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# ❖AUTISM ACTION❖

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Spring Issue

March/April 2003

The Newsletter of the  
*San Diego County Chapter*  
**Autism Society of America**  
Serving the needs of individuals with autism and their families  
through advocacy, education, public awareness and research.

## SUPPORT GROUP SPEAKERS

**Thursday, March 6, 2003**

### **Panel of Speakers from Recreation Programs**

Come find out about the Recreational Programs available throughout San Diego County for children with Autism.

**Thursday, April 3, 2003**

**Bobbie Kohrt & Mary Lou Evans**

### **From SDCS Resources for Students with Autism (RSA) Program**

Visual Schedules — A Make It & Take It Night

Come learn about tools to assist individuals with Autism. Come brainstorm with the experts on how visual schedules can help address challenging behaviors. All materials will be provided.

Meetings are held at the TMI Building, 4740 Murphy Canyon Road, San Diego. From I-15, take the Clairemont Mesa Blvd. Exit and go west. The first traffic light is Murphy Canyon Road. Go South (left) on Murphy Canyon .4 mile. The TMI building is on the west (right) side of the street. Meeting held on the 2nd floor.

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## SUPPORT GROUP MEETING FORMAT

6:30-6:45 P.M.	Informal/Social/ Networking Time
6:45-7:00 P.M.	President's Message
7:00-8:00 P.M.	Guest Speaker
8:00-8:30 P.M.	Questions/ Answers

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Gregory Fletcher

One always takes a chance when opening the newspaper or turning on the television news; but lately it seems the news has become even more somber than usual. The world mourns the recent loss of the crew of the space shuttle Columbia. And the Mideast situation grows more tense each day; so dramatically that it's possible our armed forces may be at war by the time you read this newsletter.

And the news on the Autism front is not much better. In January, the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) released their 2002 year end report revealing that the number of individuals diagnosed with severe autism receiving DDS services jumped another 21 percent in 2002. These new figures follow a similar report issued two years earlier that disclosed autism increased 273 percent since 1990.

An alarming 20,377 individuals with a diagnosis of autism were receiving services from the DDS as of the fourth quarter of 2002, compared with 16,802 individuals as of the fourth quarter of 2001. The 21 percent one-year increase represents an all-time record number of new cases in the system's 33-year history.

During the 1970's, California consistently added 100 to 200 new cases of autism a year. In the mid-1990s, an average of two individuals a day entered the California Developmental Disabilities system. Today, the state is seeing an average of 10 new cases a day. Autism now accounts for 40 percent of all of the new intakes into California's Developmental Disabilities system, making severe autism the number one disability entering the system; outranking mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and other conditions similar to mental retardation.

Isn't there any good news?

During the month of April, which is National Autism Awareness Month (NAAM), autism organizations around the country will make their voices heard in various public awareness activities. The San Diego County Chapter will commemorate NAAM on April 5 with the Third Annual Casino Night Fundraiser. This special event will help increase local public awareness of autism and help raise funds for much needed autism related recreational activities.

At the state level, the Autism Society of California (ASC) will join forces with Unlocking Autism, Families for Early Autism Treatment and other autism organizations for the "One Voice for Autism" rally on the steps of the California State Capitol on April 5. And on April 6, the ASC will host the inaugural California Autism Coalition meeting, also in Sacramento.

And if you're looking for a way to get involved, the San Diego County Chapter is currently accepting nominations for the 2003 – 2004 Board of Directors. You can find additional information in this issue of *Autism Action*. So please get involved and help make some good news!

## Board of Directors

President	Gregory Fletcher
1st VP Membership	Susanne Tasin
2nd VP Programs	Victoria Ikerd-Schreiter
3rd VP Newsletter	Jennifer Ruiz
Treasurer	Cathy Schieffer
Secretary	Shelly VanBrabant
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Director	Sandi Hayslip
Director	Bobbie Kohrt
Director	JP Lapeyre
Director	Marilyn Rosenberg
Director	Jennifer Oke
Director	Carrie L. Alexander

## Mission Statement

The mission of the **Autism Society of America** is to promote lifelong access and opportunities for persons within the autism spectrum and their families, to be fully included, participating members of their community through advocacy, public awareness, education and research related to autism.

