
❖ AUTISM ACTION ❖

July/August 2004

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.

MONTHLY INFORMATIONAL MEETING SPEAKERS

Please note:

We will not hold Monthly Informational Meetings in July & August.

Informational Meetings are held September—June at
TMI Conference Center
4740 Murphy Canyon Road—2nd Floor
San Diego / Kearny Mesa

2004 BACK-TO-SCHOOL BBQ & POOL PARTY

Sunday, August 29th
Tierrasanta Park & Rec Center Pool
4:15 — 6:30 pm
SDASA Members \$5 per family
Non-members \$10 per family

Advance Ticket Purchase Required
See enclosed flyer for information

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MONTHLY 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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Web site: www.sd-autism.org*

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“Summertime and the livin’ is easy” or so the song goes. For those of us parenting children with autism, we may have a different take on the good old days of summer. We may feel the added stress of “What are we going to do all day with no school, therapies, no HELP!”

The idea of a family vacation can be just enough to push us over the edge. Planning for vacation takes weeks, and often months, of prior preparation in order to minimize the trauma on our children, our families and us. I remember planning a family trip to Disneyland one year. We made arrangements in advance—what food we would take, the video set-up for the car, the special blankets, etc... you get the picture. The day finally arrived, we entered the park with much anticipation and after about two hours my oldest son was ready to go home!!! Ah, the best-laid plans are often not what our children with autism have in mind as a “good time”.

Over the years, I have given up on the notion of a “traditional” family vacation. That’s not to say all of you shouldn’t try or give up on it. I have learned for our family that my two sons with autism really do not enjoy traveling. They like to go to local places and we try to do this as much as possible. This is our version of a family vacation. They are happiest when they can return to their own home at night, sleep in their own bed, in surroundings familiar to them. We finally decided, “Why fight it?”

Because we frequent the same places in our community, there are familiar people who know our two sons at most of the places we go. This makes things much easier for all of us, particularly if one of our sons is having a hard day. I would highly recommend this to all of you. It becomes much easier to venture into the community when the people working at the stores, restaurants, theaters, etc... know you and can help you when needed.

There are special needs passes that allow you or an assistant for your child with autism to enter numerous venues free or at reduced rates. The San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park, Sea World and Disneyland are just a few who provide this opportunity. It never hurts to ask (in advance) if there is special needs program wherever you plan to go. It has been a real lifesaver for us on our “trips”.

The San Diego ASA recognizes the demands that the summer break can place on all of us. We are continuing to hold our monthly pizza and pool parties at the Boys and Girls Club in Clairemont. We are planning an end of summer family party at the Tierrasanta Recreation Center. There are golf lessons for persons with autism. And of course, there is Camp I CAN and Surf Camp for Children with Autism, which we are proud to sponsor again this year. We want to support our families and make the summer as fun and enjoyable as possible for all of you.

See you in the pool!!! Shirley Fett, President

Board of Directors

President	Shirley Fett
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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.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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. **Please RSVP at least FIVE days in advance to insure sufficient food and beverages for all 619-298-1981 or info@sd-autism.org.**

Upcoming dates:

July 9, August 13, September 10

CONGRATULATIONS TO TWO SDASA MEMBERS

Ralph Carrasquillo is a father of an autistic child and a Captain/Paramedic EMS Administrative Coordinator with the San Diego Fire Department. He has written an article "Approach to Autistic Children" that will be published in the June 2004 issue of the Journal of Emergency Medical Services. We would like to thank him for his dedication to the safety of individuals with autism.

Chantal Sicile-Kira's book entitled, "Autism Spectrum Disorders, The Complete Guide" is due for U.S. release in September by Penguin books. It was released in the United Kingdom last year.

CALL FOR ARTWORK

Would your child like to see his/her artwork published on note cards? This is your budding artist's chance. To submit artwork, send (1) the art, (2) your name, address, phone number, and email, (3) your child's name and age, and (4) a bio written by your child or for your child. The deadline for submission is August 1, 2004. Artwork will not be returned and becomes the property of the SDASA. If your child's art is chosen it will be featured in note cards or other publications. You will be contacted to obtain written permission. Send artwork to: SDASA, PO Box 420908, San Diego, CA 92124.

CARTRIDGES FOR KIDS

We received our first check from Cartridges For Kids in amount of \$136.50. Thanks to all of you who continue to

support us through all our programs. Used cell phones and laser and ink cartridges can be brought to our monthly meetings.

PLANNED CHARITABLE GIVING

As we confront the challenges of the future, we know that the generosity of those who assist us will make all the difference in our success. And there are many ways that your philanthropic giving can accommodate your financial situation and tax planning.

One of the easiest ways to make a gift to the ASA is with a Bequest in your will or revocable living trust. Bequests work particularly well for those who are unable to make an immediate gift, but would like to support the future work of ASA. Please contact the ASA at 619-298-1981 if you would like more information about Planned Charitable Giving. All gifts, large and small, make a difference to the future of ASA.

