

Children's National: CASD CHAT

Research Published!

Sexuality and Autism Spectrum Disorders

Youth with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) can face challenges related to sexuality, dating, and friendships. Many autistic adolescents and adults have less sexual knowledge and awareness, which places them at risk for sexual victimization and sexual exploitation. With the growing number of autistic youth entering adolescence and adulthood, there is an urgent need for research on how to best educate youth with ASD on sexuality and related decision making so that they can lead safe and fulfilling lives in harmony with their sexual needs. In the new article, "[Feasibility and Preliminary Efficacy of a Parent Mediated Sexual Education Curriculum for Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders](#)," CASD Faculty Member, [Cara Pugliese](#), PhD and collaborators at Danya International, Inc. and the University of Colorado School of Medicine, explored whether a parent-delivered curriculum, the Supporting Teens with Autism on Relationships (STAR) program, was helpful for youth with ASD and their parents, increased youth's sexuality knowledge and relationship skills, and increased their parents' sexuality knowledge and comfort with discussing sexual matters with their children. Eighty-four youth with ASD ages 9-18 years old and their parents participated in this study. Two parent groups received the STAR program (a clinician-led group vs. a self-guided group), while a comparison group received a substance abuse prevention program that included instruction in problem-solving and social skills. Youth with ASD and their parents rated the STAR program highly, and it was effective in increasing parent and youth knowledge of sexuality, while the comparison group was not. Parents also became more comfortable discussing sexuality with their children. Improvements were seen regardless of whether the parent received support from a clinician. CASD's faculty and staff would like to congratulate Dr. Pugliese on the publication of this important article!



Cara Pugliese, PhD

If you are interested in learning more about the curriculum, you can access it here: "[Charting the Course: A Family Toolkit to Help Youth with Autism Navigate Sexuality and Relationships](#)".

Eating Habits Study Now Recruiting



Participate in Research On Eating Habits of Children

Who can participate?

- Parents and their 7-17 year-old children who are:
 - A) on the autism spectrum
OR
 - B) typically developing
AND
 - C) not currently on a special diet

What do you do?

- Complete behavioral surveys, paper-and-pencil and computerized tasks, provide physical measurements

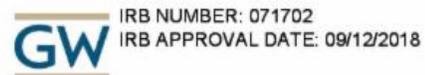
How long does it take?

- Approximately 2 hours, scheduled at a mutually convenient time

Is there payment?

- Yes! Children receive \$30 and parents receive \$35.

If interested, contact:
Emily Richard
emilyrichard@gwu.edu
202-994-0756



Calendar of Events

July 2019*

Nationwide

Chuck E. Cheese's Sensory Sensitive Sundays

Chuck E. Cheese's Locations Nationwide

Sunday, July 7th

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>

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Spider-Man: Far From Home

AMC Theatres Nationwide

Tuesday, July 9th

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: Toy Story 4

AMC Theatres Nationwide

Saturday, July 13th

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

My Way Matinee: TBD

Regal Theatres Nationwide

Saturday, July 13th at 10:30am

This program gives everyone the opportunity to experience a movie with the lights turned up and the volume turned down. Guests are free to express themselves by singing, crying, dancing, walking around, talking or shouting while enjoying Hollywood's latest films! All screenings for these sensory friendly movies will begin at 10:30am on the second and fourth Saturday of the month for a special discounted ticket price! For more information, please visit, <https://www.regmovies.com/static/en/us/promotions/my-way-matinee>

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Lion King

AMC Theatres Nationwide

Tuesday, July 23rd

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

My Way Matinee: TBD

Regal Theatres Nationwide

Saturday, July 27th at 10:30am

This program gives everyone the opportunity to experience a movie with the lights turned up and the volume turned down. Guests are free to express themselves by singing, crying, dancing, walking around, talking or shouting while enjoying Hollywood's latest films! All screenings for these sensory friendly movies will begin at 10:30am on the second and fourth Saturday of the month for a special discounted ticket price! For more information, please visit, <https://www.regmovies.com/static/en/us/promotions/my-way-matinee>

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Lion King

AMC Theatres Nationwide

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DC Metro Area

Adventure Theatre MTC Sensory Friendly Performance: The Cat in the Hat

Glen Echo, MD

Saturday, July 6th at 4:30pm

These performances have been slightly adjusted for children with autism and other sensitivity challenges. To purchase tickets, please visit:

<https://adventuretheatre-mtc.org/seeashow/professional/autismsensoryfriendly.html>

Smithsonian's Morning at the Museum

Renwick Gallery

Washington, DC

Saturday, July 13th

Morning at the Museum 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. Registration is required. For more information about the program, please contact Ashley Grady at Access@si.edu or 202-633-2921. To register for Renwick Gallery program, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/morning-at-the-museum-renwick-gallery-tickets-63378517853>

Morning at the Gardens

U.S. Botanic Gardens

Washington, DC

Sunday, July 14th 8:30am

Morning at the Gardens is a FREE sensory-friendly program for families of children with disabilities. Space is limited and registration is required! For more information and to register, please contact Maura Nelson at mnelson@aoc.gov or 202-226-1047.

Evening at the Gardens

U.S. Botanic Gardens

Washington, DC

Sunday, July 14th 6:30pm

Evening at the Gardens is a FREE sensory-friendly program for teens and young adults with disabilities ages 13+ years and their families. Space is limited and registration is required! For more information and to register, please contact Maura Nelson at mnelson@aoc.gov or 202-226-1047.

Sensory Friendly Storytime Little Falls Library

Bethesda, MD

Saturday, July 20th at 2pm

Sensory Friendly Storytime is designed for children of all ages who prefer smaller groups due to sensory processing disorders. The program will last about 20 minutes and

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 entire family is welcome to attend, including any neurotypical siblings. To register for the program, contact the Little Falls Library at 240-773-9520 or by email at Leslie.Jarvis@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Please include the following information:

Child's first and last name

Age of child

Parent/Guardian name

Best phone number to reach parent/guardian

Parent/Guardian email address

Morning at the Museum: Ford's Theatre

Washington, DC

Saturday, August 3rd at 9am

Ford's Theatre aims to provide a meaningful and comfortable experience for individuals and their families. As part of the program, pre-registered families will have early entry into the museum, before it opens to the public. Facilitated and thematic activities will be offered, as well as pre-visit materials (e.g., social narratives, sensory maps, etc.) and a take-a-break space. All activities are designed to create a connection between the individual and the content of the museum. Siblings and other family members are always welcome! Tickets are free but required. Reserve them now [online](#) or by calling the box office team at 202-347-4833, option 7. Recommended for ages 6 and older.

Baltimore, MD

B&O Sensory Friendly Days

B&O Railroad Museum

Baltimore, MD

Sunday, July 21st at 10am

The B&O offers Sensory Friendly Days for children and guests with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and sensory processing differences. The museum will be opening one hour early. This more accessible museum experience features added signage and modified lighting and sounds, as well as the presence of additional volunteers and staff to support visitors throughout their stay. Sensory kits will be stationed throughout the Museum's campus and include feeling charts, break timers, fidgets, stress balls, and noise canceling headphones. If smaller crowds, specialized activities, less sound and light stimuli, and a designated quiet room will make it easier for you or your child to explore all that the B&O has to offer, this is the day for you! Event is free with general admission. To RSVP and receive the specialized sensory story, please contact Rebecca Funk at RFunk@borail.org. For more information, please visit, <http://www.borail.org/sensory-days.aspx>

Sensory Evening

The Walters Art Museum

Baltimore, MD

Saturday, July 27th at 4pm

Join the Walters Art Museum for an evening of expanded programming designed specifically for children with Sensory Processing Disorders and their families. For more information and to register, please visit: <https://thewalters.org/event/sensory-evening/>

Sensory Morning

The Walters Art Museum

Baltimore, MD

Sunday, July 28th at 9am

Join the Walters Art Museum for a morning of expanded programming designed specifically for children with Sensory Processing Disorders and their families. For more information and to register, please visit: <https://thewalters.org/event/sensory-morning-4/>

Philadelphia, PA

Play Without Boundaries

Please Touch Museum

Philadelphia, PA

Sunday, July 7th at 9am

The Please Touch Museum is adapted to provide a relaxed environment for individuals with autism, learning differences, and other sensory or communication needs.

