

PERSPECTIVES



Genesee Intermediate School District

Compiled By: Becky Downing,
Teacher Consultant for Autism
Editor: Patti Dombrowski



September/October
2004

Inside this issue:

Animal Assisted Therapy	Pg. 2
Resources	2
O.U. Needs Your Help!	2
Postage Stamps	2
Vaccine Safety	3
Movie Preview	3
Biomedical Update	4
Autistic Patient brochure	4
Motivating Students	5-6
Quotes	6
Conferences	7
Accommodations	7
Support Group	8

New School Year

Another summer has passed and we are back for the 2004-2005 school year. Each year the number of individuals on the autism spectrum increases nationally and internationally. These individuals will be in our schools and our neighborhoods. Please take the time to learn something about Autism Spectrum Disorders or to refresh your memory! Here are some helpful websites:

- ☞ Autism Society of America: www.autism-society.org
- ☞ Autism Society of Michigan: www.autism-mi.org
- ☞ ASA Oakland County Chapter: www.asaoakland.org
- ☞ Dr. Tony Attwood: www.tonyattwood.com
- ☞ On-line Asperger's Information & Support-OASIS: www.aspergersyndrome.org
- ☞ The Center for the Study of Autism: www.autism.org
- ☞ The Gray Center: www.TheGrayCenter.org
- ☞ Liane Holliday-Willey: www.ASPIE.com
- ☞ Future Horizons: www.futurehorizons-autism.com
- ☞ Free pictures for visual schedules, etc.: www.usevisualstrategies.com
- ☞ Picture Exchange Communication System: www.pecs.com
- ☞ TEACCH: www.teacch.com
- ☞ Theory of Mind: www.autism-resources.com
- ☞ Sensory Integration: www.autism-resources.com
- ☞ Sibling Issues: www.angelfire.com/bc/autism/index.html
- ☞ Gluten Casein Free Diet: www.gfcdiet.com
- ☞ Mayer-Johnson, Inc.: www.mayer-johnson.com
- ☞ Free Pictures and Computer Games: <http://do2learn.com>

New Computer Software

Dr. Jeffrey Weisman, a cardiologist and father of a six year old daughter with autism, is enhancing children's problem solving and social interaction skills by introducing them to thinking activities available through a new computer software series called Ultimate Learning "Problem Solvers," "Fun with Feelings" and "Sound Reading" are for children between the ages of 3 to 10. For more information go to www.UltimateLearning.net or 1-866-DIGISOFT toll free.





Animal Assisted Therapy

A seven year old boy with Asperger Syndrome was paired with a Facilitated Assistance Dog for children with communication and/or socialization impairments. The dog could help keep him safe and help with therapeutic goals such as: increased socialization, task adherence, sensory regulation, etc. His success story is in the March-April Autism Asperger's Digest.

References

NEADS (www.neads.org)

"What Does Matthew's Dog Do? Web article detailing specific tasks that Quincy performs for Matthew based on experience and research. http://home.comcast.net/~akillio1/AMK_Files/Mattie_Dog_Do.htm

Ann Killion's Partial Bibliography of Web-Based Research and Information on Assistance Dogs with focus on Assistance Dogs for Children both on and off the Autistic Spectrum. http://home.comcast.net/~akillio1/AMK_Files/AD_Bibliography_2003.htm

Resources

Asperger Syndrome—Practical Strategies for the Classroom, A Teacher's Guide by Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council. Available from the Autism Asperger Publishing Co. 877-277-8254 or www.asperger.net



Asperger Syndrome-What Teachers Need to Know by Matt Winter, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London and New York, www.jkp.com

Oakland University Needs Your Help!

The rate of autism is increasing and soon the "young children" with autism will be adults. It is important for local and state agencies to understand the needs of families who are now supporting adults with autism. Only by identifying the needs will we have a chance of improving services. We are asking that you assist us by completing a survey. Thanks for your help! Access the survey here: <https://www2.oakland.edu/secure/autism/>



Postage Stamps

Breast Cancer and AIDS have postage stamps and now so does the Autism community! Autism Networks has employed the help of a US mail company in order to bring to market the very first US postage stamp to raise Autism Awareness. This 37 cent US postage stamp displays in bold text the statement "Raise Autism Awareness" on a colorful puzzle background. The puzzle background represents the mysteries that still surround the Autism Spectrum Disorders. The stamp is an Autism Networks exclusive product and can only be purchased through the autism Networks online store. Visit our online store for this and other great products: <http://www.autismnetworks.com/store.php> or <http://www.autismnetworks.com> and select STORE.