GOLF LESSONS FOR PERSONS WITH AUTISM

In collaboration with John Klein, PGA Golf Professional, the SDASA is offering individuals with autism ages 7 to 17 years of age golf lessons. This is intended to be a fun, family event. An adult must accompany each individual with autism. Individuals with autism will be fitted and given a golf club to keep. Parents, caregivers and siblings in attendance may bring their own equipment or may use the equipment provided. Lessons are 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm on Sundays in July, August, and September at the Sheraton 4 Points Hotel on Aero Drive. Enrollment is limited to the first 10 individuals with autism. There will be a new session beginning at the start of each month. Cost per family is \$10 per/week. Payment in full is due participation for all sessions will be due the first day. To enroll, contact John Klein (858) 780-0731 or specialdjoh@san.rr.com.

John Klein is a PGA golf professional. He has been teaching adults and children with special needs for 26 years. He has a background in therapeutic recreation,

special education and adaptive physical education.

2ND ANNUAL CHARITY DOGS GOLF DAY

The Burlingame Bulldogs Softball Club is sponsoring the 2nd Annual Charity Dogs Golf Day to benefit the SDASA. The event will take place Saturday, July 10, 2004 at the Chula Vista Municipal Golf Course. You can still participate by making a donation, donating a prize, or sponsoring a hole (perhaps you have a contact). For more information, contact Daryl Dotson (619) 583-2921 or Karen Mitrovich-Dotson (619) 962-2921 or thedot@cox.net.

LET'S PUT ON A SHOW PRESENTS "SHOWBIZ"

Invite your friends and family for a terrific musical evening benefiting the SDASA. Let's Pet On a Show Foundation presents the 2004 Children's Workshop's "Pure Imagination" Books On Broadway featuring songs from Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, Seussical the Musical, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, and You're a Good Man Charlie Brown. When: Sunday, July 18 at 5 pm. Where: Wednesday Club, 540 Ivy Lane, San Diego 92103. Ample parking at 3500 Fifth Avenue-Webster Building Parking Lot. Suggested donation: \$10.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Shelly VanBrabant was awarded the 2003-2004 Combined Health Agencies Volunteer of the Year Award on June 16, 2004. She receives this award for her tireless work as co-chair of Casino Night 2003 and 2004. Her dedication was key in the success of these events that raised money for Camp I Can and POOL PALS. Thank you Shelly!

MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASE

Please note that our membership dues have been increased. This is the first increase since 1999. Thank you for your continued support of ASA, and especially the San Diego County Chapter.

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, September — June, 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 2nd Thursday of the month *Inland Group* meets 3rd Tuesday of the month *HF/Asperger Group* meets 1st Monday of the month. For more information contact info@nccasa.com or (760) 479-1420 www.nccasa.com

Autism of Imperial County. George Mcfadden 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

EFRC & HOPE Infant Family Support Group. ☎ Mary Sebastyn (858) 569-5370 or Tessie Salcedo (619) 409-3127. Meets in Chula Vista. English and Spanish groups.

Families & Autistic Children Together Succeed (FACTS). Cheryl Cisneros PO Box 89-0685, Temecula, CA 92589-0685 F A C T S f a m i l i e s @ a o l . c o m 📧 www.factsfamilies.org

Fragile X Center of San Diego ☎ Cindy de Gruchy (619) 697-6468. Children's Hospital. www.fragilexsandiego.org

Kaiser Support Group Meets the second Tuesday 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 3rd 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. Contact Bobbie Kohrt or Mary Lou Evans 858-490-8520

Spanish-Speaking Support Group — For families with children under 5: 1st & 3rd Fridays, 9:30-11AM. For families with children 5 and over: 2nd & 4th Friday, 9:30-11AM. Contact Laura Cervantes (619)498-8171 or Tessie Salcedo (619)594-7391.

SibShop Sibling support group for kids ages 6-12. Contact Nicole Hadley CCLS (858) 966-7411.

Supporting Parents of Autistic Young Adults (SPAYA) Sophia (858) 560-0555 or SPAYA@san.rr.com Meets at San Diego Regional Center, Rm. 101, 4355 Ruffin Road.

TACA Parent training and support group addressing issues of younger children on the spectrum TACAnow@anysite.net

Understanding Autism Together. ☎ ASYMCA (619) 532-8156. Meets 3rd Monday of each month, 6:00 p.m., Pediatric Conference Room, Building 2-1 of the Naval Medical Center. www.asymcasd.org

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/.

Autism Tissue Program (ATP). A national campaign, working with advocacy organizations to notify families of the importance of brain tissue donation for autism research. 1-877-333-0999 (24-hour information and donation hotline) www.MemoriesofHope.org

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. www.EFRCOnline.org

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.

San Diego Park & Recreation Therapeutic Recreation 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.

