



## CASD CHAT E-Newsletter

### Staying Safe Through The Holidays

Dear CASD friends and family,

It's already November! Some families have celebrated fall holidays and many families are looking forward to more celebrations as we head toward the end of 2021 and ring in 2022! While many COVID-19 precautions continue to be in place, we hope that some of you might be able to find a way to safely celebrate with your loved ones this year. In preparation for the holiday season, we thought we could share some tips for the holidays and ways to make sure your kids can stay as safe as can be leading up to the festivities.

1. **Continue to support your child in wearing their mask at school.** Review [this teaching story](#) that was created early in the pandemic to help support your child wearing their mask. You can also find helpful tips about mask-wearing in school through DC Autism Parents' [Back to School Toolkit](#). Finally, engage your child's school team in case your child may benefit from a behavioral plan to keep their mask on at school.
2. **If eligible, have your child get the vaccine.** Children as young as 5 are now eligible to get a COVID vaccine. This [helpful article](#) written by our colleague at CNH, Dr. Alexandra Brugler Yonts answers many important questions about the vaccine including why kids should get the vaccine and what we know about vaccines and kids. Additional information can be found [here](#). You can use a social story such as [this one](#) to help prepare your child for their vaccine visit.
3. **Consider these tips, shared in a past CASD Chat to make the winter holidays go smoothly.** Children with ASD benefit from routines and knowing what to expect. Even if you don't have big celebrations, holidays bring a change in routines, such as a break from school, and generating a new daily schedule for your child may be helpful. If you are planning social gatherings for the holidays, make a plan and share it with your children. Let them know what they might expect, including where and when they are going and who might be there. No matter what you plan for the holidays, make sure to take some time to slow down and build in time for rest.

(This CHAT was developed by Serene Habayeb, PhD with the support of research assistant Jessica Smith, BS)

# Celebrating Neurodiversity

15, 1980 – April 11, 2020) was a non-binary autistic blogger who was an influential figure in the autism rights and neurodiversity



movement. Mel was nonverbal and used a communication device to share their ideas. Many came to know Mel through their short film "In My Language." Mel spoke about autism at conferences about disabilities and worked with researchers who were trying to better understand autism. Through their videos and blog posts, Mel spread the message that "all people are valuable" and ensured that autistic advocacy included all people with autism, not only those with higher language levels.

## 2021 Calendar of Events

### CRUSHING HOLIDAY ANXIETY

#### TO DO LIST

1. SO
2. MANY
3. THINGS

November 17, 2021

6:30pm - 8:00pm

Calvert County Board of Education

1305 Dares Beach Road; Prince Frederick, MD 20678

The Holidays are coming! So is the excitement, the rush of activities, and the commitments to family, work, and school. This can stress us and our kids out. How do we reduce the stress in our lives that the holidays bring on and how do we make it easier for our kids. Join us at our Crushing Holiday Anxiety workshop to gather some tools for this upcoming season that can be used throughout the year.

This workshop is being offered as an in-person workshop, but we also will be setting up a Microsoft teams meeting so you can log on in real time if you cannot join us for the in-person workshop. Please register and let me know if you will be attending in person or virtually.

Register by emailing Sue Rafalowski at [parentconnections@calvertnet.k12.md.us](mailto:parentconnections@calvertnet.k12.md.us)

If you have any questions please call 443-550-8375



### Free Parent Support Group

**Where:** Virtual

**When:** every Monday at 1 PM EST

Dr. Dan Shapiro, friend of CASD, will be offering a free parent support group, every Monday at 1 PM EST. To register, [click here](#).

Pathfinders for Autism provides a list of programs for all ages including:

- Online group for

spouses/partners of adults with Asperger's;

- Information on transitioning services and Job skills;
- Online program for parents of picky eaters
- Pediatric feeding disorders in autism


Additionally, please see the flyer to the right for an event hosted by Pathfinders on Wednesday, December 8.