## Endorsement Policy

The Autism Society of America does not endorse individual programs. References appearing in the *Autism Action* regarding programs, resources, treatment, etc. should not be interpreted as an indication of endorsement by the Autism Society of America. They are provided for information only.

## Child Care

Please note that childcare is no longer provided during the support group meetings.

## Autism Advice Column

Please submit any question(s) for use in upcoming issues of "Ask the Expert" an autism advice column. Questions can be sent to us via email (to [info@sd-autism.org](mailto:info@sd-autism.org)) or mail (P.O. Box 420908, San Diego, CA 92124). Thanks!

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### CASINO NIGHT 2003

The San Diego County Chapter—Autism Society of America presents “Back to School” at SDSU, the 3rd Annual Casino Night benefiting Camp I CAN. To be held Saturday, April 5, 2003 at 6:00—11:00pm at Cuicacalli Hall at SDSU. Enjoy an evening of dinner, silent auction, entertainment and casino games. All net proceeds from this event will be used to fund Camp I CAN and chapter recreational activities. See enclosed flyer for more information or call (619) 298-1981.

### SDASA POOL & PIZZA PARTIES

Mark your calendars to attend our fun and popular monthly pool parties. They're held the 2nd Friday evening of each month at the Boys & Girls Club in Clairemont. 4635 Clairemont Mesa Blvd. 6:00-8:00 pm. Free pizza & drinks! The whole family can swim in an indoor, heated pool. Lifeguards provided. RSVP to 619-298-1981 or [info@sd-autism.org](mailto:info@sd-autism.org). Upcoming dates:

- ◆ March 14     ◆ April 11
- ◆ May 9        ◆ June 13

### EASY WAY TO SUPPORT THE SDASA

Sign up for the **E-Scrip Program** and help our chapter raise money is just by shopping at stores you regularly shop! Visit the E-Scrip web site to sign up—[www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com). Our ID is **785161**. E-Scrip allows you to donate to up to 3 non-profits of your choosing. E-Scrip also makes it easy to **donate ANY vehicle to the SDASA!** You may be eligible for a tax deduction! Visit [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and click on vehicle donation program. Choose “Donate Now” and then fill in the form provided. For more info contact Sandi at 619-216-9891.

### HEALTH HERO

Congratulations go to the Mission Valley YMCA, our 2002 Health Hero. They provided invaluable support in the pilot year of Camp I-CAN Summer Camp. The Mission Valley YMCA will be recognized for their contribution during an award ceremony on March 25th at the Downtown Wyndham Hotel.

### RESEARCH STUDY

Dr. James B. Adams, Ph.D. of Arizona State University is conducting a study of Essential Fatty Acid Treatment for Autism. He is a member of a team of researchers investigating the effect of nutritional supplements on reducing the symptoms of autism. They are looking for participants for this multi-site national study. SDASA members should have received information on the study in the mail mid-February. If you'd like to receive an information packet, please contact the SDASA at (619) 298-1981.

### NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IS APRIL

Saturday, April 5, 2003, in Sacramento, the Autism Society of California (ASC) is joining forces with Unlocking Autism, FEAT and other parent run organizations for a rally on the steps of the State Capitol. Sunday, April 6, 2003, ASC is sponsoring the inaugural California Autism Coalition.

The Coalition meeting on April 6th will be held at the Hyatt Regency Sacramento at Capitol Park, 1209 L Street, from 9AM-4PM. ASC is hoping to attract representation from as many parent groups in California as possible to participate in both events. The state of California is so immense, and the need for support is so great, that we need to band together in order to tackle this daunting task. Each group brings its own unique focus and abilities, which other groups can learn from. The Coalition will come together and share ideas, strengths and visions, to create a united force and then effect change through legislation and advocacy.

Space is limited to a total of 100 people. All suggestions for topics will be welcomed. This is only the first meeting of what will hopefully be a long-standing force for Autism in the State of California. Please RSVP to Dr. Dean Wilson, ASC President by Friday March 28th. [DWilson80@aol.com](mailto:DWilson80@aol.com) or (562) 425-2292

### ANNUAL MEETING & ELECTION

On June 5th the Chapter will hold its Annual Meeting for the year ending June 2003. The event promises to be an enjoyable evening of socializing and delicious hors d'oeuvres. Definitely an evening you will not want to miss!