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

Valeries Email List information, announcements and networking. To subscribe email Val Saraf at ValeriesList@aol.com

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

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, one-on-one aide and child at Sea World. 619-497-2450

AquaPros Swim School offers swim lessons for children with autism. Home pool programs or at Boys & Girls Club in Clairemont. 619-209-2990 www.aquapros.org

Autism Friends Club. Social skills training for children on the high functioning end of the autism spectrum, 4-18 years of age. Comprehensive Autism Services and Education (CASE) in Carlsbad 760-720-4964 www.casefamily.com

Autism Spectrum Consultants (ASC) social skills groups, ages 7-13, on Mondays 4-6pm, 6 week sessions in Scripps Ranch. Cindy@autismconsultants.com

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

CARES Family Services Center- Providing therapeutic services (including individual, family, and child therapy) for families with children with developmental, behavioral and/or social problems. Now accepting TRI-CARE. Nancy Cason, Psy.D. 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

RESOURCE INFORMATION

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

Community Coaching Center Community & Behavioral Life Skills Training and supervision for after school, Saturdays, school vacation. Tina Waters (858) 603-9835 www.ccckids.net

Comprehensive Autism Services and Education, Inc. (CASE) In home programs, school consultation, social skills groups. 580 Beech Avenue, Suite B Carlsbad, CA 92008 (760) 720-4964 CASEandi@aol.com www.casefamily.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.

The Crimson Center for Speech & Language. Speech/language therapy services, social/language groups, typical peer groups, and occupational therapy. Sessions can be observed behind one-way mirrors. 858-695-9415 or www.crimsoncenter.com

Susan L. Daniel, O.D., Developmental Optometrist 2624-A El Camino Real Carlsbad, CA 92008 760-434-3314 drsusdan@pacbell.net

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 Speech Therapy Center (Katherine Medeiros) OT Etc (Val Plummer) 7927 Ostrow St. Suite B San Diego 92111 858-565-6910 www.excelspeech.com

Kara Dodds and Associates Kara Dodds (619)692-0622 or KaraDoddsandAssoc@sbcglobal.net

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

Horsemanship for the Handicapped. A rehabilitation and therapy program offered at no cost to participants. San Diego Center, (619) 441-7868.

I Can Too Learning Center Offers behavioral intervention for children with autism between 2-6 years. Kevin Dotts 760-815-4800 www.icantoolc.com

Kidspiration Physical Therapy and Yoga, Inc. 909 Prospect Street, Suite 224 La Jolla, CA 92130 www.kidspirationPT.com info@kidspirationPT.com 619-804-1630 Michele Rooney Harriman, MS, PT. Yoga, craniosacral therapy, 'breath play' and aquatics. Parent and professional training workshops.

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

N. Jennifer Oke, Ph.D. Clinical Psychologist. Psychological assessment and treatment for children with autism spectrum disorders and their families. Many insurances accepted. CA License #PSY14603 (858) 452-9596.

Pacific Therapy, Inc. Angela Desideri, Speech-Language Pathologist, 14667 Via Azul San Diego CA 92127 (858) 442-3072

Promising Futures, Inc. Residential services for adults with autism (619) 390-4277 www.promisingfutures.net. Vocational services (619) 440-3300.

Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. staff development, program design and family training for Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). 888-732-7462 www.peccs.com

Sensory Learning Center Learning Program uses a combination of vision, balance, and auditory training to improve perception, understanding, and the ability to learn. Dr. Susan Daniel (760) 807-2338 or drsusdan@pacbell.net.

STAR Program, Inc. Socialization Training and Reinforcement. After-school social skills program for children with pervasive developmental disorders. Dr. Linda Collins, Exec Dir. & President 6440 Lusk Blvd. Suite D203, San Diego, California 92121 (858) 450-4785

Vivo Music Therapy Services Julie M. Guy, MT-BC Music Therapist Board Certified Fax & 24-hour Voice Mail 1.866.493.6097 www.vivomusictherapy.com

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES:

Community Advisory Committee for Special Education (CACSE)
San Diego ☎ (858) 627-7270 ext 3160.
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/specialed.

Special Education Local Planning Areas

East County	☎ (619) 590-3920
North Coastal	☎ (760) 471-8208
North Inland	☎ (760) 788-4671
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

Please send updates to info@sd-autism.org

INTERNET SITES FOR ASD

Reviewed by Jennifer Oke, Ph.D

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Indiana Resource Center for Autism*****

www.iidc.indiana.edu

The Indiana Resource Center for Autism provides an excellent site with a wide range of articles written by their staff. These topics include: general information on autism, family, adults, educational programming, behavior, communication, social/leisure, and self help/medical. The site is particularly helpful as it addresses adolescent and adult issues.

Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Handicapped Children*****

www.teacch.com

TEACCH has articles on a wide variety of topics in the areas of autism, educational approaches and communication approaches. Some of the information on the site is in Spanish.

Autism Independent UK***

www.autismuk.com

This site is included as it has two articles on sexuality and autism. This is a topic that parents frequently ask questions about and raise concerns but is not addressed nearly enough.