Vaccine Safety

Public Comment Sought on CDC's Vaccine Safety



Overview

In consultation with outside stakeholders, the CDC had undertaken a review of vaccine safety activities at CDC. As part of this effort, the CDC is seeking public comments regarding the current state of the agency's vaccine safety program and to identify ways in which excellence in vaccine safety monitoring, research and communication can be maximized and sustained in the future. Comments should focus on the objects listed below:

1. Review the structure, function, credibility, effectiveness, efficiency and support of CDC's vaccine safety program and assess how it can be maximized and sustained.
 - ♦ Assess the program's ability to detect emerging or rare adverse events.
 - ♦ Assess the capacity of the program to provide comprehensive monitoring of the growing number of vaccines.
2. Review the intramural and extramural collaborative activities of the vaccine safety program and determine their effectiveness and efficiency.
 - ♦ Assess additional steps CDC can institute to enhance coordination with other federal agencies and partners, including consumer and advocacy groups.
3. Determine the optimal organizational location for vaccine safety activities within the CDC to ensure scientific objectivity, transparency and oversight while at the same time ensuring that program priorities are appropriately established and are relevant to the immunization program and other stakeholder needs.

Background:

The Director of CDC asked that a group of individuals convene to review Vaccine Safety activities at CDC, to provide their individual opinions regarding the current state of the agency's vaccine safety program and identify how CDC's excellence in vaccine safety monitoring, research and communication can be maximized and sustained in the future.

In an effort to obtain broader public input, CDC committed to post the objectives for public comment. The presentations provided at the meeting are available on this website. We request that you follow the instructions to provide your comments and input. A summary of the public comments will be provided to the director of CDC. The public comment period will end on October 12, 2004.

URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/od/vaccsafe/default.htm>

"Mozart and the Whale" Preview

Exciting news for the autism community, Jerry & Mary Newport, a married couple who both have Asperger's Syndrome are the subjects of a full length feature film titled "Mozart and the Whale" and stars Josh Hartnett & Radha Mitchell. Ron Bass, who wrote the script for "Rainman," penned the original screenplay for the movie. It was filmed in Spokane, Washington in March and is being produced by Millennium Studios and Robert Lawrence Productions. For more info and to see a preview, please visit www.mozartandthewhale.com
reprinted from www.aspergersyndrome.org/





Biomedical Update:

MRIs Show White Matter Overgrowth in Autism

Many autistic children exhibit accelerated head growth in the first few months of life, and a significant number have larger than normal head circumferences (see ARRI 17/3). New research pinpoints the specific areas of white matter that are abnormally overgrown in these children.

Martha Herbert and colleagues analyzed MRI scans of 13 autistic children (all boys), 24 children with developmental language disorder or DLD (which also is linked to white matter overgrowth), and 29 non-disabled controls. Subdividing white matter into regions, the researchers found that in both autistic children and those with DLD, the outer layer of white matter was significantly larger than in controls. In contrast, the inner areas of white matter were similar in all groups.

All areas of the outer layer of white matter were abnormally large in autistic subjects, but the frontal lobe area showed the greatest enlargement. The researchers say their study—which shows that the most enlarged areas of white matter in autistic subjects were those in which neurons form an insulating myelin coating late in development—shows that brain overgrowth in autistic children occurs after birth, and may be related to myelination.

Gene on Chromosome 2 Associated with Autism

A gene on chromosome 2 is strongly linked to autism, according to a recent study by Joseph Buxbaum and colleagues.

Screening more than 400 families who showed evidence of autism linked to chromosome 2, the researchers found that two particular variants of the *SLC25A12* gene were transmitted from parents to autistic children significantly more often than would normally occur. According to Buxbaum, having one of these variants “appears to approximately double an individual’s risk for this disorder.” The gene is involved in energy production within the mitochondria, and is especially active during early brain development.



The finding is of particular interest because previous research has linked deficits in language development to the *q* region on chromosome 2, where the *SLC25A12* gene lies.

Biomedical Update reprinted from ARRI Vol. 18, No. 2, 2004

Your Next Patient Has Autism

A practical guide for the health practitioner for effectively meeting the special needs of patients with disorders on the Autism Spectrum.

This brochure discusses what autism is and what falls under the autism spectrum. It explains what may be difficult, techniques to use with patients who have an autism spectrum disorder and to always ask parents what works and what to avoid.



