



Children's National: CASD CHAT

CASD at the INSAR Annual Meeting

In May, members of the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD) research team attended the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) Annual Meeting in Rotterdam, Netherlands. CASD's Director, Dr. Lauren Kenworthy (top right), 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. John Strang (top left), CASD neuropsychologist and Director of the Gender & Autism Program 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.



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. Dr. Strang presented, "Autistic Gender Dysphoric Youth: Community-Based Participatory Research Development of a Clinical Program," discussing what autistic transgender youth and their families want and need from care providers. Meredith Powers (bottom left), CASD clinical research coordinator, presented, "Gender Histories, Life Experiences, and Future Plans and Hopes of Gender Dysphoric Autistic Youth: A Framework Analysis" as a part of the panel.

Dr. Allison Ratto (bottom right), CASD clinical psychologist, participated in the INSAR Annual Meeting Press Conference where she answered questions about her work on dual-language exposure and bilingualism in children with autism spectrum disorders. She later gave an [oral presentation](#) on this work, titled, "Effects of Dual-Language Exposure on Language and Executive Function in Children with ASD and ADHD." Dr. Cara Pugliese (not pictured), presented her poster titled, "Psychiatric Outcomes in an Addressing Disparities Comparative Effectiveness Trial for Elementary Students with ASD or ADHD".

If you are interested in learning more about CASD Research Opportunities, please call 301-765-5425 or email autism@childrensnational.org with the SUBJECT LINE: "CASD Research Opportunities".

Children's National and GetWell Network Design Digital Pathway

The digital autism toolkit will be packed with prescribable health education and condition-management tools developed by the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders at Children's National.

The GetWell Go autism toolkit will provide:

- parenting strategies to address common challenges
- information about navigating school programs and services
- community resources that will connect parents to a network of families and organizations that provide social and emotional support
- legal and financial planning tools to provide guidance on preparing for the future

There are plans currently underway to launch a pilot of the GetWell Go autism toolkit this summer at Children's National Health System. A national roll-out is expected later this fall.

Future phases will explore integrating evidence-based screening tools and the development of a platform that connects communities - schools, family members or anyone who is a part of the child's life - to evidence-based resources about autism.



Dr. Kathleen Atmore, Eileen Walters, Yetta Myrick, and Allysa Ware presented at the GetWell Annual Conference about the project

CASD Cares

Summer Ideas

Another school year is coming to a close, and now it is time to have some summer fun! Here are three ideas to help your family enjoy the summer season.

1. Visit a national or state park. Did you know that the National Park Service, Maryland and Virginia State Parks offer free admission to people with disabilities? The [America the Beautiful-National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Access Pass](#) is a free, lifetime pass - available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States that have been medically determined to have a permanent disability that provides admittance to more than 2,000 recreation sites managed by five Federal agencies. The [Universal Disability Pass](#) permits the holder and one other person free entrance to day-use facilities at Maryland State Parks and Forests, where there are service fees associated with entrance. Virginia State Parks honors all official Handicapped License Plates or Placards. For disabled persons not qualifying for these plates, you must apply for a [Disability Passport](#).

2. Visit a museum. The Smithsonian offers eleven museums and galleries on the National Mall and six other museums and the National Zoo in the greater National Capital Area. These museums can be full of tourist this time of year. However, Morning at the Museum, a project of the Smithsonian Institution's Accessibility Program and the Smithsonian Museums, invites visitors with cognitive and sensory disabilities to the Smithsonian Institution museums one hour prior to the official open hour so that participants can take advantage of the quiet and calm museum environment. To learn more, please contact Ashley Grady at access@si.edu or 202-633-2921. Additionally, many museums all across the country offer sensory-friendly accommodations. Check out the article on Understood.org, [12 Museums with Sensory Friendly Accommodations for Kids](#), highlighting twelve museums offering sensory-friendly programming.

3. Visit a theme park. Long lines, and loud noises can create sensory overload for many children, teens and young adults on the autism spectrum. However, many theme parks, ([Six Flags America](#), [Busch Gardens](#), [Hershey Park](#), and [Dutch Wonderland](#)), offer accessibility programs for visitors with disabilities. [Kings Dominion](#) even offers tips specifically for guests with autism. Check out the Easter Seals article, [39 Theme Parks with Special Needs Access Passes](#), which features theme parks across the county and the United Kingdom offering such programming. In April, [Sesame Place](#) announced that it is the first Theme Park in the World to be designated as a Certified Autism Center, and offers quiet spaces and a [sensory guide](#) for families.

If you are traveling to other cities and states this summer, reach out to local autism organizations to see if they offer programming or can provide you insight on activities that offer support like those provided above. Have a fun and safe summer!

