



PERSPECTIVES

A publication for parents and professionals serving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Fireman Dresses as Spider-Man to Rescue Autistic Boy



BANGKOK - A Thai firefighter dressed as Spider-Man to rescue an autistic boy who climbed onto a third-floor balcony and dangled his legs over the side because he was nervous on his first day of school.

Firefighter Somchai Yoosabai was called in after the 11-year-old boy's teachers and mother failed to coax him off the ledge on Monday, he said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

"He was nervous about the first day at school, and he was asking for his mother," Somchai said. "He cried and refused to let any of us get close to him."

Overhearing a conversation between the boy's mother and his teachers about his love for comics and superheroes, Somchai rushed back to the fire station to change into a Spider-Man costume before swinging into action.

"I told him Spider-Man is here to save you. No monster will hurt you now," Somchai said. "Then I told him to walk slowly toward me. I was very nervous that he might have slipped if he got too excited and ran."

Somchai, who keeps costume of Spider-Man and a Japanese superhero Ultraman to liven up fire drills at schools, said the teary-eyed boy broke into a smile and started walking into his arms.



Reprinted from www.msnbc.msn.com

Thoughts on Bullying

I would like to highlight a unique book published in 2008 about bullying. This book "Letters to a Bullied Girl" is unique book because is a completion of letters written to Olivia Gardner, a 15 year old girl who was bullied at school. Olivia was bullied after suffering from a seizure at school. Not only was Olivia tormented at school, but her classmates started a website for "Olivia Haters" and made "I hate Olivia bracelets." Due to this bullying, Olivia considered taking her own life. But two sisters read about Olivia's story, and started a letter writing campaign to her for encouragement. Olivia received over four thousand letters discussing bullying. These letters became a source of encouragement and hope for Olivia. These letters give simple, yet wise tips on helping our children dealing with bullying and how to avoid our child being a bully. Please take the time to read and discuss these letters as a family and with others in the community.



A letter from a bully

*Dear Olivia,
I want to share with you my story....
I wasn't the victim, I was the victimizer. I was the one who, unfortunately, enjoyed making fun of and taunting my schoolmates. And I am extremely sorry for what I put people through!!*

I have children now, and I have always addressed the situation with them face on!! "You don't make fun of people it's not nice to treat people

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badly...always treat people the way you want to be treated." I think my words of wisdom worked well.

I can't help think that if my parents would have talked to me at an early age, maybe I would have never taunted the kids at school.

So parents, let this be a lesson for you. Teach our potential would be bullies to be nice, not nasty.

Pam

Whether you can identify with this parent and self calling former bully, I hope we can all gain from her perspective of talking to children about friendly, kind behavior. Even if you think your child knows how to be nice, find some teachable moments to really make sure they understand how to handle a variety of situations with grace. This can be a fun game of what would you do if? Give your child a situation related to peers being mean to another child, or a child being mean to them and then brainstorm three possible solutions. Perhaps you feel your child may give the "right" answers just because you are there, but remember if there is a "right" script of how to handle a bullying situation in their head, they will use that when nervous. If your child enjoys drama, make up some of your plays about being how to handle bullying situations. It may seem silly but giving your child the tools to be nice and avoid those who are not, can be a self esteem booster that will last for years to come.

New Book Addresses the Need for Quality Autism Instruction

A mentor teacher in a book
By: Robin Gurley

AutismClassroom.com has launched a new book for educators, administrators and parents that includes practical, hands-on information about the elements needed in a classroom to provide instruction to students with autism. Due to the continuous increase in students with autism in school systems throughout the world, the need for quality autism classrooms is at its highest. *How to Set Up a Classroom for Students with Autism* addresses this need.

Parents, administrators and teachers often want to provide the best education for their students, but do

not know where to start. Some school systems are located in areas where access to training in the area of autism is limited or where the cost of sending employees to trainings is too high. Unless the teacher has been trained specifically in working with students with autism, chances are that a new teacher is experiencing many issues related to challenging behaviors, student motivation, classroom organization and student progress. *How to Set Up a Classroom for Students with Autism* is a mentor teacher in a book.

