



CASD CHAT E-Newsletter

Planning for a Successful Summer Break

Dear CASD friends and families,

Summer break is quickly approaching, which often leads to increased downtime for our kids. While this break may be beneficial for some, it can also pose new challenges for many children with autism who rely on predictable routines. Therefore, as you head into the summer, here are several strategies and resources that will help keep your child's break as structured as possible:

- 1. Make things visual.** Create a summer calendar or picture schedule and post it where your child can see. Add activities and events as soon as they get scheduled. Families may wish to investigate the following website, which is a great resource for creating visual schedules: <https://do2learn.com/picturecards/VisualSchedules/index.htm>. Use the format that is easiest for everyone in the family to understand at a glance. Pictures are often easiest, and kids may enjoy selecting the pictures (including emojis) for each activity. For those who are more tech-savvy, activities and events can be added to a cellphone or electronic calendar. Reminders can be set at varying intervals in order to alert your child to what's happening the next day or cue when he/she/they will need to leave the house.
- 2. Create daily routines.** Although it can be difficult, especially with summer travel, try to create a consistent routine for your child. This includes keeping the same mealtime or bedtime routines throughout the summer, as well as scheduling routine summer activities (e.g., going to the park at the same time every day). This sense of predictability will likely increase your child's overall comfort level. Highlight changes to the schedule and, when needed, generate a new daily/weekly schedule when the routine changes, like for vacations and trips. The new schedule should indicate what stays the same and what is different.
- 3. Prepare your child for upcoming plans.** Preview any known changes to your child's summer schedule well in advance. For example, if your family is taking a trip or attending a social gathering, make sure to prepare your child for what to expect (e.g., when/where, who will be there, what he/she/they can do if feeling stressed or overwhelmed). Families are also encouraged to incorporate the use of social stories, which can be used to preview upcoming events using a visual format. Social stories are used to help reduce your child's stress or anxiety by making unfamiliar situations feel more predictable. There are many social story templates already available online. Here are some

suggested resources for families: [a social story about coming to CASD](#), a [social story for getting vaccines at Children's National](#), [Carol Gray Social Stories](#), and [templates and teaching stories from Autism Speaks](#)

4. **Limit screen time and get outdoors.** This is particularly important after spending all or most of the school year doing virtual learning. Try to find an outdoor activity that your child enjoys (e.g., swinging, playing tag, riding a bike, swimming) which will allow him/her to burn off some energy each day. Exercise is important for both physical and mental health. It may help to list these activities on the daily schedule to occur before screen time. If your child likes every aspect of screens (such as movies, you-tube videos, games), help them decide what specific activity they will play and when they will play it (for example, watching you-tube after the walk, watching a movie after dinner).
5. **Reward positive behavior.** Generating or maintaining a simple behavior chart over the summer can also create a sense of structure. Identify 2-3 positive behaviors that you would like to prioritize over the summer (e.g., cleaning up after play, clearing the table, washing hair) and reward those behaviors when they occur. For tips on creating a positive behavior chart, please go to: <https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/boost-behavioral-change>. Reward the behavior you observe before giving another command (such as “Thanks for picking up your cars. Please pick up the blocks”).

Profiles Celebrating Neurodiversity

This month, we are highlighting Jessica Benham, Pennsylvania's first openly bisexual representative and the first state legislator with autism. Jessica co-founded the Pittsburgh Centre for Autistic Advocacy in 2014, a grassroots self-advocacy project run by Autistic people for Autistic people, and continues to fight for disability rights in her role as state representative. Representative Benham has ensured individuals with disabilities are treated equitably in the legislative process through her work with the Autism CARES Act on the federal level and her advocacy for Paul's Law.

She currently serves on numerous committees and caucuses, including the Climate Caucus, Autism and Intellectual Disabilities Caucus, LGBTQ Equality Caucus, Women's Health Caucus, and others. In an interview with The Hill, Benham remarked: “I hope that my candidacy demonstrates to young people with developmental disabilities that they can be leaders, and that they can stand up for the future of their communities.”



2021 Calendar of Events

Ivymount IvyMoves Club

Where: Ivymount School

When: Thursdays 4-4:45 pm

Featuring a mix of stretches, beginner's yoga, and fitness exercises along with music to get you moving and shaking at home. Ivymount's own Adapted Physical Education teacher, Mr. M, will be leading the fun! During each class, participants will engage in upper body, lower body, cardio or strength training movements. Fitness challenges and rewards will be celebrated throughout the session. [Register here.](#)

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.](#)

TGIF Yoga Series

Where: Virtual

When: Once a Month every Friday at 4:30p

Pathfinders for Autism and [Child's Heart Yoga](#) are teaming up for a series of FREE yoga classes to try and provide a much needed mental health break for everyone during this hectic time.

Starting on Friday, March 12th at 4:30 p.m. and continuing once a month until September, please join us for a free, virtual, all ages, family friendly yoga class taught by Bridget Strama of [Child's Heart Yoga](#).

