

Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders

www.childrensnational.org/CASD



Children's National: CASD CHAT

Summer is on the horizon, and the traditional school year is coming to an end. In this issue, you will learn about CASD's contributions at the International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) Annual Meeting, tips to prepare your child for summer break, upcoming events in the autism community, a new MedicAlert program, and an internship opportunity with the Kennedy Center.

CASD Research Report

CASD at IMFAR

In May, members of the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders' (CASD) research team attended the International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) in San Francisco, CA.

CASD's Associate Director, Dr. Laura Anthony, moderated a panel session, titled, "Addressing Disparities through Interventions in Diverse Community Systems" and presented "Addressing Disparities By Reducing Stigma and Increasing Acceptance?: Sesame Street's See Amazing in All Children Online Initiative". CASD's Director, Dr. Lauren Kenworthy, also presented "Differential Outcomes in an Addressing Disparities Comparative Effectiveness Trial of Community-Based Executive Function Treatments in ASD and ADHD" on the panel. Dr. Allison Ratto (top row, left), clinical psychologist and CASD faculty member, presented her poster titled, "Engaging Latino Families in ASD Treatment Research". Dr. Ratto's poster was feature in a story in [Spectrum News](#).



CASD Research Coordinators, Alyssa Verbalis, PhD (bottom row, center), Sydney Seese (middle row, left), Mary Skapek (top row, center), and Meredith Powers (bottom row, right), and CASD Volunteer, Danica Limon (middle row, right), also participated in poster sessions at IMFAR. The titles of the posters are listed below:

- "Reaching the Other Half: Executive Function Deficits in a Community Based Sample"- Alyssa Verbalis, 1st Author
- "Differing Perspectives: Examining Reports of Executive Function in Children with ASD and ADHD" - Sydney Seese, 1st author
- "Anxiety Problems relate to teacher-reported classroom performance in children with ASD but not ADHD" - Mary Skapek, 1st author
- "Factors that Drive Access to Services for Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Low Income Populations" - Meredith Powers, 1st author
- "Social and communication subtypes in autism spectrum disorders (ASD) without intellectual disability (ID)"- Shristi Rau, PhD, 1st Author

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".

CASD Cares

Preparing for Summer

Your family has made it through another school year, and now you are wondering what you are going to do with your child over the summer break. How do I keep my child engaged during the summer while still giving him/her a break from the demands of everyday life?

Here are three tips to help your family enjoy the summer season and get a much-needed break while keeping your child engaged.

- 1. Stay on a schedule, even in the summer.** As the everyday demands of the busy school year lessen, the much more relaxed pace of summer can be welcoming to parents. However, this break from everyday routines can present challenges for our autistic children. Many of our children thrive on a routine, and it is up to us to help them remain grounded by establishing supports and maintaining schedules even throughout the summer. In 2014, CASD's Director, Lauren Kenworthy, PhD, provided the Washington Post's On Parenting Blog with tips for helping children cope with the changes that come with summer. Please check out the article, titled: "[Five Ways to Help Your Child with Autism Cope with Summer's Relaxed Schedule](#)".
- 2. Learn about water safety.** During the summer months, our children have access to water in different capacities, from community pools to lakes and oceans. According to the National Autism Association (NAA), drowning is among the leading causes of death of individuals with autism. This is very disconcerting information. However, helping our children to become familiar with the pool setting and basic swimming skills can help save lives even if they do not entirely learn to swim. The best line of defense is prevention. Families need to educate themselves on water safety. The Parents of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia (POAC-NOVA) has created a [Water Safety Curriculum](#). This swim program introduces children to water and teaches them how to swim in deep water as well as promoting crucial, life-saving skills.
- 3. Start your own Independence Day traditions.** In the DC Metro Area, there is nothing more patriotic than watching the fireworks on the National Mall. However, the crowds and loud noise emitted from the firework displays can create sensory challenges for our children. If your child has not seen firework displays in person, prepare your child by watching videos of fireworks online. You can even find coloring sheets online with firework displays that you and your child can talk about and color in preparation for the event. Another option, if you are concerned that the experience will be too much for your child, is to stay in and tune in to your local PBS station. WETA, DC's local PBS station, has shown the firework displays for years, and this is a fantastic way for your family to enjoy the fireworks while allowing your child to feel comfortable. If your child would like to venture out and watch the firework display, bring a pair of headphones and sunglasses to help lessen the volume and visual stimulation. You may also want to think about a place for your child to take a break if it is too much or discuss an amount of time to watch the fireworks. Maybe the first year you stay for ten minutes, then twenty minutes next year. It really is up to you. After all, it is Independence Day and you are free to make these choices.

Have a happy and safe summer!