IN-PERSON PFA WORKSHOP

## 1 in 52 has Autism. Who Do You Know?

Wednesday, December 8, 2021 | 6 pm to 8 pm

Pathfinders for Autism has trained teachers, parents, police officers, doctors, and many more on Understanding Autism. Now it's time to train everyone in-between! Join PFA trainers, for an "Understanding Autism" workshop that is designed for the entire community. Learn more about Pathfinders for Autism's mission, explore our website, and have a chance to ask questions.



**Location:**  
Calvert County Board of Education  
1305 Dares Beach Road  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
Held in their Multipurpose Room

Register Now:  
<https://bit.ly/PFACC2021>

5 PATHFINDERS FOR AUTISM



The videos made me feel less alone.  
--Parent

The strategies were very well explained.  
--Parent

**New Free Videos**  
**UNSTUCK**  
AND ON TARGET

The *Unstuck* author team has created short videos to help parents of children with executive functioning difficulties. Please click the playlists below to view the videos in both English and Spanish!

**If you like the videos and your child attends school in Virginia, ask your school about being involved in our**

***Unstuck* implementation project. You can learn more about the project here:** <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/cu/nE4K95z/UOTelementaryschool>



The Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders is starting a new research project investigating how Unstuck and On Target: High School (UOT:HS) changes brain function. UOT:HS is a proven group treatment designed to promote flexible problem solving for high school students. Participation in the research project is made up of three parts. Each part begins with MRI scanning and behavioral assessments. The first part provides families with resources from experts about the transition out of high school, the second part is the 25-week group treatment for teens, and the third part is follow-up online surveys post-intervention. UOT:HS improves executive function skills such as flexible problem-solving and independent goal setting, planning, and organization. It emphasizes neurodiversity, self-advocacy, sustained motivation for long-term goals, handling stress, creating a positive reputation, and compromising skills. Group members will choose a goal that is important to them and work on

achieving their goal for the duration of group. This group is for diploma-track high school students (14-18 year olds), with average or above average cognitive abilities.

**Please contact Andrea Lopez at [alopez4@childrensnational.org](mailto:alopez4@childrensnational.org) for more information.**

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Allysa Ware, Ph.D. Candidate at Catholic University of America is recruiting for her dissertation study, exploring African American parents' views and opinions on parenting a child with autism. The purpose of this survey is to find out your views on different areas of parenting a child with autism, or ASD, and parenting experiences. The survey takes around 15-20 minutes to complete. To qualify to participate in the survey you must be 18 years of age or older, identify as Black or African American, and be the parent or parenting caregiver of an African American child with autism or ASD (age 17 or younger). If you meet these qualifications, and would like to participate, please be assured that your individual responses are completely anonymous and therefore completely confidential. Your participation is also completely voluntary, and there are no penalties for not participating.

As an incentive for completing the survey, you will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card for a completed survey. Please note that if you have further questions about the survey, or its results, you are welcome to contact Ms. Ware directly at her email: [66ware@cua.edu](mailto:66ware@cua.edu), or her supervising major professor, Dr. Michaela L. Z-Farber, PhD, LCSW-C at [farber@cua.edu](mailto:farber@cua.edu) (office phone 202-319-5465). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Catholic University has approved the conduct of this survey. You can also call The Catholic University of America's Office of Sponsored Programs at (202) 319-5218.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please complete the survey by clicking the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/childrensnationalautism>



Hover over this QR code to complete an interest form for this study.

## PARENT/CAREGIVER INFORMATION SHEET

*Comparative Effectiveness of EIBI and Adaptive ABA for Children with Autism*

**Principal Investigators:** Susan Hyman, M.D., Cynthia Anderson, Ph.D., BCBA-D,  
Eric Butter, Ph.D., Cynthia Johnson, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Zachary Warren, Ph.D.

This information sheet tells you about a research study being conducted at several different sites including the Cleveland Clinic, May Institute, Nationwide Children's Hospital, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center. The study is called *Comparative Effectiveness of EIBI and Adaptive ABA for Children with Autism*, and is for young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families.

