CASD Year in Review

As we embark on what we hope to be another successful year, CASD would like to take a trip down memory lane...

**January 2018:** We highlighted the article, "*What About the Girls? Sex-Based Differences in Autistic Traits and Adaptive Skills*", featured in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders led by Dr. Allison Ratto, Clinical Psychologist and CASD Faculty Member.

**February 2018:** The Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD) research team attended the International Neuropsychological Society (INS) 46th Annual Meeting. CASD's Director, Dr. Lauren Kenworthy served as the panel chair for the panel session, titled, "Bringing Neuropsychology to the People: Transforming Our Knowledge of Executive Function Phenotypes into Effective Community-based Interventions for Children" and presented "Cross-Diagnosis Efficacy of School-Based Unstuck and On Target EF Intervention in Low Income Communities". Dr. John Strang, neuropsychologist and Director of the Gender and Autism Program presented "Improving Autistic Adolescent EF Skills: Development and Evaluation of the On Target for Life School Curriculum".

**March 2018:** CASD hosted its first Stakeholder Advisory Board Meeting (SAB) in March. Since that time, we have hosted three additional meetings. To learn more about the CASD SAB, please visit our Stakeholder Advisory Board webpage.

**April 2017 and 2018:** C-SPAN's Washington Journal hosted, CASD Faculty Member, Allison Ratto, PhD, and the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) Executive Director, Julia Bascom, as they talked about Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and the programs and policies surrounding it. Please visit C-SPAN to view the 2017 and 2018 appearance.
May 2018: The CASD research team attended the International Society for Research (INSAR) Annual Meeting in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Dr. Kenworthy chaired a panel session titled, "Reaching Children Where They Are: The Promise and Challenge of School-Based Intervention for Autism" and presented, "How Do We Disseminate?: What School Staff and Parents Need to Implement Evidence Based Interventions in Public Schools," which reported on survey findings of school professionals about their knowledge of evidence-based interventions and how they select interventions to implement. As a part of this panel, Dr. Strang presented, "Improving the Executive Functioning of Adolescents with ASD through School-Based Intervention: The On Target for Life Curriculum," reporting on the positive outcomes of the On Target for Life (OTL) executive function intervention for middle school students. Additionally, Dr. Strang also chaired a panel titled, "The Co-Occurrence of Autism and Gender Dysphoria or Gender Incongruence" that included international scholars from VU University Medical Center in Amsterdam, Netherlands and Deakin University in Burwood, Australia.

July 2018: CASD Community Outreach Coordinator, Yetta Myrick partnered with the faculty and staff from the Children’s National Health System’s Primary Health Center at THEARC in SE Washington, DC to host its first Autism Workshop entitled, "Autism: The Full Spectrum".

August 2018: Dr. Strang’s study, “They Thought It Was an Obsession: Trajectories and Perspectives of Autistic Transgender and Gender-Diverse Adolescents”, was featured in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.

November 2018: Members of the CASD research team attended the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) 52nd Annual Convention in Washington, DC. Dr. Kenworthy served as the keynote speaker for the ASDD SIG Meeting and chaired a panel, "Leveraging Technology to Improve Autism Acceptance and Treatment" and presented, "Online Parent Training Modules to Improve Executive Function in Autistic Children" about the e-Unstuck and On Target Parent Training Study. Dr. Cara Pugliese also presented, "Efficacy of a Parent-Mediated Sexual Education Curriculum for Youth With ASD", during the panel.
To take an in depth look at our trip down memory lane, please read past CASD Chat issues on our CASD Chat webpage.

Call for Applications

The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) announced its 2019 Scholarship Program, which provides $3,000 scholarships to students across the autism spectrum. OAR is pleased to invite persons with an autism diagnosis (DSM-IV or later criteria) pursuing full-time, postsecondary, undergraduate education or vocation-technical training in any of the following:

- Four-year undergraduate college or university
- Two-year undergraduate college
- Trade, technical or vocation school
- Cooperative life skills programs

To learn more please visit the OAR Scholarships page. Applications are due on May 6, 2019.

