



### **Nassau Suffolk Services for Autism – Work Supports for Adults**

*Shelley Ourian*

- Shelley spent 10 weeks in a supervised internship program at NSSA where she was able to spend time in the classroom that she would later be hired to work in. This provided Shelley with an opportunity to get to know the students and her co-workers, and to become familiar with the classroom environment and schedule of activities.
- The internship was structured so that Shelley spent several weeks observing only; gradually she began to take on indirect classroom responsibilities (preparing materials, clerical work) and eventually began to participate in teaching lessons to the students.
- Shelley began teaching students using scripted lessons that were designed by her supervisor and implemented by Shelley. As she became more confident, Shelley was able to begin to design her own lessons which were simple and highly reinforcing activities for the students such as reading a story or playing a game.
- As Shelley's confidence grew and she was able to demonstrate proficiency in her teaching, her responsibilities grew as well. She began to teach academic lessons (i.e. math, object identification, vocabulary, etc.) as well as get more creative and engaging with the students' more preferred and reinforcing activities.
- Throughout her tenure at NSSA Shelley has been under the direct supervision of a senior staff member. There is ongoing discussion regarding student progress as well as Shelley's professional development. Initially it was difficult for Shelley to accept feedback but this has improved significantly over time. As Shelley grew more confident and comfortable she was better able to accept and incorporate suggestions into her daily routine.