Also planned for the Annual Meeting will be the election of Chapter officers and directors. All members in good standing of the Chapter are eligible to vote. If you wish to nominate yourself or another member of the Chapter, please contact the Nominating Committee. This year the Nominating Committee is Susanne Tasin (858-278-6603 [s.tasin@centerforautism.com](mailto:s.tasin@centerforautism.com)), Sandi Hayslip (619-216-9891 [Shamus13@msn.com](mailto:Shamus13@msn.com)) and Lori Kay (619-287-7086 [aklk@cox.net](mailto:aklk@cox.net))

### CAMP I-CAN

Plans are underway for Camp I CAN 2003. The Doug Flutie Jr. foundation for Autism recently announced their grant award of \$20,000 for Camp I CAN 2003. Congratulations and thanks to the Camp I CAN executive committee for their efforts and success!

2003 applications will not be available until the first week of March. There is no waiting list. SDASA members will receive applications in the mail. All others interested in the camp should contact the Mission Valley YMCA at (619) 298-3576 beginning the first of March.

*Teen Camp* I CAN will be held for one week as a new program this summer. We are currently seeking “typical” teens ages 13-17 years to work during this week of camp as “peer buddies” to the campers. This is on a volunteer basis. For further information, contact the chapter via email ([info@sd-autism.org](mailto:info@sd-autism.org)) or at (619)298-1981.

### Summer 2003 Camp I CAN Dates

Teen Week	July 21 – July 25
Ages 6-12	July 28 – August 1
Ages 6-12	August 4 – August 8
Ages 6-12	August 11 – August 15
Ages 6-12	August 18 – August 22

## RESOURCE INFORMATION

### SUPPORT GROUPS

**Autism Society of America, San Diego County Chapter.** ☎ (619) 298-1981 info@sd-autism.org 📧 www.sd-autism.org Meets 1st Thursday of the month, 6:30—8:30 PM at the TMI Building, 4740 Murphy Canyon, 2nd Floor Conference Center, San Diego.

**Autism Society of America, North County Chapter.** *North County Coastal Group* meets 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Well Being Center, 270 El Camino Real, Encinitas. Merryn Affleck (760) 479-1420. *Inland Group* meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month at Penasquitos Lutheran Church in Poway from 7 to 9 pm. Contact Kimberly Thompson at 858-748-3230. *HF/Asperger Group* meets the 1st Monday of every month at the Levante Community Center on the La Costa Heights Elementary School 3035 Levante Street in South Carlsbad. Contact Sharon at 760-758-7321 or nccasa@cox.net or Vanessa Garcia at 760-945-2122. asanorthcountysandiego.homestead.com/home.html

**Autism of Imperial County.** George Mcfaden 760-353-3191

**East County Children's Disability Council** Focuses on children with physical, developmental and emotional disabilities, ages 0-22 years. Janet Light 619-465-2288

**Escondido Autism Coffee Groups** Meets 10:00 a.m. 1st Wed. of the month, at Safari Coffee Roasters, 1012 W., El Norte PKWY in Escondido. Val Saraf 858-571-0842

**EFRC & HOPE Infant Family Support Group.** ☎ Mary Sebastyn (858) 569-5370 or Tessie Salcedo (619) 409-3127. Meets Thursdays 9:30 am (English); Fridays 9:30 am (Spanish), 276 Church Avenue, Suite B, Chula Vista.

**Families & Autistic Children Together Succeed (FACTS).** Cheryl Cisneros PO Box 89-0685, Temecula, CA 92589-0685 FACTS-families@aol.com 📧 www.factsfamilies.org  
**Fragile X Center of San Diego** ☎ Cindy de Gruchy (619) 697-6468. Will meet May 13 & Oct 14, 2003, 7-9PM Children's Hospital. www.fragilexsandiego.org

**Kaiser Support Group** Meets the second Tuesday of the month at the Vandever Kaiser location 5:30 to 7:00. Must be a Kaiser member to attend. Krissy Hallauer 858 573-5216

**Parent Advocates Seeking Solutions (PASS).** Parents of children 15 & older with disabilities. Beverly Andreos (858) 748-2594 . Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month, St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16275 Pomerado Rd, Poway.