The event(s) are free, but a one-time registration is required. Please register below. A Zoom link will be sent out before each class to join in. You only need to register once to sign up for the series. Feel free to attend one or all of the classes! For more details, [please see here.](#)

ACT Early DC Parent Cafes

Where: Virtual, via Zoom

When: Various dates, depending on your family

The Act Early DC group will be holding 3 Virtual Parent Cafes for parents/caregivers of children ages 0-5. This is a great opportunity for parents/caregivers to connect and build friendships. See the flyer for more details.



ACT EARLY DC PARENT CAFES

Parents/caregivers of children ages 0-5 diagnosed with Autism or related disability
Saturday, June 5, 2021
10am-12pm

Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/64569DAB3H5GVMH1RH4V5pFKY>

Parents/caregivers of children ages 0-5
Tuesday, June 8, 2021
6-8pm

Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/64569DAB3H5GVMH1RH4V5pFKY>

Fathers of children ages 0-5
Thursday, June 10, 2021
6-8pm

Register here: <https://forms.gle/p1OX3HVX9z36sH2Z>

Location: Your home, via Zoom
You will receive the Zoom link after registering.

Family Night at Ladew Gardens

Where: Ladew Topiary Gardens, Monkton, MD

When: June 24, 2021 from 6-8

Join Pathfinders for Autism for an evening of fun touring the beautifully manicured lawns of Ladew Topiary Garden. The gift shop will not be open during the event. Family Night is free to attend, however, you **MUST** register. [Click here for more details.](#)

Webinar & Traffic Stop Practice Session

Where: Virtual Webinar and In-Person Practice Session (Hunt Valley, MD)

When: Webinar (7/19/21 at 6p), In-Person Practice Session (7/20/21 from 2:30 to 6:30p)

Everyone feels anxiety when they see that police car light up behind them. You begin to wonder, “Am I in trouble?” “What did I do wrong?” It can make slowing down your brain difficult in that moment and think about what you need to do. So it’s time to start thinking about what you should do BEFORE you get pulled over. The goal is to have a safe interaction during a traffic stop.

Attend the 1-hour webinar and then practice being pulled over with Baltimore County Police.* This program is offered to licensed drivers or drivers with a learner’s permit with the required supervision.

*You can register for the webinar only, but you **MUST** participate in the webinar to attend the practice session. You must attend BOTH to receive a \$25 gas gift card. For more details, [please see here.](#)

Autism Day with the Aberdeen Ironbirds

Where: Leidos Field at Ripken Stadium

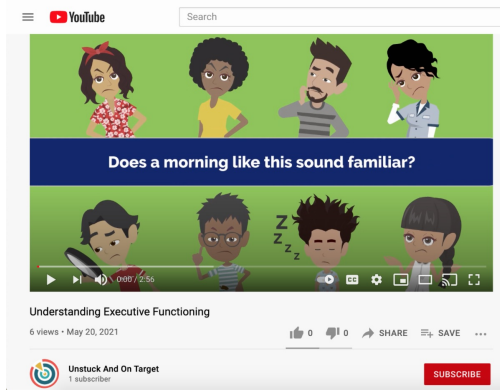
When: July 25, 2021, gates open at 1:05p

Enjoy an afternoon with PFA and the Aberdeen Ironbirds! And don’t miss a visit from Pathfinders’ Dip Tour Challenge Bus! FREE to attend, however, you **MUST** register. [Please click here for more details.](#)

Pathfinders for Autism also has more events and regularly updates their website. [Please see the website for more details.](#)

Free Unstuck Parent Resources

Unstuck at Home: Parent Support



Through COVID-19 is a project to support parents as they help their child to manage disappointments and unexpected changes, stay on track with learning, and stay calm when faced with a challenge. These supports were designed to specifically help parents during the COVID-19 pandemic, as many parents have been navigating distance learning with their children. Additionally, these videos can be used

in conjunction with *Unstuck and On Target!* intervention groups for home generalization.

Our first several videos are ready to be launched to the public, and we are so excited to share them with you! More videos will launch throughout the summer and will be added to the below playlists. Check back periodically to see the new videos!

[Please click here for the playlist of all videos available](#)

CASD is currently recruiting for a new online study in collaboration with Georgetown University. Eligible participants are adolescents 14-18 years old with or without autism spectrum disorder. The study takes place entirely over Zoom and involves completing a few tasks and answering some questionnaires with a member of the research team. Parents will also be asked to report on their child's behavior. Parents and children will be compensated up to \$80.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about our study please contact Rebecca Handsman at rhandsman@childrensnational.org.

Community Resources & Events

New Study at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Given how important the driving issue is to many teens, CASD wanted to alert families about a web-based (no in-person appointments) longitudinal study Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute designed to learn more about the experience of teens and young adults on the autism spectrum and their parents as they make decisions about transportation, including driving. More information is provided for interested families in the flyer. If you are interested in participating in the study or want to learn more, please contact our study team at autismetastudy@email.chop.edu or 267-586-5199.

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](#)
[Virginia Department of Health](#)

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

U.S Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C Dispute Resolution Procedures
U.S Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Dispute Resolution Procedures

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

Visit Children's Rise & Shine for a special edition featuring CASD Faculty member, Dr. Angie Bollich