Accommodations include low-level lighting and a quieter museum experience, Social Stories & Quiet Zones, relaxed performances in the Please Touch Playhouse. To learn more and register, please visit: <https://www.pleasetouchmuseum.org/accessibility/>

Access to Science

Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University

Philadelphia, PA

Sunday, July 14th at 9am

Visitors on the autism spectrum and their families are invited to experience the museum before the crowds. You can visit with the dinosaurs, explore the children's discovery center Outside In, see the special Mythic Creatures exhibit and wander through the dioramas at your own pace. Pre-registration is required (same-day registration is available onsite). If you would like to attend, please contact our visitor services department at 215-299-1060 or AccessToScience@ansp.org. Please provide the following information: contact name, email, phone, total number of attendees, number of children and their ages. To ensure a positive experience, space is limited! To learn more, please visit: <https://ansp.org/programs-and-events/programs/access-to-science/>

Sensory Night

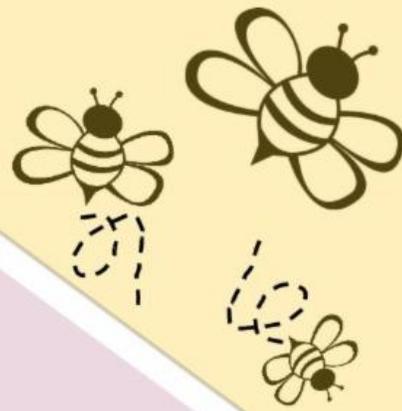
LEGOLAND® Discovery Center

Philadelphia, PA

Tuesday, July 23rd at 5pm

LEGOLAND® Discovery Center Philadelphia offers this sensory friendly LEGO® experience for families with children and adolescents 17 and under on the autism spectrum. Special accommodations include the reduction of sound and light levels in certain areas, quiet spaces, reduced center capacity, and Social Stories. To learn more, please visit: <https://philadelphia.legolanddiscoverycenter.com/whats-inside/events/2019-sensory-night-dates/>

*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.



Sexuality & Developmental Disabilities: A Workshop for Parents and Guardians

Talking with our young or grown children about sexuality can be a difficult task. As parents and guardians, we often worry whether talking about it gives permission and whether they can be safe from harm when they are in relationships. This workshop will help you become more comfortable discussing this topic by covering which topics to discuss and most effective ways to talk about this sensitive topic.

Friday, July 19, 2019 from 7:00pm – 8:30pm

HSC Pediatric Center

**To RSVP or for more information,
please contact:**

Marsha Stepensky, M.S.Ed, BCBA

MStepensky@HSCHealth.org

202.461.3698



THE HSC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



**Kids in
action**



The Ballad of Mu Lan
Sunday, July 21st, 2019 at
11:00 a.m.

Since 2012, Imagination Stage has been proud to offer Sensory-Friendly performances for select shows of each professional theatre season. Imagination Stage works closely with a network of theatre professionals and nationwide autism experts to prepare for this series.

Sensory-Friendly performances are designed to serve students on the autism spectrum or those with sensory sensitivities.

Adaptations for Sensory-Friendly Include

- Pre-Visit preparatory materials
- Adjustments to sound and light levels
- Additional break spaces
- Seating arrangements that allow for movement as needed

**Ticket prices range from \$12-25
100% refundable up until the show begins**

For more information, please contact our Access and Inclusion Coordinator Scott S. Turner at **301-280-1631**.

To order tickets, please call the box office at **301-280-1660** Monday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. or order online any time on our website!

Relax and enjoy the show with your child. Our Sensory-Friendly experience creates a safe space for all members of the family!

Funded in part by the MAXIMUS Foundation, Kiwanis Foundation, Mars Foundation, and Nora Roberts Foundation.

*The Ballad
of Mu Lan*

Written and directed by Alvin Chan
Music by Matt Mazzella
Partnership Production with
Honolulu Theatre for Youth

Courage, honor, and country! When China is forced to war with the invading Xia Xia, each family must send one man into battle. In her quest to protect her baba, our young heroine proves girls can do anything- including saving a nation. Inspired by Peking Opera, this partnership production with the Honolulu Theatre for Youth is full of music, pageantry, and humor.



College *and* Career Conference

October 26, 2019

For Middle and High School Students
with Disabilities, Their Families, and Adult
Professionals Who Work with Them

Please visit: futurequestgmu.org

FUTURE QUEST



Sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education's Region IV Training & Technical Assistance Center and the Northern Virginia Transition Coalition www.novatransition.org

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.

Development of **Unstuck and on Target: Course for Parents** and research reported on this website was supported by the National Institute of Mental Health of the National Institutes of Health under award number R44MH109193. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.