Autism Today****

www.autismtoday.com

Autism Today is an excellent site that includes articles, listings of conferences and events, answers to questions from resident experts, a library of articles, and an online gallery of stories, poems, and artwork. The resident experts cover the wide range of aspects in autism and Asperger's. Among the experts are Dr. Tony Atwood, Dr. Simon Baron-Cohen, Dr. Temple Grandin, Carol Gray, Jerry Newport, Donna Williams, and Dr. Diane Twachtman-Cullen.

EDUCATION

Circle of Inclusion***

www.circleofinclusion.org

Circle of inclusion is a thorough resource for inclusion for children through eight years of age. It is particularly useful as it is written in both English and Spanish. The site addresses "Why inclusive services?", "Methods and Practices", "Interactive Lessons", and "Accommodations, Accessibility and Awareness."

RESEARCH

Autism and Asperger's Research Report*****

aarr.stanford.edu

This site is maintained by Stanford University Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. It provides descriptions and results of recent research in the field of autism in the areas of diagnosis, therapy, neuroscience, genetics, immunology/virology, language, behavior and cognition. The site provides a glossary of terms to define medical, psychological, and research terminology.

Association for Science in Autism Treatment*****

www.asatonline.org

The Association for Science in Autism Treatment (ASAT) is an excellent resource for assessment, treatment and research in ASD. The site features a newsletter "Science in Autism Treatment" that can be downloaded in PDF format. There is a library of past articles and features from recent issues. The ASAT has an impressive advisory board of top researchers in the field.

CASA: Current Alerting System for Autism***

www.onlinecasa.org

CASA provides both current abstracts and maintains archives of research in the field. The site has an inclusive list of topics from which selections can be made to receive weekly e-mails regarding research updates.

THERAPY AND PROGRAM RESOURCES

Speech Teach UK ***

www.speechteach.co.uk

Speech Teach UK is site for parents and professionals who work with children with dyspraxia, apraxia, and autism. The site includes information for parents, picture cards, and speech therapy activities and games that can be downloaded at no cost.

do2Learn****

www.do2learn.com

do2Learn has a wealth of information, materials, games and songs. The Fire Safety Song and the Street Safety Song teach skills through animation and repetitive lyrics and steps to be learned. The songs can be downloaded and there are printable lyrics with the pictures from the animation. The site

contains step-by-step art projects with photographic visuals for projects such as drawing simple objects and marble painting. Among the games is a feelings games that shows three photos of faces and asks "Who is ___?" In addition, there are many materials that can be printed to be used at home or as part of child's programs.

Pics4Learning***

www.pics4learning.com

Pics4Learning provides photographs for use for a variety of speech and educational goals. Among some of the categories on the site are animals, careers, dinosaurs, food, holidays, body parts, science, space, toys, and transportation.

Beyond Autism PECS Pictures/Icons Pages*****

www.trainland.tripod.com

This site provides great links to numerous sites with visual strategies such as a visually-cued communication system, worksheets, writing paper, a picture dictionary, and sight words.

Words and Pictures****

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wordsandpictures/teachers/resources.shtml>

For children learning to read, this site provides some great games that can be personalized to address the sounds a child is learning. The five games include phonics, cvc words, consonant clusters, long vowel sounds, and high frequency words.

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

National Institute of Mental Health***

www.nimh.nih.gov

ASD can be found under Health Information on this site. NIMH provides information on autism, treatment, and news. They report on research as well as document where NIMH funding in the area of research is being spent.

National Institute of Health**

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/autism.html>

NIH provides information on autism and Asperger's in English with some key articles in Spanish. The site provides overviews of the disorders, diagnosis, treatment, coping, research, clinical trials, and genetics. The latest news in research is posted on the site.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Speech-Sound-Selective Auditory Impairment in Children with Autism: They Can Perceive But Do Not Attend

Ceponiene R, Lepisto T, Shestakova A, Vanhala R, Alku P, Naatanen R, Yaguchi .Cognitive Brain Research Unit, Department of Psychology, P.O. Box 13, University of Helsinki, FIN-00014 Helsinki, Finland.

Abstract: Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2003 Apr 29;100(9):5567-72. Epub 2003 Apr 17

Findings

Individuals with autism show severe abnormalities in social behavior along with abnormal attention and deficient language. Attention to people and socially relevant stimuli is impaired the most. To understand this problem of attention in children with autism, the authors studied auditory (hearing) input and processing in autistic individuals—that is, they studied how children with autism reacted to sounds.

The authors selected 9 high-functioning autistic children (8 males, 1 female, 6.3-12.4 years old) and 10 typically developing children (9 males, 1 female, 6.6-12.4 years old). These children listened to a random series of simple and complex tones as well as to spoken vowels in their native language (Finnish) in which a “standard” spoken vowel sound was occasionally replaced by an infrequent “deviant” vowel sound with a different frequency (different pitch, by 10%). The reactions of children were measured by their brain waves (using event-related brain wave potentials, ERP) that measured sensory and attention processing of sounds. The goal was to determine if children with autism have a disadvantage over typically developing children in reacting to speech (vowels) compared with non-speech sounds (tones).