**Parent Support Group for the Resources for Students with Autism Program** of San Diego Unified Schools. Meets Friday, March 14th (Speaker Olga Holland, author of *The Dragons of Autism*) & Friday, March 21st (Topic: Summer Recreation Programs) 9:30-11:00AM. Contact Bobbie Kohrt or Mary Lou Evans 858-490-8520

**Supporting Parents of Autistic Young Adults (SPAYA)** Sophia (858) 560-7376 or SPAYA@prodigy.net Meets every 4th Wednesday, 5-7 p.m. San Diego Regional Center, Rm. 101, 4355 Ruffin Road.

**Sociedad Hispana de Autismo y PDD** ☎ Bricia Moreno (619) 563-8695 or Soledad Acevedo 011-5266-30-14-11. Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Stein Center, 647 E Street, Chula Vista.

**Understanding Autism Together.** ☎ Dr. Leavell (619) 532-7291 or ASYMCA (619) 532-8156. Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month, 6:30 p.m., Pediatric Conference Room, Building 2-1 of the Naval Medical Center.

### INFORMATION & RESOURCES

**Autism Society of America, National Organization.** 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste 300, Bethesda, MD 20814. ☎ 1-800-328-8476. 📧 www.autism-society.org/

**Autism Society of California.** P.O. Box 8600 Long Beach, CA 90808. 1-800-700-0037 DWilson80@aol.com

**Autism Research Institute.** Research center, publishes quarterly journal, information packet on autism. Bernard Rimland, Director. 4182 Adams Ave., San Diego, CA 92116 ☎ (619) 281-7165. 📧 www.autism.com/ari/.

**Children's Hospital and Health Center - Autism Intervention Center** Inclusion Assistance Program offers specialists assistance to children in inclusion settings. Gabriella Albaisa ☎ (858) 966-7453.

**Children's Hospital Laboratory for Research on the Neuroscience of Autism** Volunteers needed for research studies. La Jolla, CA 858-454-7239

**Exceptional Family Resource Center.** Provides information & education for families of children with various disabilities. 9245 Sky Park Ct., Suite 130, San Diego. ☎ (800)281-8252. Also: 1001 Fern St., Imperial Beach. ☎ (619) 423-8127.

**Kids Included Together (KIT).** Assists children with disabilities to be included in community recreation and social programs. ☎ (858) 794-8154.

**Protection and Advocacy, Inc. (PAI).** Non-profit agency for protection of individuals with disabilities. ☎ (800) 776-5746. 📧 pai-ca.org.

### SERVICES

**ACES, Inc - Comprehensive Educational Services** Behavior Intervention programs, Assessments, Tutoring, Parent training, Program consultation 3731 6th Avenue, Suite 100, San Diego 92103 (619) 278-0884 acesangels.com

**ACES, Inc - Dolphin Assisted Therapy Program** Structured, interactive behavioral program utilizing swim and contact between dolphins, trainer, ACES therapist and child at Sea World. 619-497-2450

**Auditory Integration Training** Terri Silverman, MS Conducts sessions several times a year in San Diego 858-278-9534

**Center for Autism Research, Evaluation & Service (CARES)-** Academic and Behavior Clinic, 6160 Cornerstone Ct. East #262, San Diego, CA 92121 (858)623-2777 x397

**Center for Autism Research, Evaluation & Service (CARES) -** Intensive Behavior Intervention, (858) 623-2777 x397

**Children's Hospital and Health Center – Autism Intervention Center** parent training, professional workshops and inclusion services. Cynthia Carter Ph.D 858-966-7453

**Coast Music Therapy** Provides music/assisted learning approach in special education, or adapted music lessons in home. Michelle Lazar 858-453-5211

**Community Coaching Center** Community Based Behavioral Life Skills Coaching Program for children on the moderate to severe Autism Spectrum. Tina Waters (800)303-8582 #00, [ccckids@attbi.com](mailto:ccckids@attbi.com)

**Coyne & Associates** Offers In-Home Early Intervention programs; In-school services; psychological, educational and behavioral assessments. Dr. Paul Coyne PhD 760-634-1125 coyneandassociates.com.