Calendar of Events

June 2017

Kids in Action: Friday Night Fever

The HSC Pediatric Center

Washington, DC

Friday, June 9th at 7pm

Join Kids in Action for Friday Night Fever, a chance for teens with disabilities to hang out with their peers. Designed for teens ages 11 and older, the program provides opportunities to participate in social events and make new friends. Activities vary month to month and include: teen dances, karaoke night, movies, game night, ice cream socials, various educational topics and more! Advance registration required. Email Robyn Winston-Cohen, CTRS at RWinston@Hshealth.org or call 202-557-1851. For more information, please visit, <http://www.hshealth.org/medical-programs-therapy/services-programs/adaptive-sports>

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Captain Underpants: The First Epic Movie

AMC Theatres Nationwide

Saturday, June 10th at 10am

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! For more information, please visit, www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films

My Way Matinee: Captain Underpants: The First Epic Movie

Regal Theatres Nationwide

Saturday, June 10th 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>

2017 Fairfax Safety Fair

Chantilly, VA

Saturday, June 10th at noon

Join the Autism Speaks National Capital Area Chapter, Parents of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia, and the Autism Society Northern Virginia Chapter as they host a Safety Fair. Stop by and meet your local First Responders. Get to know your local service providers. Each family will receive a Safety Kit, Safety T-Shirt, and more! If you are interested in attending, please view the flyer, and register here:

[http://act.autismspeaks.org/site/Calendar?id=100621
view=Detail#sthash.TJzVDezo.dpuf](http://act.autismspeaks.org/site/Calendar?id=100621&view=Detail#sthash.TJzVDezo.dpuf)

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Wonder Woman

AMC Theatres Nationwide

Tuesday, June 13th at 7pm

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! For more information, please visit, www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films

AJE Special Education Thursdays: What is an Occupational Therapist (OT) and what is a Physical Therapist (PT)? Guests: Shenax Hussain, PT and Shayna Stoogenke, OT
Thursday, June 15th at 12:30pm

These 30 minute sessions are available online every other Thursday 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/>

SWIM TEAM the Film

Baltimore, MD

Thursday, June 15th at 6:30pm

Join Pathfinders for Autism as they host an exclusive FREE screening of SWIM TEAM the film. The award-winning new documentary film Swim Team takes an inspiring look at the rise of a competitive swim team comprised of teens with autism. Following three teammates on the cusp of adulthood, when services become scarce, Swim Team is a portrait of diverse American families grappling with the problem of "aging out." Over the course of a year, the film explores the struggles they face and the triumphs they achieve. There will be quiet rooms available, and all ages and behaviors are welcome. Following the movie, there will be a Q&A with the McQuay family from the film. To learn more, please check out the flyer. Registration is required, to register please visit, <https://app.etapestry.com/cart/PathfindersforAutism/cart2/item.php?ref=843.0.598961183>

Kids in Action: Only Make Believe

The HSC Pediatric Center

Washington, DC

Saturday, June 17th at 10am

Join Kids in Action as they host Only Make Believe, a non-profit organization that creates and performs interactive theater 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 Robyn Winston-Cohen, CTRS at RWinston@Hshealth.org or call 202-557-1851. For more information, please visit, <http://www.hshealth.org/medical-programs-therapy/services-programs/adaptive-sports>

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Cars 3

AMC Theatres Nationwide

Saturday, June 24th at 10am

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! For more information, please visit, www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films

AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Transformers: The Last Knight

AMC Theatres Nationwide

Tuesday, June 27th at 7pm

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! For more information, please visit, www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films

AJE Special Education Thursdays: The Difference Between a Medical vs. Education Autism Diagnosis, Guest: Dr. Sharron Williams, School Psychologist and Andrea Handscomb, SLP

Thursday, June 29th at 12:30pm

These 30 minute sessions are available online every other Thursday 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/>

You May Be Interested...

MedicAlert[®] FOUND

The MedicAlert Foundation has developed the free MedicAlert Found Program to provide an additional layer of protection for the autism community. "MedicAlert's goal is to ensure every person affected by autism has an autism medical ID and 24/7 wandering service and is committed to turning wandering tragedies into successful family reunification stories." This program is completely free for all people with autism. For more information on the program and how to enroll, go to www.medicalert.org/autism

THE KENNEDY CENTER

Experiential Education Initiative (EEI) Internship

The Experiential Education Initiative (EEI) Internship is an innovative program designed to offer meaningful instruction and cultural arts experiences to individuals with intellectual disabilities. The EEI Internship Program provides hands-on Internships and opportunities to explore today's complex performing arts environment to six motivated individuals each year. Official application packet is attached. The goals of the Internship are to:

- provide exposure to the performing arts;
- develop social skills; and
- offer opportunities to improve job-related skills.

Applicants must:

- have a documented intellectual disability;
- be between the ages of 19 and 30;
- demonstrate an interest in the performing arts;
- be referred to the program through a social service agency; and
- agree to the dates/expectations of the internship.

For more information, please view the [application](#). All applications and corresponding documents must be submitted to Emily Thiell (Program Coordinator, Special Education | Education Division) at ecthiell@kennedy-center.org or by fax at (202) 416-4840.

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

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