The results showed that high-functioning verbal children with autism had no significant abnormalities in processing a simple tone, a complex tone, or a vowel. However, children with autism did not orient or react to changes (deviants) in vowels (speech) the same way that normal children reacted—the children with autism showed brain waves indicating almost no orientation to complex speech compared with complex tones. Thus, the autistic children's defects in processing vowel sounds as opposed to complex tones may be related to the quality of the sound perceived as speech. If such a deficit in

orienting and reacting to speech is present early in infancy, it profoundly affects how verbal and nonverbal communication skills are developed in the affected children.

Conclusions

A defect in an autistic child's ability to orient and react to complex speech would mean they are at a disadvantage when trying to comprehend and react to signals of social communication (e.g., complex speech and possibly subtle facial expressions) because these complex stimuli change quickly. Furthermore, if social stimuli are not particularly meaningful to children with autism, they would have no motivation to react to those speaking in social situations or, worse, they might even develop resentment to the stimuli to which they feel they should, but cannot, relate. In support of this view, research shows that 5-year-old children with autism preferred listening to nonsense sounds than to their mothers' talking. However, children perceive and react to music well and often outperform normally developing children in musical ability.

Effectiveness of Melatonin in the Treatment of Sleep Disturbances in Children with Asperger Disorder

Paavonen EJ, Nieminen-Von Wendt T, Vanhala R, Aronen ET, Von Wendt L Department of Child Psychiatry, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland.

Abstract: J Child Adolesc Psychopharmacol. 2003 Spring;13(1):83-95

Findings

As many as 65% of children with autistic disorder have abnormal sleep patterns, and particularly, sleep disturbances are common in individuals with Asperger disorder. Adequate sleep is particularly important in these individuals because sleep disturbances may worsen other symptoms. However, to date, there have been no studies on the treatment of sleep disturbances in Asperger disorder. Dr. Paavonen and her colleagues studied the effectiveness of the hormone melatonin in treating sleep disturbances in children with Asperger disorder. Melatonin is a hormone naturally secreted by the pineal gland in the body, which functions to initiate sleep, and has been used in the past to promote sleep in various sleep disturbances.

For this study, the researchers studied both sleep characteristics as well as daytime behavior of 15 children and adolescents (13 boys, 2 girls) with Asperger disorder aged 6-17 years. Subjects were given melatonin pills 3 mg/day for 14 days and sleep and daytime behavior observed 1.5 weeks before, during (at the end of the 14 days), and 3 weeks after the treatment period.

Sleep patterns of all children improved during treatment. Time to fall asleep decreased by half (from about average 40 minutes to 21 minutes) in all children. The time they slept (about 8 hours) did not change with treatment, but decreased significantly after melatonin was stopped. Despite the short period of this study, most behavioral measures improved. Particularly, depression, anxiety, and withdrawal decreased during the period of treatment. Most of these effects disappeared 3 weeks after melatonin was discontinued. Only 2 children reported mild tiredness and one reported headache while taking melatonin, but these symptoms went away after the child stopped taking melatonin.

Conclusions

This was the first clinical study using melatonin in children with Asperger disorder. The results showed that melatonin may be effective in treating sleep problems in children with Asperger disorder. Also, the daytime behaviors and “internalizing problems” (depression, anxiety, and withdrawal) improved in all children while taking melatonin, but the researchers did not know whether this effect was a result of improvement in sleep disturbances or whether it was an effect of melatonin on some other aspect of the child's functioning. The authors state: “...the link between autistic spectrum disorders and sleep is of particular concern, as it is likely that sleep problems exacerbate [make worse] the disruptive daytime behavior typical of autistic children and thereby increase parental stress.” The authors stress that these results seen in this study with a small number of children need to be confirmed in a larger study that is controlled (ie, a double-blind, placebo-controlled study).

The authors conclude that giving melatonin in low doses (such as used in this study) “can improve sleep quality without virtually any adverse effects.”

RESEARCH UPDATE

Specifying PDD-NOS: A Comparison of PDD-NOS, Asperger Syndrome, and Autism

Walker D, Thompson A, Zwaigenbaum J, Goldberg J, Bryson S, Mahoney, W, Strawbridge C, Szatmari P. Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