**DTC - Developmental Therapy Center** Direct Occupational Therapy assessment and treatment, sensory integration, activity-based groups including yoga, art, and sensory motor for children of all ages. 3731 6th Avenue, Suite 103, San Diego 92103 Bridgette Anderson 619-295-4500

**Excel – A Center for Speech, Language and Learning.** Kara Dodds (619)692-1919 or [excelspeech@hotmail.com](mailto:excelspeech@hotmail.com)

**Giant Steps Therapy Center** Berard Auditory Integration Training (AIT) & Interactive Metronome (IM) Training. Jackie Rockwell 800-952-0288 email [giantsteps@earthlink.net](mailto:giantsteps@earthlink.net)

**I Can Too Learning Center** Offers behavioral intervention for children with autism between 2-6 years. Kevin Dotts 760-815-4800 [www.icantoolc.com](http://www.icantoolc.com)

## RESOURCE INFORMATION

**Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center Inclusion Program** Offers recreation and social programs for children with special needs 858-457-3030 x222

**Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes** Learning Center 445 Marine View Drive, Suite 290, Del Mar CA 92014 858-259-3206

**Kelly McKinnon, M.A.** – Autism & Behavior Consultant specializing in social skills. www.kellymckinnon.com

**Pacific Therapy** Angela Desideri, Speech-Language Pathologist, 2801 Camino Del Mar #1 Del Mar, CA 92014 858-442-3071

**San Diego Park & Recreation Disabled Services Program.** Organized activities for various age groups. Siblings & friends welcome. ☎ (619) 525-8247 FAX: (619) 533-3930.

**San Diego Regional Center.** Information, referral, evaluation and advocacy services for the developmentally disabled. 4355 Ruffin Rd., Suite 204, San Diego CA 92123. ☎ (858) 576-2996.

**Sandy Shaw, Ph.D.** Psychotherapy, support and consulting to parents and families with children with developmental disabilities. (619) 645-8618

**STAR Program, Inc. Socialization Training and Reinforcement.** After-school social skills program for children with pervasive developmental disorders. 858-623-2777 ext 376 or Dr. Linda Collins, Exec Dir. 619-801-9601

**Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK).** Workshops & advocacy training for parents. ☎ (858) 874-2386.

**UCSD Autism Research Laboratory** Pivotal Response Training 858-534-6144

### EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES:

**Community Advisory Committee**

**San Diego** ☎ (858) 578-3148.

**Poway** ☎ (858) 748-0010 or (858) 679-2534.

**California Department of Education.** Special Education Division. ☎ (916) 445-4613. Parent Information Line: (800) 434-2465. ☎ www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/sed.

**Hope Infant Family Support Program.** ☎ (858) 292-3700. FAX (858) 569-5394.

**San Diego City Schools Special Education Programs Division web page:** ☎ www.sdc.s.k12.ca.us/special.ed.

**Special Education Local Planning Areas**

**East County** ☎ (619) 590-3920

**North Coastal** ☎ (760) 471-8208

**North Inland** ☎ (760) 788-4611

**Poway** ☎ (858) 748-0010

**San Diego** ☎ (619) 225-3606

**South County** ☎ (619) 498-8171

**Special Education Parent Facilitators:**

**Poway** ☎ (858) 748-0010

**San Diego** ☎ (619) 225-3623

**South County** ☎ (619) 498-8171

# AUTISM ADVICE

## TAX PLANNING FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY AUTISM

*Editors Note: This is provided for readers' information only and should not be construed as financial advice by the SDASA. Thanks to TACA (Talk About Curing Autism) for referring us to www.schwablearning.org, the source of the following information.*

If you have a child with a severe learning disability, you may qualify for valuable tax benefits. If your child has AD/HD, or other physical, mental or emotional impairment, you may also qualify for tax benefits. Because tax laws are complex, and many tax preparers often do not have occasion to use these unique tax benefits, families are at risk of losing refunds worth many thousands of dollars. It's likely that 15-30 percent of families with a disabled child have one or more unclaimed tax benefits. This guide provides a brief summary of the most significant tax benefits and should not be considered legal advice. Tax decisions should not be made simply on the basis of the information provided here. You are advised to print out this guide and give a copy to your tax advisor.

### Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

"Publications" represent the most accessible form of guidance to the tax rules for the general public, and relevant IRS publications are cited for each of the tax benefits listed below. The IRS also issues interpretations of the code and regulations called "Revenue Rulings." These interpretations are formal, binding policy statements. Tax professionals rely on revenue rulings in advising clients about tax liabilities and tax benefits. For example, Revenue Ruling 78-340, discussed later, authorizes a medical expense deduction for tuition or tutoring fees paid for a child with a severe learning disability who is attending a special school at the recommendation of the child's doctor. Tip: Relative caretakers, such as grandparents or aunts, and non-relative caretakers, such as foster par-

ents, also may qualify for tax benefits. See a related tax guide of the Casey National Center for Resource Family Support.

### Tax Benefits: Deductions vs. Credits

It's important to distinguish between two different categories of tax benefits. One category is a "deduction from taxable income" or simply "a deduction." The value of a deduction is based on the marginal tax rate of the taxpayer. If a person has a tax deduction "worth \$1,000," the actual value of the deduction will be determined by the taxpayer's tax rate. So a taxpayer in the lowest tax rate bracket, 10 percent, will have taxable income reduced by \$1,000, and save \$100 (10 percent of \$1,000). However, a taxpayer in a higher bracket, say the 30 percent, will have taxable income reduced by \$1,000, and save \$300 (30 percent of 1,000).

The second tax benefit is a tax credit, which is a dollar for dollar reduction in tax liability. An individual with a tax credit worth \$1,000 will have his tax bill reduced by \$1,000. This means that the actual amount of taxes is reduced by the amount of the tax credit. However, because tax laws and procedures are very complicated, other factors can influence the ultimate value to the taxpayer.

The following summarizes the principal tax benefits that may be available to families caring for children with severe learning disabilities.

### Retroactive Claims for Refunds

The IRS allows taxpayers to file amended returns, and collect refunds for unclaimed tax benefits, retroactively up to three years. This means a taxpayer can file an amended return for the 1999 tax year and claim a refund if the return is filed not later than April 15, 2003. (See IRS Publication 17, Tax Guide 2002, at pp. 18-19.)

### Medical Expense Deductions

The IRS has ruled that tuition costs for a special school that has a program designed to educate children with learning disabilities and amounts paid for a child's tutoring by a teacher specially trained and qualified

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to deal with severe learning disabilities may also be deducted. (Revenue Ruling 78-340, 1978-2 C.B. 124.) Special instruction or training or therapy, such as sign language instruction, speech therapy, and remedial reading instruction also would be deductible. Related books and materials can qualify for the medical expense deduction.

Generally, to qualify for the deduction, the child's doctor must recommend the special school, therapy, or tutoring, and there must be a medical diagnosis of a neurological disorder, such as severe learning disability, made by a medical professional. Transportation expenses to the special school or to the tutor also qualify for a medical expense deduction. If transportation is by car, the allowable expense in 2002 is thirteen cents per mile plus parking and tolls, or the actual cost of operating the vehicle.

Diagnostic evaluations also qualify for a medical expense deduction. This can include testing by a psychologist, neurologist, or other person with professional qualifications. Note: Expenses claimed as a medical expense deduction and later reimbursed by a school district or insurance company must be reported as taxable income for the year in which the reimbursements are received.

Not everyone who has medical expenses can use them on their tax return. Medical expenses must be claimed on Schedule A, Itemized Deductions, and are subject to certain limitations. First, the family must have itemized deductions that exceed their standard deduction in order to use Schedule A (about 65 percent of taxpayers do not itemize for this reason). Second, medical expenses are allowed as a deduction only to the extent that they exceed 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income, a significant threshold for many families. (See IRS Publication 502, Medical and Dental Expenses.)

