20, 2011) – Based on years of research and work with thousands of families, USF St. Petersburg Psychology Professor V. Mark Durand has written a guide for parents and caregivers of children with challenging behavior. The book, Optimistic Parenting: Hope and Help for You and Your Challenging Child (Brookes Publishing, 2011), can help moms, dads, and other caregivers develop more positive thoughts and perceptions – a key ingredient of successful parenting and effective behavior management.

One of the most highly regarded experts on challenging behavior in children, and a parent himself, Durand delivers both philosophical hope and practical help to parents of children with a wide range of challenges. He offers practical tools and strategies to guide parents step-by-step through the process of:

- pinpointing the “why” behind challenging behavior
- tuning in to their own thoughts, emotions and self-talk
- understanding how their thoughts affect their interactions with their child
- interrupting negative thoughts and replacing them with positive, productive ones
- achieving a healthy balance between taking care of their own needs and their child’s needs
- using effective emergency strategies when quick behavior intervention is needed
- implementing long-term strategies for lasting behavior improvements
- weaving functional communication training into everyday routines and interactions
- addressing the most common problem areas, such as sleep and transitions
- increasing mindfulness and parenting in the moment

“Our thoughts and feelings always influence what we do,” Durand said. “Many parents face challenging children as well as thoughts and feelings about parenting that get in the way of their best instincts. This book is the first to combine the best of our knowledge about what to do for misbehaving children and new research that shows us how to summon up the strength and confidence to do it.”

Durand teaches courses in abnormal psychology, motivation, behavior analysis and autism. He is known worldwide as an authority in the area of child behavior disorders, including sleep problems. Durand is a fellow of the American Psychological Association and has received more than $4 million in federal funding since the beginning of his career to study the nature, assessment, and treatment of behavior problems in children with a range of difficulties including autism spectrum disorders.

-USF St. Petersburg-