Abstract: J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry 43:2 2004

Findings

In diagnosing children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), doctors will often assign the category of PDD-NOS (pervasive developmental disorders-not otherwise specified) to those who don't match a specific diagnosis of autism or Asperger syndrome (AS); however, the category of PDD-NOS doesn't have specific criteria and is often used as a diagnosis of exclusion. The term PDD-NOS can be misleading and ambiguous to parents and doctors. To better understand what clinical characteristics distinguish children diagnosed with PDD-NOS from other children with ASDs, Dr. Darlene Walker and her colleagues compared 216 children with autism, 33 with Asperger syndrome, and 21 children diagnosed with PDD-NOS. Children were studied for level of functioning (communication, daily living, and social skills, IQ, and age of first language) and symptoms of autism (impaired communication, reciprocal social interaction, and repetitive and stereotyped activities). They found that for level of functioning, the PDD-NOS children had scores between those of autism and AS. However, PDD-NOS children had fewer autistic symptoms (particularly repetitive behaviors) than autism and AS individuals. Further analyses suggested that children with PDD-NOS can be divided into three groups: (1) high-functioning, resembling AS, but with transient language delay or mild cognitive impairment, (2) those resembling autistic children but had late onset of cognitive delay or mild cognitive impairment, (3) a group not fulfilling criteria for autism due to fewer repetitive behaviors.

Conclusions

Children diagnosed with PDD-NOS comprise a heterogeneous group. On average they are higher functioning compared to children

with autism, have more delayed language than children with AS, and have fewer repetitive behaviors than either group. The authors suggest that changing slightly the criteria for both AS and atypical autism may lead to a more accurate classification of these children. The term PDD-NOS should then be reserved for children for whom there is not enough clinical information (young age, poor documentation, etc.) to make a more specific diagnosis. The result will be a more reliable diagnoses and more accurate studies on the causes of ASDs.

Enhanced Pitch Sensitivity in Individuals with Autism: a Signal Detection Analysis.

Bonnell A, Mottron L, Peretz I, Trudel M, Gallun E, Bonnell AM. University of Montreal; Riviere-des-Prairies Hospital, Montreal, Canada

Abstract: J Cogn Neurosci. 2003 Feb 15;15(2):226-35

Findings

Research has shown individuals with high-functioning autism (HFA) are better than typically developing individuals visually searching and discriminating items. Those with HFA are also better than controls in memorizing picture-pitch associations and detecting pitch changes in music. Especially intriguing are a subset of autistic individuals known as "musical savants," who can identify exact (absolute) musical pitches and even play back complex pieces of music after hearing it once. This musical superiority may be a result of an abnormally high sensitivity to fine pitch differences in sounds.

To test this hypothesis, Dr. Mottron and colleagues studied 12 high-functioning teenagers with autism (average 17.9 years) who were musically untrained and a comparable group of 12 typically developing teens (average 16.6 years), all of whom were tested for normal and comparable hearing. Subjects were given two tests, each increasingly difficult: (1) pitch discrimination, requiring individuals to discriminate between two different tones or to judge if they were the same, (2) pitch categorization, requiring individuals to categorize each tone presented as high or low compared with a pure reference tone.

In both tasks, subjects with autism showed a higher sensitivity to pitch and categorizing pitches than the control subjects.

Conclusions

These findings confirm that pitch processing is enhanced in "high-functioning" autism. Superior performance in pitch discrimination and categorization confirms previous findings of enhanced visual and auditory performance. This enhanced sensitivity to different pitches may account for the observation that autistic individuals excel at music perceptual tasks, and for the ability of musical savants to determine absolute pitch.

Glossary

Double-blind: A type of study in which neither the subject taking the drug nor the investigator giving them the drug know whether it is the active, real drug or a placebo.

Event-related brain wave potentials, ERP: A method used to measure electrical response from portions of the brain during presentation of various stimuli such as a spoken word or a tone.

Melatonin: A naturally occurring hormone secreted by the "pineal" gland. In humans, it likely plays a role in establishing 24-hour (circadian) sleep rhythms.

Placebo: A "dummy" medication ("sugar pill") having no specific activity or action in the body. With a pill taken by mouth (orally), for example, the placebo is a pill identical in appearance to the pill with the active medicine. Subjects are given a placebo to test for the psychological aspects of giving the medicine—that is, some people complain of side effects (nausea, headache) and even improve with a placebo.

INSIGHT

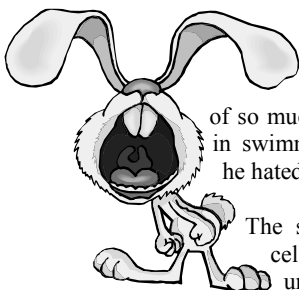
The Animal School — A Parable —

Once upon a time the animals decided they must do something decisive to meet the increasing complexity of their society. They held a meeting and finally decided to organize a school. The curriculum consisted of running, swimming and flying. Since these were the basic behaviors of most animals, they decided that all the students should take all of the subjects.

The duck proved to be excellent at swimming, better in fact than his teacher. He also did well in flying, but he proved to be very poor in running. Since he was poor in this subject he was made to stay after school to practice it and even had to drop swimming in order to get more time in which to practice running. He was kept at this poorest subject until his webbed feet were so badly damaged that he became only average at swimming. But average was acceptable in the school so nobody worried about that - except the duck.



The rabbit started at the top of his class in running, but finally had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up time in swimming - a subject he hated.