You May Be Interested...

Morning at the Museum, a project of the Smithsonian Institution's Accessibility Program and the Smithsonian Museums, is a FREE sensory-friendly program for families of children with disabilities. Programs rotate throughout the Smithsonian museums and take place on Saturday or Sunday morning. Each program consists of providing pre-registered families early entrance, facilitated activities, pre-visit materials, and a take a break space.

Please see the 2019 Morning at the Museum Calendar of Events. For more information and to register for future Morning at the Museum programs, please contact Ashley Grady at access@si.edu.

Calendar of Events

January 2018*

Chuck E. Cheese's Sensory Sensitive Sundays
Chuck E. Cheese's Locations Nationwide
Sunday, January 6th
Chuck E. Cheese's offers a sensory-friendly experience, two hours early, on the first Sunday of every month. The Sensory Sensitive Sundays experience includes: less
crowding and noise, dimmed lighting, show and music turned off or down, limited appearances by Chuck E., and food and games are offered for a fee. For more information and for a list of participating locations, please visit, [https://www.chuckecheese.com/birthday-events/sensory-sensitive-sundays](https://www.chuckecheese.com/birthday-events/sensory-sensitive-sundays)

**AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Bumblebee**  
**AMC Theatres Nationwide**  
**Tuesday, January 8th**  
The program provides a special opportunity for families to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. The auditoriums dedicated to the program have their lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout, or sing! Please check your local theatre listings for specific show times. For more information, please visit, [www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films](http://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films)

**AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Mary Poppins Returns**  
**AMC Theatres Nationwide**  
**Saturday, January 12th**  
The program provides a special opportunity for families to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. The auditoriums dedicated to the program have their lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout, or sing! Please check your local theatre listings for specific show times. For more information, please visit, [www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films](http://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films)

**The Auburn School Speaker Series:**  
**Dr. Clifford Sussman, MD**  
"Changing the Game: A Parent Guide to Healthy Screen Use"  
**Fairfax, VA**  
**Wednesday, January 16th at 9am**  
Dr. Sussman has been featured as an expert on Internet Gaming Disorder in the New York Times and TIME Magazine for kids. His guide to healthy technology use for ADHD was featured on the cover of Attention Magazine. As an author of peer-reviewed literature and a frequent public speaker, he is internationally known as a pioneer in using psychotherapy to treat internet and video game addiction. He is dedicated to helping people achieve a more balanced relationship with digital technology. By the end of the presentation, parents should have the answers to the following questions: Why are video games and screen time so addictive? How does excessive screen time affect the brain? What are some guidelines for healthy screen use in the home? How do I balance setting age-appropriate limits with encouraging independence and self-regulation? How do I know if my child is controlling the game or the game is controlling my child? What can I do if my child shows signs of internet and video game addiction? How do I educate my children about this? All events are FREE to attend! RSVP at [https://www.theauburnschool.org/speakerseries](https://www.theauburnschool.org/speakerseries)

**Sensory Friendly Storytime**  
**Little Falls Library**  
**Bethesda, MD**  
**Saturday, January 19th at 2pm**  
Sensory Friendly Storytime is designed for children of all ages who prefer smaller groups due to sensory processing disorders. Storytime will be followed by social playtime with
educational toys, and an opportunity for parents to socialize. Participants are encouraged to bring their own noise reduction earmuffs and weighted items. The number of participants is limited, so registration is required. The entire family is welcome, including neurotypical siblings. For more information and to register for the program, please contact the Little Falls Library at 240-773-9520 or email Leslie Jarvis at leslie.jarvis@montgomerycountymd.gov

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Glass
AMC Theatres Nationwide
Tuesday, January 22nd
The program provides a special opportunity for families to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. The auditoriums dedicated to the program have their lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout, or sing! Please check your local theatre listings for specific show times. For more information, please visit, www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: A Dog's Way Home
AMC Theatres Nationwide
Saturday, January 26th
The program provides a special opportunity for families to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. The auditoriums dedicated to the program have their lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout, or sing! Please check your local theatre listings for specific show times. For more information, please visit, www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films