The 82-page manual is geared towards teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, and administrators new to working with students with autism or for professionals who would like to enhance their current autism classroom set-up. The manual is easy to read and is full of great ideas for setting up an autism classroom. The book highlights items such as detailed instructions about the layout of the classroom, ideas for collaborating with parents and other professionals, data collection samples and information on how to implement behavior intervention plans.

For more information about *How to Set Up a Classroom for Students with Autism*, go to <http://www.autismclassroom.com/>

Resource for Job Seekers

By: Carin Yavorcik

[Hire Disability Solutions](#) is a firm that connects job seekers who have a disability with employers who are looking to hire qualified workers.

"Our mission at Hire Disability Solutions is to give all who want a chance to succeed the opportunity to succeed," according to Jeff Klare, CEO of Hire Disability

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Solutions. To help achieve their goal, HDS has partnered with dozens of top companies dedicated to increasing disability diversity in the workplace.

Since its inception in 2004, HDS has become a recognized national leader in enhancing employment opportunities for individuals with physical, emotional and cognitive challenges. Learn more at <http://www.hireds.com/>.

Auditory Processing Train of Thought

My son, Josh, needed increased response time when he was younger. When asked a question, he took longer than most to formulate his responses, so often he was skipped over in a group setting. The teacher or coach would ask him something; get no response for several seconds, and move on to someone else. Part of the problem was that Josh gave no indication that he'd heard the question. He did not change his facial expression or otherwise let the speaker know that he was actually thinking about what had been said. It was frustrating to Josh to know the answer but have such a limited window of opportunity to express it that he often was unable to reply in the time allotted. I worked with Josh to develop a few strategies to let the speaker know that he had heard and was processing what was said to formulate a response. The first strategy was to hold up one finger in the "wait a minute" pose, to indicate that he needed a little more time. This was probably the easiest to implement, since it did not require an oral response when Josh was already struggling to formulate a verbal answer. The next strategy was to actually say something like, "Give me a minute, please" or "Could you repeat that?" (This was much preferable to saying, "Huh?" which happened so frequently when he was younger that I screened his hearing multiple times!) This strategy let the speaker know that Josh was intending to answer, and the repetition often helped him and gave him a little more time to process. Josh also learned the strategy of asking for clarification, by simply asking "Are you saying ____?" or "Is this what you mean?" It's also important to teach our auditory processing strugglers to use verbal strategies when they are on the phone, because obviously visual cues like the upheld "hold on" finger

won't work.

Once when I was on the phone with Josh, I asked him a question and he was quiet for so long I wasn't sure he was even still on the phone. I asked if he was still there and he told me. "Yes, Mom, but my train of thought is still boarding." I've also noticed that Josh's train of thought will sometimes derail entirely if he is interrupted during the boarding process. When that happens, often by well-meaning people trying to help him out or speed things along, Josh's train has to go back to the beginning and start all over again. So instead of moving things along more quickly, it actually backfires and takes even longer. This is where it's helpful to teach our kids the gestural cues as well as verbal scripts so they will be less likely to be interrupted and the train of thought can actually leave the station.

Reprinted from: www.headsupnow.blogspot.com

Clay Marzo: Liquid Cure

In December 2007, Clay was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. What makes Clay unique is that his obsession is a sport, not an abstract intellectual category. While many children with Asperger's are marked by their lack of coordination—"motor clumsiness" is a very common trait—Clay moves in the water with an uncommon grace. (His movements are much more awkward on dry land; I watched him hit his head on a car door and knock over two water glasses in the span of 15 minutes.) "Clay's kind of a surfing freak," nine-time Association of Surfing Professionals world champion Kelly Slater has said. "He's like a cat.

He's got this ability to always land on his feet. Clay definitely knows things that I don't know." Clay's nickname is "the Rubber-Band Man," since he'll consistently stick maneuvers, such as his signature aerial reversal, that aren't supposed to be possible. He'll be bent over backwards, his blond hair in the water, and he'll find a way to stand up.