CASD Community Workshop Series Transition and ASD: What You Need to Know

Thursday, June 14th 6-7:30pm

This workshop seeks to increase understanding of the transition process for youth and young adults with autism spectrum disorders. An overview of the four pillars of transition: education, medical, employment, and independent living will be provided.



Presenters:

CASD's Social Worker, Allysa Ware, MSW, LGSW and Community Outreach Coordinator, Yetta Myrick, both mothers of autistic teenagers, work to link families with resources and services. They work together to provide the best possible care for autistic youth, and facilitate research participation among interested families.

Location:

Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
Children's National Health System
15245 Shady Grove Road, North Building
Suite 350 Conference Room
Rockville, MD 20850

This workshop is FREE and open to parents, family members and professionals, but registration is required.

To register, please contact Yetta Myrick at ymyrick@childrensnational.org or 301-765-5488.

Help Me Keep Calm Program

The Help Me Keep Calm (HMKC) Program at Children's National provides supportive services for children with autism and/or developmental delays who are scheduled for surgery or a procedure under anesthesia. Prior to the day of surgery, the Child Life team will complete an assessment over the phone with your family to discuss your child's sensory needs, behavioral challenges and past medical experiences. Based on this assessment, the team will then create a safe passage plan for your child and share the plan with your medical team.

In addition to the safe passage plan, our team offers the following resources for the day of surgery:

- Private, quiet waiting space
- Modified forms of communication, including picture schedules and preparation materials
- Sensory items including weighted lap pads, sensory toys, headphones, noise machines and more

If you have questions or think your child would benefit from the HMKC Program, please call Child Life at 202-476-5665.

Calendar of Events

June 2018*

Partnership for Extraordinary Minds: Special Needs Trusts and ABLE Accounts

Silver Spring, MD

Tuesday, June 5th at 7pm

Join xMinds as they host Eric Jorgensen from Turning Point Financial and Tia Marsili from ARC of Northern Virginia. The presentation is free from member and \$15 for non-members. Pre-Registration is required. To register, visit www.xMinds.org.

AJE Special Education Thursdays

Learning About Accessibility Programs in the DC Library: Including the Summer Challenge Reading Program

Guest: Rebecca Tanen, Children's Librarian, DC Public Library

Thursday, June 7th at 12:30pm

These 30 minute sessions are available online one Thursday a month to give parents and professionals: information, education and a better understanding of DC special education issues in a "bite-size" format. For more information, please visit, <http://www.aje-dc.org/programs-3/special-education-thursdays/>

Kid in Action: Only Make Believe
The HSC Pediatric Center
Washington, DC
Friday, June 8th at 7pm

Join Kids in Action as they host Only Make Believe, a non-profit organization that creates and performs interactive theatre for children in hospitals and care facilities. Performances at The HSC Pediatric Center are designed for children with varying abilities. Only Make Believe allows participants to take a break from their everyday obstacles, express themselves in their own way, and "let loose" in a safe environment. Advance registration required. Email Jenn Preyers, CTRS at jpreyers@hschealth.org. For more information, please visit, <http://www.hschealth.org/medical-programs-therapy/services-programs/adaptive-sports>

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Solo: A Star Wars Movie
AMC Theatres Nationwide
Saturday, June 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: Solo: A Star Wars Movie
AMC Theatres Nationwide
Tuesday, June 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

My Way Matinee: Incredibles 2
Regal Theatres Nationwide
Saturday, June 16th at 10:30am

The program is sensory friendly, with the sound lowered and lights brighter. For more information, please visit, <http://www.regmovies.com/MyWayMatinee>

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Incredibles 2

AMC Theatres Nationwide

Saturday, June 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

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom

AMC Theatres Nationwide

Tuesday, June 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, July 1st

Chuck E. Cheese's is proud to support families who have children with autism and special needs. They now offer a sensory-friendly experience, two hours early, on the first Sunday of every month. Their trained and caring staff is there to make sure each guest has a fun filled visit. 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/deals-offers/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.



Autism Support Group

Looking for a support group where you can talk with other autism parents?

Do you want to participate in a group while in your comfort zone?

Join **DC Autism Parents (DCAP)** as they host their monthly support group phone call!

This event is free, space is limited and registration is required. To learn more and register, contact:

ymyrick@dcautismparents.org.



Tuesday,
June 12, 2018

7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Conference Call

Call-in number will be provided upon registration.

You May Be Interested...

In a study out of Yale University and the Yale Child Study Center, researchers found that "the emergency responders with a lot of experience did not demonstrate greater skill at tending to people with autism than those with less experience. This result suggests that ordinary on-the-job training is not enough." You can read the full *Spectrum News* article here: "[Training First Responders to Recognize Autism May Avert Tragedies](#)"