The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed psychological blocking in flying class when the teacher insisted he start from the ground instead of from the tops of the trees. He was kept at attempting to fly until he became muscle bound - and received a C in climbing and a D in running.

The eagle was the school's worst discipline problem, in climbing class he beat all of the others to the top of the tree used for examination purposes in this subject, but he insisted on using his own method of getting there.

The gophers of course, stayed out of the school and fought the tax levied for education because digging was not included in the

curriculum. They apprenticed their children to the badger and later joined the ground hogs and eventually started a private school offering alternative education.

Author: Unknown

Autism Advice

Parent to Parent: A New Autism Advice Column

Parents have a unique outlook and have so much to share with each other. This new column is a forum for parents to ask and answer questions on topics of importance to you. The questions for the next issue of Autism Action are based on community skills. If you have good strategies, other parents would benefit from hearing them. If you are having some of these issues look for some tips in our next issue.

1. How do you make trips to the dentist or doctor less stressful?
2. What tips can you give for teaching your child to stand/wait in lines and waiting rooms?
3. How do you handle difficult situations in grocery stores, restaurants, malls, movies, etc.?

You can submit answers or questions for the next issue of Autism Action to drjoke@earthlink.net. Responses may be edited for length.

Book Review

Maverick Mind: A Mother's Story of Solving the Mystery of Her Unreachable, Unteachable, Silent Son by Cheri L. Florance, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Rachel Tapper Zijlstra, Speech Language Pathologist

Maverick Mind is an autobiographical story written by Dr. Florance, a medical speech language pathologist working with both children and adults with communication disorders. The book begins describing her ex-

tremely successful and busy career, with 12 years in a thriving practice, a strained marriage and two, healthy young children.

Upon the birth of her 3rd child, everything changes. Immediately after the son's arrival she senses that something is wrong: he doesn't appear to bond the same way her other children did. He isn't cooing, and more importantly, he fails to respond to her presence or his environment.

The child reaches his motor milestones as expected but the absence of communication (the achievement of any speech and language milestones) becomes very alarming. At first, she pretends that nothing is wrong, ignoring or avoiding people in her life that question his development. Soon, she can no longer ignore his autistic-like behavior. After accepting her son's condition she confronts his disability with all the motherly and therapy instincts she possesses. She incorporates everything she's learned from her training and experiences working with communication disorders, and develops therapeutic interventions to break through the barrier that's preventing her son from communicating.

It is both painful and heartwarming to see Dr. Florance fight for her child and to follow her very personal and professional battle to understand both the disorder as well as her own son. Her son's progress is no less than remarkable, and she can be commended for her heroic effort at discovering effective therapeutic interventions. As a reader, we get the benefit of seeing one child's development from birth through high school, from severely impaired to merely learning disabled.

Maverick Mind is a very inspirational story of one mom advocating for her child and trying to convince herself as well as the outside world that her child can effectively participate in our world.

Star Rating: 3.5/5 Stars

CASINO NIGHT 2004

The SDASA would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the generous individuals and businesses who donated funds and items for auction at this year's Casino Night fundraiser. Your selfless gifts helped the SDASA raise almost \$25,000 to support our recreation programs that include Camp I CAN and POOL PALS. We would also like to thank everyone that attended and made the event such a success. We appreciate the humor Tony Calabrese brought to the event as MC. Thanks go to Shelly and John VanBrabant, co-chairs and Cathy Schieffer and Bob Edwards as well as the rest of the Casino Night Committee and the event volunteers who made the night a tremendous success on all levels. Below is a list of our generous donors:

Old Town Trolley Tours
 Christian Community Theater
 H & M Landing
 Hornblower Cruises
 Qwiig's
 Chuck & Joan Hansen
 A Better Body Salon and Day Spa
 Dr. Wendall Smoot & Dr. John Smoot
 Reuben H. Fleet Science Center
 Sea World Community Relations
 Six Flags Magic Mountain
 San Diego Natural History Museum
 Birch Aquarium
 Heavenly Hands Massage
 World Famous
 Pacific Beach Surf Shop
 Surfer Beach Hotel
 Starlight Theatre
 North Coast Repertory Theatre
 Anthony's Fish Grotto
 San Diego Coaster Company
 Skysailing

Sea View Chiropractic
 Henry's Market Place
 Tony & Maria Caligagan
 Callaway Golf Company
 San Diego Harbor Excursion
 Country Farm Soaps
 Maureen Ruchhoeft
 Ridershouse
 SDSU Athletics
 Disneyland Resort
 TaylorMade
 Guy Blumenthal Jewelry
 The Life Enhancement Center
 Magnolia Salon
 Kayou Clinic
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 Peter Rullan MD Dermatology Institute
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 Anthony Robbins Foundation
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 Starbucks Coffee Co
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 Dr Katherine Tanaka
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 Sandi Hayslip
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 United Sports of San Diego
 Julie and Mike Cork
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 Rachel Zijlstra
 Sea View Chiropractic
 John and Shelly VanBrabant
 Studio 94 Salon
 Gary Wigdahl Photography
 The Sacramento Kings
 Rosie's Calico Corner
 Paul Basile
 The Hembury Family
 M. Katz & Family
 Craig and Robin Prince
 Mama Mallace's
 Dr. Jennifer Oke