At the moment, Clay is one of the most celebrated surfers in the world. He already has a national surfing title and numerous Hawaiian titles; he's been featured on the cover of *Surfer* magazine and is a

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mainstay on YouTube, where one of his clips has been watched more than 100,000 times. Although Clay has yet to qualify for the ASP World Tour—a series of competitions featuring the 46 top-ranked surfers—his low ranking hasn't hindered his reputation for being world-class. Kai Barger, a fellow Maui surfer and the current ASP world junior champion, recently called Clay "the best out of all of us, and it's all natural. He never had to work at it."

Reprinted from <http://outside.way.com/outside/culture/200909/clay-marzo-1.html>

New Autism Support group

Young Adult HFA/Asperger Group

The Autism Support Group of Genesee County has a newly formed group of young adults with HFA/Aspergers who meet monthly. The first hour of the meeting is usually a teaching lesson to help young adults learn independent living skills (e.g., how to change a flat tire, how to make small talk, maps & directions, paying bills, hygiene, etc.). The second hour is hands-on experience or sometimes just social. Additional topics may involve a speaker, field trip or special session at a university or business. The group meets the last Saturday of every month, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Calvary Apostolic Church, 1013 Hughes St., Flint, MI. Contact: Patrick or Mary Kubik, at 810-603-2166 or e-mail pk1851@gmail.com or marykubik@gmail.com.



Do you have a child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who has a younger infant sibling?

The Infant Brain Imaging Study (IBIS) at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis is looking for interested families to participate in a new study of infant siblings

Autism Speaks announced in February it had provided \$5 million to expand and link two large-scale, multi-site studies of more than 2000 infant siblings of children with autism, who are at higher genetic risk for developing the disorder. This

unprecedented research effort will investigate genetic and environmental risk factors for autism from pre-natal development through early childhood.

We are proud to be able to fund this research — and couldn't do that without every dollar raised through our Walk program, special events and donations. Thank you for your support.

Twin and family studies have shown that younger brothers and sisters of children with autism are at a higher risk of developing autism than those children who do not have relatives with this condition. Information gained about early brain development in children at risk for autism may improve methods of early detection and intervention for infants who later develop autism. Earlier identification and treatment may lead to better outcomes for these young children and their families.



Washington University is part of a large multi-site national study which aims to identify very early brain features that may be characteristic of infants at risk for autism. To do this, they are actively seeking to enroll families who have a child with an autism spectrum disorder and an infant sibling 10 months old or younger for the Infant Brain Imaging Study (IBIS). Developmental evaluations and MRI scans of your infant's brain will be completed at 6, 12, and 24 months of age. MRI scans will be obtained while your infant is naturally sleeping. These services are provided at no charge to your family. Compensation for participation is also provided and travel arrangements can be made for families traveling from further distances.

To learn more about participating in this study, please contact our study coordinator, Lisa Flake at 1-888-845-6786, flakel@psychiatry.wustl.edu or visit our website at <http://infantsibs-stlouis.org>

Reprinted from Autism Speaks

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The "Remarkabilities" of Autism

We stand in awe of people with autism. Their brains function differently to ours and they are capable of such a diverse range of exceptional abilities. It's incredible how many talents they have that we could never have the capacity to tap into. Below are some of the remarkable skills that children with autism have demonstrated. They are in no particular order and are all astounding. We encourage you to go to <http://www.ncloncepts.com/autism-sharestory.htm> and post your "remark-ability."



Washington

My 7 year old son can recite the presidents in order, forwards and backwards. He knows their first, middle and last names. He knows all of their vice presidents and first ladies. He learned this by reading the presidents names approximately 3 times. Jene, NY

My son has always been obsessed with numbers. He could multiply and divide with exponents at 4. Now he is 12 and is taking Differential Equations and Linear Algebra (the class after Calc. 3) at our local Community College. But he still can't tie his own shoes. Rebecca, CA



One day we noticed my child could read fluently. She had just turned 3 years old. Nobody ever taught her. Stacey, WI

My son taught himself to tread water for hours and hours, never getting tired. He taught himself to do this way before he learned to swim. Laura, NY

One of my students can do puzzles as fast as lightning — with the picture side face down. Wendy, CT



I don't know how he does it but my son can hear my husband's car the moment he turns into our block. We live at the other end of the block! Lucille, TX

A student in my class can imitate anyone's speech. He imitates their voice and intonations perfectly and it sounds just like them. It's hysterical. May, VA