It is developed by the Autism Steering Committee, North Shore—LIJ Health System: www.northshorelij.com/autism

Autism
The Way I See It
by Temple Grandin

Motivating Students

One frequent characteristic of individuals on the autism/Asperger spectrum is an obsessive interest in one or a few particular subjects, to the exclusion of others. These individuals may be nearing genius on a topic of interest, even at a very early age. I have heard from parents of a 10 year old child whose knowledge of electricity rivals that of a college senior, or a near-teen who is an expert on insects. However, as motivated as they are to study what they enjoy, these students are often equally unmotivated when it comes to school work outside their area of interest.

It was like this with me when I was in high school. I was totally unmotivated about school work in general. But I was highly motivated to work on the things that interested me, such as showing horses, painting signs and carpentry projects. Luckily, my mother and some of my teachers used my special interests to keep me motivated. Mr. Carlock, my science teacher, took my obsessive interests in cattle chutes and the squeeze machine to motivate me in studying science. The squeeze machine relaxed me. Mr. Carlock told me that if I really wanted to know why the machine had this effect, I would have to study the boring school subjects so that I could graduate and then go to college to become a scientist who could answer this question. Once I really grasped that to get from here to there, from middle school to graduation to college and then to a job of interest to me, meant that I needed to get through all my school subjects, boring or not, I maintained the motivation to complete the work.



While students are in elementary school, teachers can easily keep them involved by using a special interest to motivate their learning. An example would be taking a student's interest in trains and using a train theme in many different subjects. In history class, read about the history of the railroad; in math class involve trains in problem solving; in science class discuss different forms of energy that trains utilize then and now, etc.



As students move into middle and high school, they can get turned on by visiting interesting work places, such as a construction site, an architecture firm or a research lab. This makes the idea of a career real to the student and they begin to understand the education path they must take early on in school to achieve that career. If visiting a work site is not possible, invite parents who have interesting jobs into the school classroom to talk with students about their jobs. Lots of pictures to show what the work is like are strongly recommended. This is also an opportunity for students to hear about the social side of employment, which can provide motivation for making new friends, joining groups or venturing out into social situations which might be uncomfortable at first.



STUDENTS ON THE SPECTRUM NEED TO BE EXPOSED TO NEW THINGS IN ORDER TO BECOME INTERESTED IN THEM. THEY NEED TO SEE CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

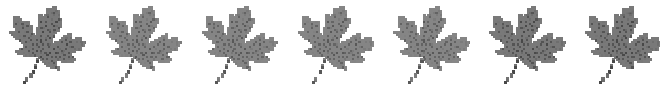
REALLY COOL THINGS TO KEEP THEM MOTIVATED TO LEARN. I became fascinated by optical illusions after seeing a single movie in science class that demonstrated them. My science teacher challenged me to recreate two famous optical illusions, called the Ames Distorted Room and the Ames Trapezoidal Window. I spend six months making them out of cardboard and plywood and I finally figured them out. This motivated me to study experimental psychology in college.



BRING TRADE MAGAZINES TO THE LIBRARY

Scientific journals, trade magazines and business newspapers can show students a wide range of careers and help turn students on to the opportunities available after they graduate. Every profession from the most complex to the practical has its trade journal. Trade magazines are published in fields as diverse as banking, baking, car wash operation, construction, building maintenance, electronics and many others. Parents who already work in these field could bring their old trade journals to the school library. These magazines would provide a window into the world of jobs and help motivate students.

TEMPLE GRANDIN is the most noted high functioning person with autism in the world today. She is the author of two books on autism. *Emergence: Labeled Autistic* (1986) and *Thinking in Pictures* (1995). In her "day job" she specializes in designing livestock handling systems. Temple devotes much of her time to increasing awareness of autism through extensive speaking engagements. She makes her home in Fort Collins, Colorado. Visit www.templegrandin-autismvideos.com for autism resources by Temple Grandin.



Quotes

When discussing eye contact, Mick said, "I look at an inanimate object. It helps me to think. I can concentrate more if I look at a blank wall, but people think I am ignoring them."

reprinted from www.tonyattwood.com



In Genesee County one young student with Asperger's Syndrome had struggled with the activity in gym that day and said, "I am not big of the muscle but I am big of the brain."