**What is this study about?**

We are comparing two different interventions for young children with autism. The interventions are similar in many ways. Both:

- Use strategies that have been shown by research to help young children with autism learn skills (that are evidence based)
- Teach children how to better communicate and socialize
- Teach children important skills like self-help or how to not have problem behavior
- Can be modified to meet the needs of your child and your family

The interventions are different in a few ways, too:

- One intervention will have a therapist working with your child for about 20 hours per week. The other intervention has your child working with a therapist for less hours per week.
- In one intervention the therapist will work with your child on many different goals throughout the study. In the other more focused intervention, the therapist will begin by focusing on teaching your child ways to communicate better, and then may add goals to address other areas such as disruptive behaviors, sleep problems and repetitive behaviors.

**Next Steps**

If you want to learn more about this study, please let me know. You can let me know by filling out the form on the back and giving it back to your provider, who will give it to the research team. Instead if you prefer, you can complete this form online by scanning the QR code on the last page, and someone from the research team will contact you. You can also contact the research team directly at the phone and email listed on the next page. Writing your name on this form or contacting us will not mean that you are participating in the study, it will only mean that you are interested in learning more about the study.

It is important to know that this letter is not to tell you to join this study. It is your decision, and your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to learn any more about the study you can just do nothing, or you can indicate "No" on the back of this form.

For more information or questions about this research, you may call Dr. Ryan Martin at (781) 364-7820, or email at [Rmartin@mayinstitute.org](mailto:Rmartin@mayinstitute.org).

STUDY Number: 00003217  
Version Date: 07.19.2021

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RSRB Approval Date: 7/20/2021

## Community Resources & Events

The Drexel Autism Institute is seeking youth ages 13-29 on the autism spectrum who are transitioning to adulthood. They are also looking for these youths' caregivers and providers to participate in a study about **Team Trestle, an application for transition planning and coordination**. This virtual tool is designed to help autistic individuals meet their life goals by engaging autistic youth/young adults, their parents/legal guardians, and providers in the collaborative process of **implementing and achieving goals during the transition to adulthood**. For more information, check out the flyer. If you're interested, fill out the Interest Form at <https://tinyurl.com/TrestleInterest> [[tinyurl.com](https://tinyurl.com)] or email our team at

**Advocacy Resources**

[Autistic Self Advocacy Network-Navigating College: A Handbook on Self Advocacy](#)

**Resources on Racism/Supporting Black People**

[Spectrum Support's Social Stories on Racism](#)  
[ASAN's What is Police Violence?: A Plain Language Booklet](#)

[@TheMorganCruise Worksheets for Black Children](#)

**COVID-19 Safety Resources**

[Behavioral Directions LLC's Safety Teaching Protocol](#)

**COVID-19 National and Local Government Resources**

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
[World Health Organization](#)  
[DC Department of Health](#)  
[Maryland Department of Health](#)

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The Autism Institute at Drexel University is seeking parents/caregivers OR preschool/daycare providers of autistic children aged 24-60 months who have trouble speaking and use a communication tool (i.e., PECS, AAC device). We want **to better understand the use of communication tools** and how collaboration occurs about communication tool use in home/school settings **for minimally verbal preschool students with autism**. During a 90-minute focus group or interview we want to learn how teams work together to support children who use communication tools. If you are interested, please fill out the Interest Form at <https://tinyurl.com/EPICfocus> [tinyurl.com] or email [sodi@drexel.edu](mailto:sodi@drexel.edu) and we will contact you.

Visit Children's National Hospital's COVID-19 Resources



Visit Ivymount 2021 Special Needs Resource Guide: Highlighting 70+ Local Organizations Find Information about Behavioral Services, ABA Therapy, Assessment & Treatment; Schools Educational Programs, Advocacy; Social, Recreational, Fitness; Transitioning Youth & Young Adults; Accessibility, Inclusion, Safety, Health; Therapeutic Services; Camps; Financial Planning, Insurance