My 3 year old can recite a 30 minute video, word for word. And that's after watching it



once or twice. Marcia, PA



My 5 year old brother can do multiple flips on the parallel bars without ever being shown how. Jason, NY

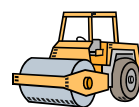
My child is a mechanical wizard. He can take anything apart and put it back together in perfect order. He does it really quickly, too. It's amazing. Shelly, OK

My brother can tell me about every dinosaur that ever existed, what they ate, what they looked like and what period they lived in. Adam, NY



A 14 year old former student of mine that I provide weekend respite care for can tell me exactly how to drive anywhere if he has been there before, even once. When I first started caring for him, I did not know my way around his area. Wow, now I am very knowledgeable thanks to his direction. He tells me to turn right or left, and if I have made a wrong turn, he'll ask me, "Mary Kay, where are you going"? It's so amazing, and fun. It's nice to be able to rely upon him in this way! He has a map in his head! Mary Kay L.

My 13 year old Aspie is perfectly bilingual in English and Arabic and watches DVDs in French, Spanish, or Hindi and memorizes words in context. Noor-Aiman Kahn



My son is 9 and loves road construction. He knows every piece of equipment used, has researched them all on the Internet and will speak at length about the pros and cons of each make and model. Wendy, Canada

My 7 year old son with Aspergers Disorder has taught me more about science than my years of schooling could ever come close to. He is a joy to be around and someday may just save out planet. Amy, PA



My son fascinated with vacuum cleaners. He knows about every make and model, what kind of motor they have and the attachments they come with. Lauren, MI



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SUN News

Dinnertime at our house can sometimes be stressful for me. Too often, I don't plan meals ahead of time, so when the clock and my family's stomachs indicate that it's time to eat, I have to go to the cupboard and freezer to figure out what to fix for our family of five. Frequently my kids decide they need my assistance at the same time, either with homework, or addressing sibling conflicts. Although we all sit down together to eat each evening, dinnertime is a busy time for me, as I jump up to grab missing utensils, reach over to cut someone's food, or respond to a request to pass something. As soon as the meal is finished, it's time to clean up the kitchen, which further adds to the chaos of mealtime.

Needless to say, I enjoy occasional opportunities to eat dinner at a restaurant. Having someone else fix the meal, serve it, and clean up afterwards enables me to enjoy conversing with my family, and gives me the opportunity to really listen to what they're saying. Usually we are all a lot calmer at those times.

Relationships are like that, I think. The more we have to be involved in the busyness of managing a relationship, the less we're able to just enjoy it. When a family member, student, colleague, or friend needs frequent correction for the choices he or she is making and the impact that they have on others, it's difficult to sit back and enjoy that relationship. The result may be that the two people in the interaction, whether it's a parent and child, or student and teacher, or employee and boss, feel stressed by their relationship, and may even feel as though they don't like each other (or aren't liked by the other person).

The more we can manage our responses on our own, working at being socially effective, the more other people can simply enjoy being our friend, teacher, colleague, student, or parent.

At our house, we're making changes to enable all of us to enjoy each other more. We're working to decrease mealtime stress through designating helpers and instituting better table manners (for

example, my husband insists that everyone wait to eat until I've had my first bite, which helps to ensure that others are not half finished by the time the food preparation is done and I get to sit down to eat). Our children are also helping more with cooking—a skill which benefits them as much as it does me! We're each working at taking responsibility for our own socially effective responses, so that we can enjoy our relationships instead of having to correct each other or deal with added stress. I'll write more about that next week!

Reprinted from www.thegraycenter.org

New National Professional Competencies for Teachers of Autism

By: Robin Gurley

First-ever standards for schools to help meet the needs of students with ASD

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Autism Society announced the publication of professional competencies for teaching students with autism spectrum disorders at the Autism Society's 40th National Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders in St. Charles, Illinois, last week. The competencies will be incorporated into CEC's resource on highly qualified teachers, *What Every Special Educator Needs to Know*.



"As the incidence of autism has increased, universities and colleges created their own version of competencies to guide program development," said Cathy Pratt, Ph.D., Director of the Indiana Resource Center on Autism and the Autism Society Board Chair, who worked on the competencies. "With the release of these competencies and through the leadership of the Autism Society and CEC, there is now a national standard that can be used for both course and program creation and for professional development in schools," Dr. Pratt said.

