



## Children's National: CASD CHAT

### Research Report

### RDoC Revisited



The Research Domain Criteria Initiative (or RDoC) project, "Executive Function Across Pediatric Psychiatric Disorders," is a collaboration between CASD and Georgetown University's Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory (DCNL).

RDoC is a part of a new research initiative, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, to better understand the brain science behind the varying types and degrees of behaviors we see in those with neuropsychological disorders. The project is studying executive function skills, such as attention, memory, and learning, using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). In February 2017, former CASD Research Coordinator, Meredith Powers, interviewed the study's primary investigators: Drs. Lauren Kenworthy and Madison Berl of Children's National, and Dr. Chandan Vaidya of Georgetown University. Check out the interview in the February 2017 [CASD Chat!](#)

As we embark on Year 3 of recruiting families for the RDoC project, the research team would like to thank you for your interest and participation, as none of this would be possible without the participation of families. We would like to share a quick update about the project. The total enrollment goal is 216 participants across five years by April 2021. 85 children have already participated in the study over the last two years. As you can expect, 59% of our participants have an ASD diagnosis. However, as we explained in the February 2017 [CASD Chat](#), this study is breaking new ground, and we are looking at executive function across different diagnoses. Therefore, current recruitment efforts are being focused on participants ages 8-13 with non-ASD or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder related executive functioning difficulties, such as learning disabilities, anxiety, mood disorder, conduct disorders, depression and bipolar disorders.

If you are interested in participating in the RDoC project, please contact Charlotte Jeppsen at 301-765-5425 or [cljeppsen@childrensnational.org](mailto:cljeppsen@childrensnational.org).

## Gender and Autism

A new study, "They Thought It Was an Obsession": Trajectories and Perspectives of Autistic Transgender and Gender-Diverse Adolescents", featured in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, was led by Dr. John Strang, director of the Gender and Autism Program at Children's National. The study followed 22 autistic transgender teens over nearly two years. It is the first study of its kind to track and follow up with this many youth with the co-occurrence over a significant period of time. To learn more about this important work, please read the [Children's National Press Release](#) and the [article](#).



John Strang, PsyD

CASD's faculty and staff would like to congratulate Dr. Strang on the publication of this important study!

## CASD Clinical Group Still Recruiting!

### Flexibility and Friendship

The Flexibility and Friendship Group targets social skills and flexibility in young children with ASD through a play-based and story-based curriculum. Children learn how to play games and pretend together, as well as how to change their play plans when needed. Children also learn coping skills, sharing and taking turns, and early conversation skills. Parents participate in their own group that provides coaching in how to support kids in using their new skills at home, as well as parenting strategies and other topics of interest to parents of young children with ASD, such as picky eating, planning playdates, and school supports.

Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders  
www.childrensnational.org/CASD

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Who this group is best for:

- children with ASD who can answer direct questions about things that happened to them at another time
- Age range: 4-5
- Start date: October 2018
- Time & Location: Tuesdays, 3:15-4:15pm, 15245 Shady Grove Road, Suite 350, Rockville, MD 20850

Please contact [aratto@childrensnational.org](mailto:aratto@childrensnational.org) with subject line: "Flexibility and Friendship Group" for more information.

Click [HERE](#) to view.

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## Race for Every Child

### CASD Cares Team

CASD Faculty and staff will be participating as the "CASD Cares" Team in the 6th Annual Race for Every Child 5K Run/Walk & 100-Yard Kids Dash at Freedom Plaza in downtown Washington, D.C on October 20, 2018!

The CASD Cares Team will be raising funds to support the expansion of its community outreach and support services, by creating and facilitating opportunities to engage

families in the local community through patient and family education.

Families are welcome to donate and/or join our team virtually or participate the day of the event. To learn how to join the "CASD Cares" Race for Every Child team, please visit the [Race for Every Child website](#).

## Calendar of Events

### October 2018\*

#### **Sensory-Friendly Performances at Strathmore: Saturday Family Story Session Rockville, MD**

**Saturday, October 6th at 10:15am**

Sensory-friendly performances are designed to create a performing arts experience that is welcoming to families of children with autism or other disabilities that create sensory sensitivities. Accommodations for sensory-friendly performances include: Lower sound level, especially for startling or loud sounds; lights remain on at a low level during the performance; a reduction of strobe lighting or lighting focused on the audience; audience members are free to talk and leave their seats during the performance; designated quiet areas within the venue; space throughout the venue for standing and movement; limited capacity in the performance to allow plenty of space for each patron; Strathmore staff trained to be welcoming and accommodating to families' needs; the use of electronic devices for communication is permitted. "Get Ready for the Show!" resource materials are available on each event page one month prior to the performance to help families prepare for their visit. Materials include pictures of the venue, entryways, performance images, and information about what to expect. To learn more and to purchase tickets, please visit, <https://www.strathmore.org/events-and-tickets/saturday-family-story-sessions>

#### **Chuck E. Cheese's Sensory Sensitive Sundays**

**Chuck E. Cheese's Locations Nationwide**

**Sunday, October 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: Venom**

**AMC Theatres Nationwide**

**Tuesday, October 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](http://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films)

#### **AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Goosebumps 2: Haunted Halloween**

**AMC Theatres Nationwide**

**Saturday, October 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](http://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films)

**The Kennedy Center Sensory Friendly Performances: American Revolution**

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

**Washington, DC**

**Sunday, October 14th at 1:30pm**

Sensory friendly performances are designed to create a performing arts experience that is welcoming to all families with children with autism or with other disabilities that create sensory sensitivities. Accommodations for these performances include: lower sound level, especially for startling or loud sounds; lights remain on at a low level in the theater during the performance; a reduction of strobe lighting or lighting focused on the audience; patrons are free to talk and leave their seats during the performance; designated quiet areas within the theater; space throughout the theater for standing and movement; limited crowds and visitors at the Kennedy Center during the day and timing of the performance; and Kennedy Center staff trained to be inviting and accommodating to families' needs. To purchase tickets for a sensory friendly performance, please call the Instant-Charge Service Desk at 202-476-8528 (voice) or visit, <https://www.kennedy-center.org/pages/accessibility/sensory>

**AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Halloween**

**AMC Theatres Nationwide**

**Tuesday, October 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](http://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films)

**AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Goosebumps 2: Haunted Halloween**

**AMC Theatres Nationwide**

**Saturday, October 27th**

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 Kennedy Center Sensory Friendly Performances: NSO Family Concert:**

**Halloween Spooktacular**

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

**Washington, DC**

**Sunday, October 28th at 2pm**

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\*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.

## Never Miss Another CASD Chat Newsletter!

CASD Electronic Newsletter: CASD Chat

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CASD Chat, our electronic newsletter, offer topics of interest for families and service providers of children with ASDs. We provide tips and snippets that might be helpful in your day to day life with, or as, an individual with an autism spectrum disorder. We also provide announcements of events and opportunities through CASD and the local community. In addition, we will highlight new and interesting science being published in the world of autism research. Sign up for [CASD Chat](#).

Check out some of our latest CASD Chat Newsletters:

- [January 2018: What About the Girls?](#)
- [December 2017: Spirit of Holiday Sharing](#)
- [November 2017: PCORI Project Comes to a Close](#)

Did you know that past CASD Chat newsletters are available on our website? Please visit our [CASD Chat](#) page to check it out!

Children's National, Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders,  
15245 Shady Grove Road, Suite 350, Rockville, MD 20850

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