## Deduction for Disability Related Conferences

In May 2000 the IRS issued Revenue Ruling 2000-24, which offers guidance - and good news - for parents of children with disabilities. Parents who attend conferences to obtain medical information concerning treatment for and care of their child may deduct some of the costs of attending a medical conference relating to a dependent's chronic health condition. The important points to remember are:

Medical expenses are deductible only to the extent that they exceed 7.5 percent of an individual's adjusted gross income, and that limitation applies to this deduction as well; Costs for admission and transportation to a medical conference relating to your dependent's chronic health condition are now deductible, if the costs are primarily for and essential to the care of the dependent. Costs of meals and lodging related to a conference, however, are not deductible. (Note, however, lodging, up to \$50 per night, is deductible if you must travel and stay at a hotel while your dependent is receiving medical treatment from a licensed physician in a hospital or a related or equivalent setting.) Costs are "primarily for and essential to the care of the dependent" (and therefore deductible) if:

- The parent attends the conference upon the recommendation of a medical provider treating the child
- The conference disseminates medical information concerning the child's condition that may be useful in making decisions about the treatment of or caring for the child
- The primary purpose of the visit is to attend the conference. While at the conference, the parent's social and recreational activities in the city he or she is visiting are secondary to attendance at the conference
- The conference deals with specific issues related to a medical condition and does not just relate to general health and well-being.

The full text of IRS Revenue Ruling

2000-24 is available at Amicus for Children, Inc. or can be retrieved by using the tax links search engine.

## Child and Dependent Care Credit

The Child and Dependent Care Credit is allowed for work related expenses incurred for dependents of the taxpayer. Generally the dependent must be under the age of 13. However, if the child has a disability and requires supervision, the age limit is waived. For example, a 16-year-old with severe AD/HD and a behavior disorder who cannot be left alone would be a qualifying child for this credit. Expenses up to \$2,400 per year per dependent are allowed. Expenses for regular childcare services, after-school programs, and summer camp qualify although overnight summer camp expenses do not. Payments to a relative to care for a child also qualify, as long as the relative is not a dependent of the taxpayer. The credit is calculated at 20-30 percent of allowable expenses, based on the family's adjusted gross income. The average credit is about \$420 but can be as high as \$1,440. (See IRS Publication 503, Child and Dependent Care Expenses.)

## Where to Get More Information

The IRS provides free booklets that cover each of the topics listed above. The titles listed below may be ordered by calling the IRS toll-free number: (800) 829-3676. The following booklets may be helpful:

- IRS Publication 17: "Your Federal Income Tax" (a comprehensive 250+ page guide)
- IRS Publication 502: Medical and Dental Expenses
- IRS Publication 503: Child and Dependent Care Expenses
- IRS Publication 501: Exemptions, Standard Deduction and Filing Information
- IRS Publication 596: Earned Income Tax Credit

In addition, the State of California offers a Long Term Care Credit. See California Form 3504.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The SDASA 3rd Annual Casino Night Fundraiser** will be held on **Saturday, April 5, 2003** at Cuicacalli Hall, San Diego State University. Proceeds from Casino Night 2003 will benefit CAMP I CAN, (Camp Including Children with Autism Now), as well as other recreational events the SDASA sponsors such as monthly pizza pool parties and summer surf camp. The theme of this year fundraiser is "Back to School." Core classes are dinner, dancing, shopping, and casino games. Call the SDASA office for more information (619) 298-1981.

**Parent Information Night "Transition to Adulthood"** Topics to include vocational programs in the area, independent living skills, transportation, driving, college options, certificate vs. diploma, the CAHSEE, etc. Wednesday, March 5th, from 6:30—8:30pm at Excelsior Academy, 7202 Princess View Ave., San Diego, 92120.

**Involved Exceptional Parents' (IEP) Day will be held on Saturday, March 15, 2003, at the University of San Diego** The theme this year is Celebrating the Legacy of Partnership. The resource fair promises to be the largest in the history of IEP Day. You can get the latest updates on confirmed speakers by logging on to [www.iepday.org](http://www.iepday.org). Registration forms are also available on-line and are due March 7th.

**Autism/ Asperger's 2003** presented by Future Horizons Conferences. March 20 - 21, 2003 in San Diego. Featuring Dr. Jeanie McAfee, Kathleen Quill, Jerry and Mary Newport, and Diane Murrell. For more information, call 1-800-489-0727.

**Advanced Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) Training Workshop** will be held at The Pyramid Autism Center March 21, 2003 Registration \$155 Contact Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc at [pyramid@pecs.com](mailto:pyramid@pecs.com) or 888/732-7462. For additional information visit [www.pecs.com](http://www.pecs.com).