These professional competencies contain the knowledge and skill base that professionals entering practice or assuming advanced roles should possess to practice safely and effectively.

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Conferences

Date	Title & Location	Speakers	Fee	Contact Info
Oct. 1, 2009	Childhood Neurology Lansing	Robyn Neft, RN, MSN, CPNP	\$174	www.pesihealthcare.com 800-675-5026
Oct. 2, 2009	Childhood Neurology Novi	Robyn Neft, RN, MSN, CPNP	\$174	www.pesihealthcare.com 800-675-5026
Oct. 2, 2009	Understanding "Behavior" in ASD Ann Arbor	Sally Burton-Hoyle Kathy Johnson	Varies	www.autism-mi.org 800-223-6722
Oct. 9, 2009	Paraprofessional training East Lansing	Sally Burton-Hoyle Kathy Johnson Ann Carpenter	Varies	www.autism-mi.org 800-223-6722
Dates range from Oct. 12, 2009 to Nov. 6, 2009	Complementary Interventions for Autism, Asperger's & Sensory Dysfunction in Children & Adolescents Locations vary	Gary M. Eisenberg, PhD, CPQ	Varies	www.summit- education.com 800-433-9570
Oct. 16, 2009	Taming the Social Context Jungle Grand Rapids	Carol Gray	Varies	734-677-0503
Oct. 30, 2009	Advocacy & the IEP Livingston ESA	Kathy Johnson Lori Swan	Varies	www.autism-mi.org 800-223-6722
Nov. 5-6, 2009	PECS Detroit	Jill Waegenare, M.A., CCC/SLP	\$395	www.pecs.com 313-222-7700

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These competencies are based on evidence-based autism research and will be part of the CEC and CEC/NCATE accreditation that universities go through in designing their special education curricula.

"CEC is delighted to have collaborated with the Autism Society in developing a set of knowledge and skills that will speak clearly and unambiguously to the field," said Richard Mainzer, Associate Executive Director of Professional Services at CEC. "Before being approved, the standards went through a rigorous process that included documenting the supporting literature and surveying practitioners. The result is the best of the best practices."

Lee Grossman, President and CEO of the Autism Society, agreed. "These competencies will have tremendous impact in local schools," said Grossman. "Parents can be assured that going forward their children's teachers will be trained according to nationwide, evidenced-based standards."

The competencies were drafted through a grant from and with support from the Ohio Center for

Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI). The Autism Society's Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Programs (NATTAP) conducted research and technical assistance in this process.



Family members and individuals on the spectrum were also involved in the development process. NATTAP will be integral in the implementation and training of the use of competencies in school districts. The competencies will also be part of the Autism Internet Modules, a platform with 80 modules under development which will provide evidence-based content based on the competencies. The competencies also will be included in textbooks that will be used in universities' classrooms.

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Support Groups

- * Autism Support Group of Genesee County:
www.geneseeautism.org
- * ASA/Oakland County Chapter Events:
www.asaoakland.org
- * OUCARES, www.oucares.edu offers soccer, baseball, music, learn through movement, social skills, martial arts, basketball, animals in art, cartooning, & after hours adult social. Call 248-370-2424 for more information.
- * Mott Children's Health Center Parent Empowerment Program for parents and caregivers of newly diagnosed or suspected ASD. Karen Shoemaker 767-5750, ext. 5292
- * Kathleen's House: www.kathleenshouse.org, 810-720-0667.
- * Young Adult HFA/Asperger Group: Patrick or Mary Kubik. Call 810-603-2166 or e-mail: pk1851@gmail.com or marykubik@gmail.com

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 and Support-OASIS: www.aspergersyndrome.org
 - ☞ The Gray Center: www.TheGrayCenter.org
 - ☞ Liane Holliday-Willey: www.ASPIE.com
 - ☞ Free pictures of visual schedules, etc.:
www.usevisualstrategies.com
 - ☞ Picture Exchange Communication System:
www.pecs.com
 - ☞ TEACCH: www.teacch.com
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