If you have quotes you would like to share, please send them to:

Interschool mail: Becky Downing
Genesee ISD
SESC-N

OR

U.S. Mail: Genesee ISD
Becky Downing
SESC-N

2413 West Maple Avenue
Flint, MI 48507

OR e-mail: bdowning@geneseeisd.org

Conferences

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title & Location</u>	<u>Speakers</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Contact Info</u>
Oct. 1, 2004	Parapro Training Livingston ESA	Sally Burton-Hoyle Anne Carpenter	Vary	ASM 800-223-6722 www.autism-mi.org
Oct. 8, 2004	Looking at Autism Differently Washtenaw ISD	Maureen Ziegler	Vary	ASM 800-223-6722 www.autism-mi.org
Oct. 15, 2004	Sensory Integration in the Home & Classroom Clinton County RESA	Sandy Glovak	Vary	ASM 800-223-6722 www.autism-mi.org
Oct. 18-20, 2004	Gray Center Shared Solutions in ASD: From Science to Success Grand Rapids	Multiple speakers	Vary	The Gray Center 616-954-9747 www.theGrayCenter.org
Oct. 19, 2004	Understanding "Behavior" in Autism Spectrum Disorders Mackinaw City	Sally Burton-Hoyle	Vary	ASM 800-223-6722 www.autism-mi.org
Nov. 5, 2004	Special Education Law Monroe County ISD	Tricia & Calvin Luker	Vary	ASM 800-223-6722 www.autism-mi.org
Nov. 30, 2004	The New Development of Diagnosis & Treatment of Asperger Syndrome Calhoun ISD	Dr. Luke Tsai	Vary	ASM 800-223-6722 www.autism-mi.org

The ABC's of Adaptations and Accommodations

Adaptations and accommodations must fit the student's learning style and are written in the child's IEP. Some accommodations may be used on the proficiency tests and promotion standards. The following is an alphabetical list of useful classroom and curriculum.



- ◆ Alphabet strip taped to student's desk.
- ◆ Break long range assignments and projects into smaller ones
- ◆ Calculators, checklists and computers
- ◆ Dictate work/assignment to student
- ◆ Extended time for tests, projects and assignments
- ◆ Flash cards
- ◆ Group cooperatively, give cues, graphic organizers
- ◆ Highlight main ideas or specific words
- ◆ Instruction given orally and in print
- ◆ Journal writing could be drawing pictures or scripted by another
- ◆ Kids use assignment books to organize work
- ◆ Large print or type for easier reading manipulative and models
- ◆ Number lines, notebooks
- ◆ Oral reports in place of written ones
- ◆ Paired reading, peer tutors
- ◆ Quiet space or work area
- ◆ Road tests, directions, assignments
- ◆ Shorten assignments, smaller amounts, study guides
- ◆ Tape texts, stories, three dimensional ruler
- ◆ Use a test format that requires little writing
- ◆ Verbal responses to questions, tests
- ◆ Worksheets and/or tests written on lower level
- ◆ Xerox copy of assignments for home and provide examples of projects
- ◆ Your tests could be open book or take home
- ◆ Zero in on reinforcing concepts through hands on activities and games

Reprinted from:
www.cps-k12.org/programs/
speced/ABCs.html



Genesee Intermediate School District

Special Education Services Center
2413 West Maple Avenue
Flint, Michigan 48507-3493

Phone: 810-591-4877
Fax: 810-591-4548



Coming Up: Autism Support Group



Date: Tuesday, October 26, 2004

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: Genesee Intermediate School District
Special Education Services Center-North, GenNET classroom
5075 Pilgrim Road, Flint 48507



(Pilgrim Road is south off of Maple Avenue, between VanSlyke and Torrey Roads. Parking is located in the front and side of the building. Enter through the front doors.)

The DVD *Asperger's: Million Undiagnosed* features interviews with: Carol Gray, whose social stories approach has become established as an effective way of teaching social and life skills to children on the autism spectrum; Tony Attwood, a clinical psychologist who has specialized in the treatment of individuals with Asperger Syndrome for over 20 years and wrote *Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*; Jeanette McAfee, M.D., who's daughter was diagnosed with high functioning autism. In her quest to help her daughter, she wrote a social skills program called *Navigating the Social World*; and Jerry Newport is an adult with Asperger Syndrome who was not diagnosed until he was 47 years old. He founded AGUA (Adult Gathering, United & Autistic) where he met his wife, who is a savant with Asperger Syndrome. Parents, Professionals, and others who are interested are welcome to attend.