**The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) Training Workshop** will be held at the Holiday Inn Anaheim at the Park March 24 & 25, 2003. Professional Registration \$345/ Parent Registration \$235 Contact Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc at [pyramid@pecs.com](mailto:pyramid@pecs.com) or 888/732-7462. For additional information visit [www.pecs.com](http://www.pecs.com).

**Promoting Positive Behaviors For Parents and Professionals Working With Young Children With Autism.** Presented By: Sandy Shaw, Ph.D. And Nancy Cason, Psy.D. of CARES, Inc. Workshops and Symposiums. March 27, 2003 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 6160 Cornerstone Court, San Diego, CA 92121 Room 200. Part I: Behavior Modification for Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders. Part II: Positive Strategies for Skill Development. Cost for Part I or Part II only: \$ 45 — Part I & II combined: \$ 80. Contact CARES at 858-623-2777 for more information.

**Autism Rally** The Autism Society of California (ASC) is currently working with Unlocking Autism (UA) and FEAT to create a two day event April 5-6, 2003 in Sacramento. The Saturday will be UA's sponsored Rally called "One Voice for Autism" on the steps of the Capitol. See more information on page 3.

**Auditory Integration Training** Berard Method. April 10-19, 2003 This 10 day training includes 2 sessions per day. Sessions will be held in the Clairemont area of San Diego. For additional information contact Terrie Silverman at [terries@execpc.com](mailto:terries@execpc.com) or visit [www.we-exist.net/ait](http://www.we-exist.net/ait)

**Autism & Social Skills**—presented by Roger Cox, Ph.D.—Division TEACCH, Director of Training & Susan Boswell, M.Ed. University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. May 5, 2003, 8:30—3:30, in San Diego. For more information contact Pat Statler (562) 926-5566 ext. 21060 or [Patricia.Statler@abcusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:Patricia.Statler@abcusd.k12.ca.us)

**5th Annual Conference on Autism—San Diego** presented by T.E.R.I., Inc. & Dr. Paul Dores. "Autism Through the Lifespan: What We Know About What Works" Friday, May 9th, 2003. For more information contact T.E.R.I., Inc at (760) 721-1706 or [tracyk@teriinc.org](mailto:tracyk@teriinc.org)

**Sensory Integration and Young Children** Featuring Carol S. Kranowitz, MA and Lucy Jane Miller, Ph.D., OTR. In San Diego on May 9, 2003. For more information, call Sensory Resources at 1-888-357-5867

**2003 ASA National Conference on Autism: Bridges To The Future!** July 16—20, 2003 at the Westin Convention Center Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. If you'd like to be added to the conference mailing list, send your name, address, phone, and email to [2003conference@autism-society.org](mailto:2003conference@autism-society.org).

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHAPTER / AUTISM SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA / AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

YOU MAY USE MY NAME AND ADDRESS AS A REFERRAL FOR OTHER PARENTS .....  YES  NO  
 YOU MAY GIVE MY NAME TO OTHER PARENTS IN MY AREA .....  YES  NO

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PERSON WITH AUTISM (CHECK ALL BOXES THAT APPLY):

- |  |   |                                    |                                       |
|--|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PARENT        | <input type="checkbox"/> GRAND PARENT         | <input type="checkbox"/> TEACHER   | <input type="checkbox"/> AIDE         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CARE PROVIDER | <input type="checkbox"/> RELATIVE             | <input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> PSYCHOLOGIST |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FRIEND        | <input type="checkbox"/> SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER     |                                       |

DUES (INCLUDES NATIONAL AND STATE DUES):

- FULL TIME STUDENT: \$25.00  
 INDIVIDUAL: \$35.00  
 FAMILY MEMBERSHIP: \$45.00  
 NEWSLETTER ONLY - 1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION: \$10.00

PLEASE CHECK IF:

- NEW MEMBER  
 RENEWING MEMBER

APPLICATIONS CAN BE MAILED TO: Autism Society of America, P. O. Box 420908, San Diego, CA 92124

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA • ***DUES AND DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE***

SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHAPTER

Autism Society of America

P O Box 420908

San Diego, CA 92124

(619) 298-1981

Email: [info@sd-autism.org](mailto:info@sd-autism.org)

Website: [www.sd-autism.org](http://www.sd-autism.org)