Chuck E. Cheese's Sensory Sensitive Sundays
Chuck E. Cheese's Locations Nationwide
Sunday, February 3rd
Chuck E. Cheese’s offers a sensory-friendly experience, two hours early, on the first Sunday of every month. The Sensory Sensitive Sundays experience includes: less crowding and noise, dimmed lighting, show and music turned off or down, limited appearances by Chuck E., and food and games are offered for a fee. For more information and for a list of participating locations, please visit, https://www.chuckecheese.com/birthday-events/sensory-sensitive-sundays

*Parents need to assess the appropriateness of any given event for their child. The sensory-friendly opportunities listed are appropriate for a broad range of ages, from children's activities to shows that are appropriate only for older teens or adults.
Life After an ASD Diagnosis:
Next steps after receiving an initial diagnosis

The purpose of this workshop is to provide an overview of autism, as well as the common resources and evidence-based treatments that are effective for children with autism spectrum disorders. We will review what autism is, common myths about autism, community resources and funding option, and evidence-based treatments.

Date: Wednesday January 9th, 2019
Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Place: Charles County Parent Center
F. B. Gwynn Center
5998 Radio Station Rd
La Plata, MD 20646

Presenters:

Allysa Ware, MSW is a Project Director for Family Voices and former Social Worker at Children’s National Health System’s Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASM).

Yetta Myrick is the Community Outreach Coordinator with Children’s National Health System’s Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASM). Both are mothers of autistic teenagers who work to link families with resources and services and to provide the best possible care for autistic youth.

The workshop is free, but registration is required. To register, please call the Parent Center at 301-934-7456 or email your name, contact information and number attending to pfs@ccboe.com
2019 VSA Playwright Discovery Award Program

Young writers with disabilities and collaborative groups that include students with disabilities, in the U.S. grades 6-12 (or equivalents) or ages 11-18 for non-U.S. students, are invited to explore the disability experience through the art of writing for performance—in the form of plays, screenplays, or music theater. Writers are encouraged to craft short (10 minute) works from their own experiences and observations in the style of realism, through the creation of fictional characters and settings, or writing metaphorically or abstractly about the disability experience.

DEADLINE TO APPLY: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2019

VISIT KENNEDY-CENTER.ORG/VSA FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO ENTER!
SAVE THE DATE

7th Annual
IVYMOUNT SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE FAIR
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2019
NOON - 3 P.M.

IVYMOUNT'S SEVENTH ANNUAL RESOURCE FAIR WILL HOST OVER 50 EXHIBITORS WHOSE ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE A VARIETY OF SERVICES AND RESOURCES TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE DC METROPOLITAN AREA.

THE IVYMOUNT SCHOOL
18614 SEVEN LOCKS ROAD, ROCKVILLE, MD
THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

IVYMOUNT SCHOOL & PROGRAMS
Exceptional Programs for Exceptional Students.
The course is an interactive online parent training program based on the proven Unstuck and On Target curriculum and in-person training. Intended for parents and caregivers of verbal children with autism aged 8-11, the Unstuck course helps parents support their children’s executive function so they can be more flexible and more easily reach goals.

Learn more about:
- Brain-based executive function challenges
- Can’t, Not Won’t thinking
- Adapting for success
- Motivation strategies
- Verbal cues to build flexibility
- Identifying feelings
- Coping strategies
- Setting and reaching goals

Features
- Self-paced modules
- Interactive practice exercises
- Video tips by experts
- Printable resources to use and share
- Real-life examples

Does it work?
What the research says:
Yes! It works! Our research shows that the online parent course works as well as the in-person trainings.

What parents say:
- "The ‘Can’t, Not Won’t’ has been transformative and it has shifted our entire mindset as a family, especially between me and my husband."
- "There were things I could take to the teacher and say, ‘Let’s try this,’ and it was easy to share."
- "The flexible words were so helpful for my child in social situations. If she had a playdate, we would talk about Plan A and if that didn’t work out how we would go with a Plan B."

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