UPCOMING EVENTS

Understanding the Autistic Individual Workshops sponsored by CARES. July 1-2, 2004 in San Diego. Speakers include Dr. Gary Mesibov, Dr. Bryna Siegel and Dr. Pamela Wolfberg. For more information visit <http://www.caresnpa.com/workshops.htm> or call 858-623-2777 x 397

'58 Chevy Project. The Autism Tree Project Foundation project is to refurbish a '58 Chevy Custom Hot Rod Truck and raffle the automobile. Proceeds from the raffle will be used to fund autism and neurological research projects and for future community education/awareness. The truck will make appearances at a different Starbucks every Saturday in August and September to sell raffle tickets and raise autism awareness. Tickets are \$20 and are available on the ATPF website at www.autismtreeproject.org or by calling (619) 980-8614.

Summer Music Enrichment Groups: An upbeat and interactive music program offered by Coast Music Therapy for children and teens with special needs. Classes are offered on Saturdays from June 19 to July 24 and held at the Kearny Mesa Recreation Center. Activities include singing, instruments, rhythm, and movement for all ability levels. Fee is \$90 for the 6-week series (\$15 per class). Adapted piano/instrument instruction is also available this spring/summer for individuals. Contact (858) 453-5211 or info@coastmusictherapy.com

Soaring to New Heights Autism Society of America is hosting it's 35th National Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders July 7 — 10, 2004 at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center in Seattle. More than 65 concurrent educational sessions, powerful keynote speakers and over 130 exhibits. Register online www.autism-society.org

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) Workshops: July 7, 2004: Incorporating PECS Across the Day. Presented by Donna Banzhof, M.Ed. Holiday Inn San Diego Bayside 0.6 ASHA CEUs. July 8 & 9, 2004: Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) 2-Day Workshop Presented by Donna Banzhof, M.Ed. & Susan L. Peterson, Ph.D., BCBA Holiday Inn San Diego Bayside 1.3 ASHA CEUs. Registration Fees One-Day Workshop: \$175, Two-Day Workshop: \$375 for professional and \$235 for parent/ student. One-day workshop includes a handout packet for note taking. Two-day workshop includes a 2nd Edition PECS Manual and a handout packet for note taking. For registration information, visit www.pecs.com or call 888-732-7462. For general information, contact Sarah Moore at smoore@pecs.com or call 302-368-2515.

New Services from C.A.S.E. Inc. *Parent Training* offers parents an intensive Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Therapy training. The cost is \$100.00 for five sessions. *Saturday Friends' Camp* is a day camp offered to children and teens on the Autistic Spectrum. The camp participates in activities like: rock climbing, laser tag, and surfing at the Carlsbad beach. Each day will be held from 9am - 3pm on Saturdays. The camp costs \$75.00 each day and there is an additional charge of \$15.00 on Laser tag day for admittance. *Summer Friends' Camp* is an opportunity to take Friends' Club out into the community. This camp is specially modified for children and teens on the Autistic Spectrum. Each child will explore activities like, rock climbing and going to the science museum in a socially structured environment designed to develop various aspects of social success. The costs is \$400.00 for Friends' Club clients and \$500.00 for new clients. The dates are: Boys camp- July 5-9, 2004; Jr. Friends' Camp- July 12 - 16, 2004; Girls camp- July 19 - 23, 2004. Each camp will be held from 9am - 3pm. Please call the C.A.S.E., Inc. office if you are interested at (760) 720-4964.

Save the Date! Soma Mukhopadhyay will be in San Diego presenting on the Rapid Prompting Method she developed to teach her son Tito. The presentation is tentatively scheduled for September 18, 2004 at the Joan Kroc/Salvation Army Center. For more information about the Rapid Prompting Method go to www.halo-soma.org.

Run for Rett 2004. The Run for Rett hopes to provide care, advocacy and research that will make a difference in the lives of girls and women with Rett Syndrome. The run is on Saturday, September 25, 2004. For more information go to www.sd.rett.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):

- PARENT GRAND PARENT TEACHER AIDE
- CARE PROVIDER RELATIVE PHYSICIAN PSYCHOLOGIST
- FRIEND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR OTHER

DUES (INCLUDES NATIONAL AND STATE DUES):

- FULL TIME STUDENT: \$25.00
- INDIVIDUAL: \$40.00
- FAMILY MEMBERSHIP: \$50.00
- 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**

Website: www.sd-autism.org
 Email: info@sd-autism.org
 (619) 298-1981
 San Diego, CA 92124
 P O Box 420908
 Autism Society of America
 SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHAPTER

