



FAU CENTER FOR AUTISM AND RELATED DISABILITIES

Florida Atlantic University

Director's Update

We hope you had an opportunity for some well-deserved relaxation and rest with family and friends. It is difficult to believe we are approaching another school year. We have had a very busy and productive summer at FAU CARD!

FAU CARD has received a substantial budget increase for this new fiscal year and will be hiring four new clinical staff. Combined with a grant awarded from the Harry T. Mangurian Foundation, we are fortunate to be able to broaden our outreach, increase staff, and reach, train, and support more families, school staff, community agencies and others. In particular, we are excited to hire a Transition Specialist who will be working with adults, families, the business community and other agencies in our region to create and maintain employment opportunities for our young adults and adults with ASD. We are also adding a Clinical Associate Mentor who will assist FAU CARD in developing a research-based mentoring program providing a critical level of support for individuals with ASD in middle school through adulthood. We want to thank the Florida legislators, parents, families and all our community supporters for this vote of confidence and for the additional funding.

Please take a minute to thank our legislators for their support, especially Representative Erik Fresen for being such a strong supporter of CARD. None of this would have been possible without the advocacy and support of our parents. I would like to thank our Parent Advisory and Board Members, Michele Weppner and Veronica Pappas, as well as Advisory Members, Darlene Foster and Carmen Noonan for all their diligence and support in meeting with our elected officials to advocate for CARD. We are most grateful for the support of these and all our parents families. Thank you!

We just completed our 8th Annual Summer Academy with over 90 professionals and parents attending. Dr. Mary Lou Duffy, Monday's Keynote Presenter, highlighted strategies to support students with ASD in the general education environment,

focusing on expanding Universal Design for Learning. Our keynote for Tuesday, Sarah Ward, provided a packed agenda of strategies to increase learning across environments. Additionally, Dr. Jagathy Nair, Dr. Soni Kay, and Heather Mack provided strategies for behavior management in the classroom, collaborating with your occupational therapist, and for transition from high school to post-secondary options. We want to thank all of the presenters for sharing their expertise. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive.

We are currently planning our training offerings for the 2014-15 fiscal year. Currently, we have a training planned for Friday, October 3 by Dr. Merrill Winston. Dr. Winston will be presenting two sessions. The morning session will introduce attendees how to increase behavioral compliance through developing relationships, maintain levels of reinforcement and implement meaningful restraint and seclusion reduction. The afternoon session will focus on antecedent manipulation for ASD and teaching students strategies to adapt and cope with adversives. Opportunity to earn BCBA CEUs will be provided. Additionally, FAU CARD is excited to offer the community a speaker series focusing on bringing national experts and speakers to the area, in the evenings for parents and professionals. To stay connected on training dates and our online tutorials, please visit our website at www.autism.fau.edu.

We are also looking forward to our upcoming FAU CARD Homecoming Run for Autism on Sunday, October 26, 2014 held on the FAU Boca Raton campus. This 5K run/walk event features lots of activities and is a great opportunity to get the whole family out for a day of fun for everyone! I hope to see you there! Please see our [Facebook](#), [Website](#) and [Trainings/Event Calendar](#) for additional information. I hope to see you at our upcoming events!

Maryellen Quinn-Lunny, Ed.S.
Director

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



Supporting autism one step at a time.

Sunday, October 26, 2014

5:15 p.m.

Track & Field Complex

- Run through the FAU Football Stadium
- Night race with track finish
- Prizes for top runner and fundraising teams

For more information or to register, please visit:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/BocaRaton/FAUHomecoming5KRun>

To create a fundraising team, please visit:

www.active.com/donate/homecomingrun4autism

Executive Director's Update

Two Things to Help with your Child's Safety

As you may know from reading some of my previous newsletter submissions, I am a very strong proponent of safety for children and youth on the autism spectrum. Safety is a huge problem but it is typically pushed into the background for reasons that I am not able to fully understand. When we fail to pay attention to safety for these children, they can pay a very heavy price. Prevention is the key.

We have to be preventive and make sure our children stay safe because the vast majority simply do not have adequate self-preservation skills. I don't know of any miracle to help implant these skills but we have to be prepared to be fully aware of safety risks, conduct drills to back up crisis and emergency plans, make environmental modifications, such as special locks and pool alarms, use safety devices, like bike helmets and car seats, and have thoughtful monitoring of the child's activities.

In July, I traveled to Indianapolis and spoke at the Autism Society of America Annual Conference about safety. Joining me were Dennis Debbaut and Chief Gene Saunders. Dennis, who many of you know, is the nation's leading trainer of police agencies about autism. Gene is the CEO and founder of Project Lifesaver International, a nonprofit organization that promotes electronic tracking for vulnerable children and seniors with dementia. We informed our audience, mainly parents, of ways to help keep their child safe in the community. We had two important messages: immediate notification of 911 if a child is missing and the risks of adults tuning out when supervising due to personal electronic devices.

First, we talked about how critically important it was for families, educators, and program leaders to immediately contact 911 if a child on the spectrum was missing. We've seen cases where school personnel delayed contacting 911 on missing persons cases by as much as one hour. 911 is the call you make to activate community search capabilities. A parent can delay calling 911 when their child is missing, perhaps thinking that they'll find the child in a little while. A teacher may report a child missing and administrators at the school may insist on a delay while they ask for a second or third search or for other reasons. Regardless of the rationale, with delayed time to react, law enforcement now has a dramatically larger area to search and the child may have already become endangered.

Drowning incidents can occur in mere seconds. Waiting to call 911 when a child is known to be missing is the wrong thing to do. Anyone responsible for a child on the spectrum must be prepared to immediately contact 911 as soon as they know the child is missing. People may sometimes hesitate to call 911 feeling that if the child is found right away that it will be embarrassing when the police do arrive. What we all heard in Indianapolis from Chief Saunders is that the police would far rather respond and then find the child is safe then to be called after a delay and know the child has a big head start on them. Please take away this message: if your child or student is missing, call 911.

The second big point relates to a tragedy that occurred in the Tampa area. The potential for more tragedies like this is clear. A young girl with developmental disabilities wandered from her middle school. She had done this before and an alert teacher had noted that the paraprofessionals seemed to be paying attention to cell phones and not paying attention to the safety of the children. If people are being paid to supervise your children then that is what they should be doing. If staff is busy playing with their cell phone or tablet, then they are neglecting their responsibilities to your child and other children. Parents, ask about school policies for the use of personal electronics by staff during supervised activities. Principals and teachers, consider policies that do not allow instructional personnel to use personal electronics in class or when they are supervising children. It can be done and is, I strongly believe, a best practice in ASD programming. I recently visited the Child Development Institute at the New York State University in Binghamton, where the leaders of this wonderful program were among the first to recognize the problems that can come from personal electronics in classrooms. They have a comprehensive policy that forbids teachers, paraprofessionals, and therapists from bringing these devices into classrooms or onto play areas at the school.

My intention is not to chastise families or professionals but rather to raise awareness of the importance of precautionary safety measures and active responding. Parents and school administrators please help join me in recognizing the potential of this problem and take action.

Have a wonderful, and safe, school year!

Jack Scott

SAVE THE DATES!



22nd ANNUAL CARD CONFERENCE

FOCUS on AUTISM

SAVE THE DATE
JANUARY 16-18, 2015

EARLY BIRD DISCOUNTS
Registration opening
August 25, 2014 @
www.ucf-card.org

FLORIDA MALL & CONFERENCE CENTER.
ORLANDO.FL

Save the Date
3rd Annual Treasure Coast Autism
Awareness 5K
Saturday, May 16, 2015
Jonathan Dickinson State Park



Boca Raton & Treasure Coast Groups

	Date	Time
<p><i>Boca Raton Adult Group</i></p> <p>Adults with an autism spectrum disorder ages 18 and older are welcome. The group meets to discuss issues, problem solve and form friendships. This group meets at the FAU High School or in the community.</p>	9/15 10/20 11/17 12/15	7 - 8:30 PM 7 - 8:30 PM 7 - 8:30 PM 7 - 8:30 PM
<p><i>Treasure Coast Adult Group- Community Outings</i></p> <p>Adults with an autism spectrum disorder ages 18 and older are welcome. The group will meet at various community locations to discuss issues, problem solve and form friendships. Locations will be determined prior to outing date. For questions, please contact Cathy Allore, Clinical Support Specialist, at (772) 873-3367 or callore@fau.edu.</p>	9/11 10/9 11/13 12/11	7 - 8:30 PM 7 - 8:30 PM 7 - 8:30 PM 7 - 8:30 PM

Trainings & Parent Networking Opportunities

Unless otherwise indicated, all trainings will be available online.

Registration is required.

Connect to all trainings by clicking on the provided link for details.

IEP Notebook

500 NW California Blvd, MP 116, Port St Lucie, FL 34986

Participants will learn how to make an IEP Notebook and understand why having one is helpful. Materials will be provided for the first 5 registered participants. Organization of the notebook will be covered. To register, please visit: www.eventbrite.com/e/iep-notebook-tickets-12488458315

Date

Time

9/23

5:30 - 7:00 PM

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL EVENTS.

ALL GROUPS AND TRAININGS ARE SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION DUE TO LACK OF REGISTRATION.

FAU CARD does not endorse specific programs or points of view presented in this newsletter.

Trainings & Parent Networking Opportunities

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Date

Time

Toilet Training

FAU Jupiter, Education Classroom, Room 202c

Participants will learn the beginning steps to start training their child to urinate in the toilet. Data sheets and bathroom logs will be given to parents to aid in the process as well as time to troubleshoot possible obstacles. To register, please visit: www.eventbrite.com/e/toilet-training-registration-12510478177

9/26

12:00 - 1:30 PM

iTech Workshop: Apps for Secondary Education- Part I

FAU Boca Raton, College of Education, Room 411

Participants will learn about and view apps highlighting English/Social Studies/College Prep. for students with autism at the secondary school level. Due to limited access to devices, it is recommended that participants bring their own iDevice. WiFi capabilities are available. To register, please visit: <http://itechsecondarypart1.eventbrite.com>

9/26

10:00 -12:00 PM

Nurturing Beginning Reading and Math Skills in Early Childhood

FAU Boca Raton, College of Education, Room 411

Some young children with ASD are especially interested in letters and numbers, even before they start school! This workshop will teach parents of toddlers and preschoolers how to turn this interest into a functional skill, build excitement in young children who struggle with pre-academic concepts, and turn learning into a source of shared enjoyment for both parent and child. To register, please visit: www.eventbrite.com/e/nurturing-beginning-reading-and-math-skills-in-early-childhood-tickets-12534670537

10/17

11:30 - 1:30 PM

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Trainings & Parent Networking Opportunities

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Registration is required.

Connect to all trainings by clicking on the provided link.

Date

Time

Planning for an Autism Emergency

500 NW California Blvd, MP 116, Port St Lucie, FL 34986

Participants will learn the critical need for being prepared for an autism emergency. Wandering, identification methods, and emergency documentation will be covered. To register, please visit:

www.eventbrite.com/e/planning-for-an-autism-emergency-tickets-12488540561

10/21

5:30 - 7:00 PM

Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

FAU Jupiter, Education Classroom, Room 202c

This training will provide participants with an introduction of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). We will discuss the principles of behavior management and the methodology used for behavior intervention and skill development. To register, please visit: www.eventbrite.com/e/introduction-to-applied-behavioral-analysis-aba-registration-12461601987

10/24

12:00 - 1:30 PM

iTech Workshop: Apps for Secondary Education Part 2

FAU Boca Raton, College of Education, Room 411

Participants will learn about and view apps highlighting Math/Science/Productivity for students with autism at the secondary school level. Due to limited access to devices, it is recommended that participants bring their own iDevice. WiFi capabilities are available. To register, please visit: <http://itechsecondarypart2.eventbrite.com>

11/21

11:30 - 1:30 PM

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Trainings & Parent Networking Opportunities

Unless otherwise indicated, all trainings will be available online.

Registration is required.

Connect to all trainings by clicking on the provided link.

Date

Time

Making and Keeping Friends (for Parents & Professionals)

FAU Jupiter, Education Classroom, Room 202c

Participants will learn the essential skills for teaching friendship skills to children, adolescents, and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Parents, professionals, and individuals with autism are welcome to participate and will gain skills to help with finding social opportunities, joining conversations, dealing with disagreements and teasing, and more. To register, please visit: www.eventbrite.com/e/making-and-keeping-friends-registration-12510777071

11/21

12:00 - 1:30 PM

Building with Blocks to Build Baby's Language Skills: Using Play to Develop Communication

FAU Boca Raton, College of Education, Room 411

Everyone knows that children like to play, but did you know that play is essential to the development of language skills in young children? This workshop will review ways that parents of babies and toddlers ages 9 months to 3 years can strategically use play to help build their child's communication skills. To register, please visit: www.eventbrite.com/e/building-with-blocks-to-build-babys-language-skills-using-play-to-develop-communication-tickets-12534674549

12/12

11:30 - 1:30 PM

Increasing Independence in Students with ASD Using Self-Management Tools and Techniques

FAU Jupiter, Education Classroom, Room 202c

This training will provide participants an overview of the barriers to independence in individuals with ASD and discuss how you can teach self-management skills to increase independent functioning throughout the day. To register, please visit: www.eventbrite.com/e/increasing-independence-in-individuals-with-asd-using-self-management-tools-and-techniques-tickets-12462306093

12/19

12:00 - 1:30 PM

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FAU Children's Friendship Training



The FAU Communication Disorders Clinic (CDC) offers social skills groups for children in 2nd to 6th grade and their parents.



What is Children's Friendship Training?

An evidence-based social skills treatment group where children learn how to make and keep friends. Parents attend to learn how to support their children in friendship development.

Who can attend?

Children in 2nd to 6th grade who have Autism Spectrum Disorder or a related disability. This group is appropriate for children who have fluent verbal language skills, are able to follow basic classroom rules, and have average to above average cognitive abilities.

Children's Friendship Training is an evidence-based treatment program developed by Fred Frankel, Ph.D., ABPP, and Robert Myatt, Ph.D. at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior to teach elementary school-aged children with high functioning ASD and other social difficulties how to make and keep friends. Some of the topics that will be addressed over the course of treatment include: Conversational skills, Finding common interests, Joining games, Good sportsmanship, Changing your reputation, Appropriate playdate behavior, Handling teasing and bullying, and Managing conflicts with adults and peers.

In collaboration with the
FAU Center for Autism and
Related Disabilities
(FAU CARD)

When will the group occur?

The treatment is 12 weeks long and meets every Tuesday afternoon from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. during the fall, starting September 23rd, 2014.

Where will the group occur?

The group will be held at the FAU Boca Raton campus at AD Henderson/ FAU High School.

How much will it cost?

A charge of \$30/session, a total of \$360 for the 12-week program.



Why are parents involved?

The Children's Friendship Training program is unique in its inclusion of a parent group, which is a requirement of the program, so that parents can provide support and coaching to their child as friendship skills are developed.

Now enrolling for Fall 2014.

To apply, please complete a confidential interest form by clicking on this link or visit: <http://tinyurl.com/mvfabtc>

For more information, contact
Jennifer Sanderson, Psy.D.
at 561-235-9342 or
jsanderson@fau.edu

MEDICAL UPDATE

Autism Spectrum Disorder Goes to the Hospital

Judith Aronson-Ramos, M.D.

The topic of this month's article was inspired by a recent study out of Canada published in *Autism*, titled, "Autism comes to the hospital: The experiences of patients with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), their parents and health care providers at two Canadian pediatric hospitals". The results of the study showed there are significant challenges faced by individuals with autism, and their families, when dealing with hospital-based health care. Results of the study showed there were a variety of problems individuals with ASD faced. Some of these included: difficulties with communication, sensory challenges, degree of flexibility of health care providers, and the red tape at the hospital in general with policies and procedures.

As many of you already know who have been to the hospital with your child or teen, these experiences can be particularly traumatizing for individuals with ASD. Hospitals in general can be a sensory challenge to everyone. The lights, smells, sounds, pace and general mood can be off putting to the best of us. Emergency departments in particular which are often where a journey into the hospital begins are the most challenging.

Having spent years working in an emergency room and being very familiar with the hospital setting I think there are ways parents can prepare themselves and the staff to be better able to manage difficulties which are apt to arise in the hospital or ER. First, come prepared. Even if you have only minutes to grab a few things before going to the hospital, a few extra items can make waiting infinitely more manageable. This may include: headphones, a media device, sweatshirt, blanket/pillow, familiar toy, snacks, a game, as well as other items to distract. Whenever possible have your primary care doctor call ahead to alert the ER staff you will be coming and of your child's special needs. Make friends with your nurse, he or she can make or

break the entire experience. Letting them know your child's developmental and sensory needs will generally be appreciated and go a long way to making any procedures or testing that is done more manageable. Even if your child is acutely ill, communicating effectively with staff will improve care and make the experience less traumatic for everyone.

Autism awareness has increased. However, in high stress situations such as hospitals and emergency rooms, sensitivity to special needs is often compromised. Individuals, who have jobs to perform in fast-paced high-stress environments can lose their sensitivity and empathy for others. A parent or caregiver who can be flexible and make their expertise about their child's needs known in a clear concise and unemotional manner can help make a difficult situation more manageable. Preparing the staff for your child or teen by giving specific advice and suggestions can be very helpful. (For example: speak slowly, use short sentences, tell them the order of events, offer a reward when finished etc.). The Canadian study showed health care workers who acknowledged parents as experts and inquired about the specific needs of the patients with autism and implemented strategies to accommodate them had more successful outcomes.

If we have prepared families and prepared staff this can only be a win-win situation. Also vitally important is preparing your child or teen with ASD about what may happen at the hospital and what they can expect. This should be done in a developmentally appropriate way based on their cognitive and emotional needs and sensory issues. (For example: describe any procedure in appropriate detail, explain what things may feel like, offer incentives to cooperate, use analogies that are meaningful – cartoon characters, superheroes, etc).

For more specific suggestions about ways you can help your child or teen in the hospital setting, you can check out the following resources:

1. Autism Speaks has a "Blood Draw Toolkit" you can download from their website: www.autismspeaks.org. Many of the suggestions included here are beneficial for hospital visits in general not just blood draws.
2. A guide to blood draws for parents and professionals: www.kc.vanderbilt.edu/asdbloodwork
3. Use Visual Supports to create a FIRST, THEN story book about what will happen at the hospital. Bring paper and pencil and make it on the spot if needed. For more on creating visual supports www.autismspeaks.org/science/resources-programs/autism-treatment-network/tools-you-can-use/visual-supports

FAU CARD NEWS

An Afternoon of Art

On Saturday, June 7th, Ameriprise Financial, of Boca Raton, hosted an afternoon art class for teens with autism. Participating students were given art supplies, including easels and canvasses, to create their very own masterpieces. It was an afternoon filled with creative energy and family bonding. Some of the artists even graciously donated their artwork as a fundraiser for FAU CARD! We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Ameriprise Financial and their generous and supportive staff!



William R.



Skylar B. with Ameriprise's Tony Bevilacqua



Zachary M.



Katrina & Beatrice G.



Cara F.

8th Annual Summer Academy

In collaboration with PEPSA (Partnership for Effective Programs for Students with Autism), this year's 8th Annual Summer Academy, held in Jupiter on July 28th and 29th, was a huge success! A variety of topics were provided to help attendees meet the needs of the ASD population and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.



Keynote speaker, Dr. Mary Lou Duffy, shared how Universal Design for Learning can support students with ASD in the general education setting.



Dr. Jagathy Nair reviewed strategies that can be used to enhance classroom management.

FAU CARD NEWS

New Mommy & Me Playgroup FAU Jupiter Campus

FAU CARD is happy to introduce a new group to support the early development of young children with autism and related disabilities. The playgroup is designed to promote positive social interaction between parents and children. Parents will have the opportunity to learn and practice specific strategies aimed at enhancing play skills, supporting social development, fostering communication, and shaping appropriate behavior. The group will begin with a training session for parents only and will be followed by the playgroup meetings with parents and children. Parents of children between the ages of 2 and 4 are invited to register. Keep in mind that there is limited space available.



Please be on the lookout for more information regarding time, location, and how to register. Feel free to contact Alison Bourdeau at abourdeau@fau.edu or Noelle Balsamo at nbalsamo@fau.edu with questions regarding this exciting new group.

Project Protect: Bracelet Location Program for St. Lucie County Coming Fall 2014!

By: Cathy Allore

About a year ago, FAU CARD was approached by a community member about collaborating with other community agencies to bring much needed bracelet location devices to families in St Lucie County. Now, a collaborative relationship has been formed between FAU CARD, St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office, and the Pilot Club of Fort Pierce.

A big thank you goes out to Deputy Sheriff, Sgt. Tony Cavallero, for submitting the grant proposal. Sgt. Cavallero has recently contacted me to inform me the grant was awarded to St. Lucie County's Sheriff Office! Through this grant 25 individuals with autism will be identified to receive a bracelet and one year of monitoring service at no charge to the family.

Criteria was created by FAU CARD staff to identify individuals who would benefit from this program, which we are calling Project Protect. Those families will be invited to participate in the program and will receive some basic safety training prior to taking physical possession of the bracelet. I am currently in the process of identifying prospective recipients from our database based on the identified criteria. In September, individuals will receive notification of having met eligibility criteria and an invitation to participate. Stay tuned!

PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMUNITY NEWS

The Foundation is Poured at The Els Center of Excellence!

On June 4th, the Els family and staff witnessed the initial pouring of the cement foundation for The Els Center of Excellence Lower School & Auditorium Building.

With construction on track, the Center looks forward to seeing the specialized design elements come to life. The buildings will integrate unique architectural components to create a learning environment specifically designed for children on the spectrum, and will include the technology, space and design components that will enable the Center to connect the international autism community with best practices and the latest information and research. The Center of Excellence Auditorium and the Lower School Building are due to open in the Summer of 2015.

To receive the latest information on development, visit: www.elsforautism.com/site/PageServer?pagename=center_excellence

Dental Home Initiative Comes to Palm Beach County

The Palm Beach County Developmental Disabilities Interagency Council, consisting of more than 10 organizations that serve persons with disabilities in Palm Beach County, received a two year grant from Allegany Franciscan Ministries and the Quantum Foundation. The goal of this grant is to increase access to dental care for people with developmental disabilities by creating a network of dental professionals who will volunteer their time and support to help those who are unable to access dental care. This will be achieved through the following activities:

- Working with local dental hygienists to perform oral health screenings at each of the 9 participating centers in PBC for over 1,500 persons with disabilities. This data will be shared with local and state agencies to advocate for increased oral health care as there is no present oral health data available.
- Working with local providers, including Palm Beach State College, local dental and dental hygiene associations and the County Health Department to provide oral health care to persons identified with needs during the screenings and who do not have a dental home.
- During the screenings, oral health education for both client and provider will be provided by the dental hygienist and dental health students from Palm Beach State College. Additionally, oral health education sessions will be offered to assist staff and caregivers on how to prevent dental disease.
- Working with academia, the dental and dental hygiene associations will develop a training component which will be offered to providers to increase their knowledge on how to care for persons with disabilities.

We are in phase one of this grant and have been working with Palm Beach State College and their dental hygiene/ dental assistant students to collect data, as well as provide oral health prevention and education to the clients of nine centers. We have also engaged multiple providers in the community that will participate to provide restorative care especially for those identified during this phase as having urgent care needs.

County partners in this grant include: ARC of the Glades, ARC of Palm Beach, Coalition for Independent Living Options (CILO), PBC United Cerebral Palsy (UCP), Palm Beach Habilitation Center, Jewish Association for Residential Care (JARC), FAU Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD), Palm Beach State College Dental Health Services, Palm Beach County Health Department, and the Palm Beach County dental and dental hygiene associations.

Please contact Michelle Ryan, Project Coordinator, at ryanmrdh@gmail.com for additional information on the grant or information on how to receive a free screening.

TREASURE COAST COMMUNITY NEWS

Sensory Sensitive Cinema in St. Lucie West

Carmike would like to give your family this special opportunity to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. The auditorium dedicated to the films have their lights up, the sound turned down, and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout or sing! Admission for the individual with special needs is FREE, but all others in the party pay admission. Adult (12 and over): \$8.00 and Children (under 12): \$7.75.

Where: Carmike Theater in St Lucie West (formerly the Rave)
1900 NW Courtyard, Port St. Lucie, FL 34986 (next to SuperPlay)
(772) 344-3580



Upcoming schedule:

Saturday, September 20: Dolphin Tale 2

Saturday, October 11: Alexander and the Horrible, Terrible, No Good Day

Treasure Coast Support Groups

Puzzled Families of Indian River County

Puzzled Families is a parent support group that meets to provide support and information for parents of individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

When: 2nd Monday of each month from 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Where: Sun Up Center, 2455 5th Street SW, Vero Beach, FL

Visit the Facebook page for more details:

www.facebook.com/pages/Puzzled-Families-of-Indian-River/122076224542183

S.O.U.L. (Supporting, Overcoming, Understanding, & Loving)

Meets in Martin County at Covenant Fellowship on Astor Lane.

For more info, contact Rhonda Oksman, Founder/Facilitator, at 561-818-5566 or rhonda.oksman@gmail.com

Disability Support Network

Disability Support Network is a parent support group meeting in St Lucie County to provide support and information for parents of individuals with special needs.

When: 3rd Thursday of each month from 7:00pm-8:30pm

Where: Community location to be determined.

Visit the Facebook page for more details:

www.facebook.com/groups/131030553607709

The PEER Group of Indian River

When: Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of the month (except in July and December) from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM.

Where: SunUp ARC at 2455 5th Street SW, Vero Beach.

For more information, contact Nancy Moody at 772-770-0683 or by email:

peergroupofindianriver@gmail.com

FAU CARD CORNER

Five Steps to Prepare your Child for a Smoother Back-to-School Transition

Jennifer Sanderson, Psy.D.

1. **Get in the routine ahead of time.** Summer break often means out of town trips, or having friends and family coming to visit. In addition to vacations, many families tend to be much more lax with bedtime. Days in South Florida are sunny well into the evening. The social calendar may even be different, with more chances for get-togethers, sleepovers, and other events, even on weeknights, that aren't usually possible during the school year.
 - **Give yourself and your child at least 2 weeks if possible to gradually readjust to going to bed and waking up earlier.** If your child needs to be asleep by 8:00 p.m. during the school year, plan and stick to a schedule where your child goes to sleep 10-15 minutes earlier each night so he or she can get used to going to sleep at the right time again. Adjust the morning wake-up time in the same way, so that each day your child gets up 10-15 minutes earlier, until you are all back in the swing of things.
2. **Teach your child to read a calendar.** Many families use a calendar to help children count down the days to a particular holiday. Show your child a calendar, give one suitable for his or her age group to keep, and hang it up in a location that is easily accessible. Free customizable and printable templates are available online at www.dltk-cards.com/calendar or www.calendarlabs.com .
 - **Briefly review the calendar each day with your child to discuss how much time is left until school begins.** You might try first marking and talking about the day that school starts, marking today's date, and then counting the number of days that are left. Older children may want to cross off each day with a marker, or place a check mark, whereas younger children may enjoy putting a sticker on each day.
3. **Talk to your child about what things will be different this year, and what will be the same.** If your child was enrolled in a school or daycare program last year, think about what things are likely to be the same for your child, and what things are likely to be different. For a child moving to a new grade, they will likely be attending the same school, have the same class, classmates, and academic subjects. Things that might be different are the teachers, schedule, classroom, amount of homework, and increased independent work.
4. **Ask your child what he or she is looking forward to this year, and if there is anything that he or she is concerned about.** This might include new roles and responsibilities that he or she will have (e.g., children new to middle and high school might be using a locker or switching classes for the first time), things they've heard about their new teacher or school, or confusion about what the new expectations will be. Just as in the discussion of differences and similarities, you may want to create a chart with two columns, using visual aids and written descriptions. This will also give you a chance to discuss and problem-solve any concerns or fears your child may have (e.g. a child who is worried about having a new teacher may feel calmer after seeing a picture of new the teacher).
 - **Discuss this with your child in a developmentally appropriate way.** Fluent readers and writers may enjoy brainstorming and writing a list with two columns of things that will be different versus the same. Younger children may want to draw pictures with you to illustrate each column. Children who are not fluent readers and writers may benefit from having a chart that includes visual supports (e.g, picture of new teacher in the "Different" column). Some children may enjoy reading a social story with you that explains what to expect this year. Children attending a new school or attending school for the first time may benefit from making a brief trip to the school to take a tour or a picture of the building.
5. **Give your child a small new responsibility for this school year.** Taking on a small aspect of getting ready for school can be a source of pride for your child helping increase his or her independence and self-reliance. Older children may be ready to start preparing their own bag lunch each night. Younger children may help by preparing their backpacks or selecting and laying out their clothes for the next day. Try to communicate this new responsibility so your child know how grown up you think he or she is. Some children may appreciate having a choice between two options for which responsibility he or she would like to take on this year (e.g. choosing between "doing my own laundry" and "making my own lunch"). Think about a reward system with your child and be consistent in your expectations and in giving the rewards. Rewards for younger children should be immediate and tangible, whereas older children may enjoy a reward chart that indicates a bigger reward that will be provided at the end of each week or month.

FAU CARD is here to help!

Please contact your assigned clinician if you would like help in implementing any of the above strategies.

FAU CARD does not endorse specific programs or points of view presented in this newsletter.

FAMILY PERSPECTIVES

Sibs Supporting Sibs

This has been a sib-packed summer! I attended two conferences and got involved with an amazing group of adult siblings who have recently established the Florida Sibling Alliance. My experiences over the last few months have highlighted how important it is for siblings of any age to have the opportunity to talk to other sibs. Whether through Sibshops for children and teens, on Facebook groups, or meeting up with other adult sibs, relating to someone who really knows what it's like to have a brother or sister with special needs can be so refreshing.

I kicked off June with the 16th Annual Family Café in Orlando, which includes sessions, a resource fair, and the Governor's Summit on Disabilities. I love this conference! It's one of the few places where families can come learn and gather resources and, maybe more importantly, relax and have fun without all eyes on them and their family member with special needs. This year, there were two sibling sessions as well as Sibshops for kids.

One of the first sessions of the conference was advertised for siblings, and the facilitators Jaime and Andrew, who are sister and brother, lead us through a brainstorming session to develop a Florida chapter of the Sibling Leadership Network. I couldn't have been more thrilled to find this group who shared my same goal and could provide the support and people-power to get things moving. The Florida Sibling Alliance is gaining momentum thanks to a small group of dedicated siblings. We look forward to expanding our capacity to include social and networking events across the state, building resources to support siblings of all ages and their families, and advocating on relevant legislation. For more information, please visit us on Facebook [here](#). The group is open to any siblings, parents, or sibling advocates that want to see expanded resources and opportunities for sibs in the Sunshine State!

Two weeks after the Family Café, I flew to Boston for a full weekend convening of 25 young adult sibs at Brandeis University. Three young women put the Sibs' Journey conference together after spending last summer driving across the US interviewing sibs of all ages. They identified sibs aged 18-30 as needing particular attention as we are figuring out adulthood and what our responsibilities are to our sibling with special needs who is also growing up. I knew when I saw the conference advertised that I couldn't miss it. I spent three days relating to other sibs, figuring out what questions I have, reflecting on my own identity as a sibling and outside of being a sibling, and recognizing my power as a sibling to advocate for change.

The keynote speaker was a woman named Hannah. When she talked about dealing with guilt, that idea/feeling hit me a little harder than it ever has. A big group of us sat for a long time in the common area of our residence hall talking. I got sad when people asked questions related to our sibs getting kind of "trapped" in doing the same things and never being able to be or do more. I wondered, "How can I know if Ian is happy? What's enough? And is that settling? Am I just going to follow the path of least resistance for me?" I've never dealt much with guilt, but it may be time to.

Only by talking to these other sibs was I able to dive so deeply in thinking about my relationship with Ian. Even my closest friends can't help me sort through my feelings about growing up with a brother who has autism. My mom and I can be on the same team especially when it comes to his care at his group home, but we have different perspectives and concerns. I needed these two conferences and the connections they allowed me to make to continue on my own sib journey.

The option to communicate with other sibs should always be open throughout the lifespan. Some sibs of many ages may not take up that opportunity, and that is perfectly fine. However, there may come a time when they have a question that can only be answered by another sib or decide they want to seek empathy from someone who "gets it." For me, these last few months have been transformational, and I know I will continue to reach out to other sibs to offer and receive support.

CONTACT US

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Thank you!

We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to all of the families and professionals who continue to support FAU CARD.



Click on the image to view a video highlighting how FAU CARD has made a difference in these families' lives.

If you or your organization would like to contribute to FAU CARD, donations can be made out to:

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