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Autism in pediatric dentistry

Consider this info when making decisions regarding dental care for your autistic child

BY DR. ELAN KAUFMAN, DMD, FAAPD

Pediatric dentists see patients with all kinds of special health needs, developmental conditions, and disabilities. Autism is a relatively common condition affecting children throughout the country. Children with autism usually present with a spectrum of disorders and often have difficulty communicating or interacting with others. Of course, children with autism need dental care just like every other child, but treating patients with autism can be a challenge for dental professionals. And, as with other children, pediat-



ric dentists are well-equipped to work with autistic patients.

Loud sounds, bright lights, certain smells, and sometimes touching can overwhelm a patient with autism. This presents a special challenge for dental treatment, because as anyone who has gone to a dentist knows, pretty much everything about dentistry involves these things. However, dentists will try their best to put the child at ease. Other than these sensitivities and the patient's reaction to them, the dental problems are pretty much like every other patient. Special attention to oral hygiene is helpful along with a measured approach to dental examinations and cleanings.

When fillings or other treatment is needed, sedative medications can often help autistic patients more easily cope with the stimulus and stress of their environment during treatment. In a few cases

where extensive procedures are required, general anesthesia might be considered. Each child is different and treatment modalities for one may differ for the next. As patients with autism may present reactions and symptoms in varying degrees, many can be treated in a similar manner to other children. Most parents are well aware of their child's conditions and limitations, and are usually very helpful when treatment is necessary.

Most important is to make sure that parents of an autistic child choose a dental provider as early as possible. The more familiar the child is with the dental environment, including the doctor and staff, the easier treatment will become. Pediatric dentists are usually properly equipped with the knowledge and experience of dealing with all children, especially children with special health needs.

Of course, parents should do their part in properly caring for their child's oral health by daily brushing and flossing, as well as making sure their child sees a pediatric dentist at least twice a year.

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MAKING CHANGES one behavior at a time

Consider these tips when motivating your family to kick bad habits

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

From strengthening relationships to achieving a healthier lifestyle, we all have behaviors we'd like to change to create a more satisfying life. But when we have families, establishing more positive habits can prove tricky. To get your family motivated, begin by focusing on one behavior at a time and make changes in a fun, collaborative way.

"One of the biggest opportunities we have that we often don't take enough advantage of is role modeling, and that can be done by parents or by kids," says Shelly Summar, a dietitian at Children's Mercy Hospital. "Instead of telling people what not to do, we want to show people what to do and help set up environments to make it easier to do that."

Here are some tips to do just that:

Curb sibling battles

Nothing makes a parent want to pull her

hair out more than listening to her kids battle it out day and night. Refocus how your kids treat each other by rewarding cooperation. First, define what it means to treat each other with respect and kindness. Then, using a token point system, reward behaviors that fulfill your expectations.

"It's important that the behaviors are very specifically identified and reinforcement is

very immediate," says Dr. Jane Sosland, a child psychologist at University of Kansas Medical Center. For example, you might say: "I really like the way you answered your sister there." Or, "I really like the way you guys are cooperating."

Keep track of points earned by using a sticker chart; a jar with marbles, cotton balls, or poker chips; or beads on a string.

To encourage teamwork, your kids must have an equal number of points to redeem for a special reward. When each child has earned 20 points, he earns an outing to a prized destination.

Ways to successfully integrate new habits

- Think positively.
- Set specific, realistic goals.
- Address obstacles that will hamper your efforts to achieve your goals.
- Setbacks are common. Try again.

**Top
Tips**

Get more active

Aiming for a healthier lifestyle? That's easier if your family is involved. Invite them to help you make a list of activities you can all enjoy together at least once a week.

Ideas could include visiting a nature center, strolling through a museum,

going for a bike ride, spending the day at the zoo, or swimming at your local community center. During extra busy weeks, plan simple activities like shooting hoops, playing hopscotch, or tossing a ball in the backyard.

Connect more by disconnecting

These days, family time competes with an array of extracurricular activities and screen distractions. Become intentional about making space for unplugged time together, whether through a regular evening meal or by creating traditions like a weekly family game night.

Summar, who has two teenage girls, says that her family has enjoyed a "Sunday Fun Day" tradition for years in which the family plays games together, laughs, and talks.

"In a fun situation, you can find out a whole lot more rather than sitting down one-on-one and drilling them," she says.

Grow more intentional about screen time

Rather than disappearing down individual digital rabbit holes, use technology together to strengthen communication skills and creativity. For example:

- Invite your child to Face-time or Skype with grandparents
- Show her how to start a private blog about one of her favorite subjects
- Take digital photos together and collaborate on a photo book or a calendar
- Make a vacation video using the app "One Second Every Day"
- Seek video games that entertain, educate, and encourage critical thinking
- Connect with your kids by playing their favorite video games with them

Not only do kids like teaching their parents how to play games, researchers at Arizona State University found

that gaming together generates conversation opportunities.

"Our research is finding that sharing this experience cultivates family bonding, learning, and well-being," says Sinem Siyahhan, assistant research professor at the university's Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics.

Eat a more wholesome diet

Plan well-rounded meals, beginning with meals you know your family will embrace. Half the plate should be covered with a fruit or vegetable and the other half with grain and protein. Encourage family buy-in by including your kids in the planning and preparation of meals.

Replace common snack foods like chips, cookies, and snack cakes with colorful fruits and vegetables, beginning with the ones your kids like, such as carrots, celery, natural applesauce, watermelon, blueberries, or canned peaches in a light syrup or juice.

As you set out to make healthy dietary changes, avoid setting up barriers for yourself that will make success more difficult like limiting yourself to fresh organic fruits and vegetables.

"That's a really difficult goal to achieve," Summar says. "Make sure the goals you set are realistic, like 'I'm going to go to a farmer's market once this summer.'"

And, Summar adds, don't feel bad about purchasing canned fruits and vegetables. They are good alternatives when fresh produce isn't handy.

Above all, remember that changes come easier when they're rewarding — and that goes for kids and adults.

Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines and her husband are the parents of two boys. Her latest book is "Happy, Healthy & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World."



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SCHOOL & special needs

How recent changes in the education system affect students with learning disabilities

BY ALLISON PLITT

Parents within the last two decades have become more open and less self-conscious about discussing their children's learning disabilities. No one knows that better than Dr. Odey Raviv, a learning specialist with a private practice in Long Island and Manhattan. Besides having worked as a special education teacher and a summer enrichment director in the New York City public school system for many years, Dr. Raviv also holds a doctorate degree in special education.

New York Parenting spoke with Dr. Raviv about some of the recent changes and challenges in the field of special education.

Allison Plitt: There has been an increase in the number of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder diagnoses. Currently, 11 percent of the general student population has been diagnosed with it. Why do you think this diagnosis has risen?

Dr. Raviv: The figures are really moving in such an amazing direction. What we've seen is that so many school systems and parents are so concerned with kids who are hyperactive, who can't stay on task, who can't sit still, are not able to focus, and not able to get along with their peers.

The teachers are too quick, along with the parents, to have their kids evaluated for ADHD and, unfortunately, many parents are reaching out for medication as a quick solution. There are two types of ADHD. We

have the traditional hyperactive child, but ADHD has a second category — a child who is inattentive. Those are the kids who are distracted internally; kids we might consider the day-dreamers, the kids who are looking out the window and can't initiate their work.

One of the reasons the percentage is up is because of more awareness of ADHD — even more publicity. It's more widely realized that kids who we thought were just lazy or tuned out — or having emotional issues or seemed just not to care — we found that their brains have processing impediments that don't permit them to stay on task. They have a tendency to become inattentive and unfocused and that makes it very difficult to keep up with today's challenging Common Core Curriculum.

Some of those kids do very well on medication, because the medication helps them stay on task.

For some kids with ADHD, however, simply medicating them isn't the only solution. They need to have some individualized support to teach them how to learn more efficiently, to be less impulsive with their problem solving, to be more inspired to compensate for their deficits.

We have found many kids with ADHD also profit from psychotherapy to deal with a lack of self-esteem, and the stress caused by the challenges of a rigorous curriculum.

Medication alone is not going to give us the changes that we really need. We need to take a complete look at the child. We need an "it takes a village" kind of approach where we're helping children with their emotions and helping them with their learning. A pill is not going to be the magic formula to change these kids into successful students.

AP: The New York State Common Core Standards Exam has been a source of worry for many parents in terms of the difficulty of its content and its strict grading system. How have parents of children with learning disabilities viewed the test?

DR: There are many parents who are worried about how their children can cope with the increased rigor of the test and a curriculum that is really placing a premium on critical thinking skills and problem solving. A lot of students struggle in that area, even kids in regular classes, because they haven't had the experiences, the teaching, and the chance to read, write, and problem solve at that very demanding level.

A lot of the prep work that teachers are required to use to teach the Common Core consists of scripted lessons to achieve certain goals and standards. Unfortunately, students with special needs learn differently. They need a lot more remediation. They need enrichment. They need a variety of teaching styles. Most importantly, they need a lot more time to learn the information and the processes to be successful.

Unfortunately, with the Common Core, there is so much pressure to push stu-



Dr. Odey Raviv



dents through performance standards more quickly and it's similar to throwing a kid into the deep end of the pool without teaching them how to swim. They're expected to be on grade level, but, in reality, their evaluations have shown that they are a few years behind — or many years behind in reading and math levels.

Regrettably, what we've seen also is that when a lot of kids experience high pressure to get ready for a test, they miss a lot of things — enrichment, art, music — those kinds of activities that can really help kids who don't do well in traditional academic settings feel better about themselves. Their self-esteem is destroyed.

In the long run, I think it's really important for kids to feel good about what they're doing and not feel defeated, because they're not getting high scores academically. We want to nurture them to be good citizens and be positive people who feel good about themselves.

When kids feel negative and defeated,

that's when they have tendencies to act out. I think we really need to build up their skills more slowly and not put them into a situation where they are destined to fail.

There is also a role for after-school and summer programs. They should have a mix of good ingredients — education, enrichment, and also exposure to things that might help them develop passions — to enable children to compete at a higher level.

We've been losing the enrichment programs that kids really love. When the student finds an area they feel great about — be it art or computers or music — that can be a springboard for them to more successful: not only in middle school and high school, but down the road in college, community college, or a technical institute.

I think it's really on the politicians to budget for educational programs that will back a holistic approach — making our kids more ready to deal with critical thinking and problem solving — and to compete globally.

AP: After students with learning disabili-

A pill is not going to be the magic formula to change these kids into successful students.

ties graduate from high school, what are their chances for success in college?

DR: What's been great over the last 10 to 15 years is that colleges have done a nice job with making available support services on campus. It's really hopeful that if a parent and a student are dedicated to finding a college that will meet their individual needs, they probably can do so.

One example is Landmark College in Vermont, which works with kids with dyslexia who can't read on grade level. With the technology available today, kids have a chance to be able to thrive and succeed at a much higher level than they could even 10 or 15 years ago. So I think it's a combination of the wonders of the new technology and the realization that there are many kids who could be successful, but it takes a lot of energy finding people who know about these programs.

Sometimes what happens, unfortunately, is that kids are reluctant to use these services, because they are hoping to move on to the next level independently. They're going to try to do it on their own, and they're going to break away from who they were and attempt to re-invent themselves.

In high school, if a student receives special support services, the school is going to come to these kids and take them out of class for support, but in college these students have to be willing to self-advocate. At the college level, the schools won't chase students. They have to be willing to acknowledge that they need support to succeed.

It really takes a lot of determination for these kids to succeed, because when they see some of their fellow students who can do things in half the time, it can be frustrating. They need to have a long-term goal in order to stick with it.

I have seen many kids thrive after struggling with academics for many years. My message, certainly to parents, is: never give up on your child. Provide them with the support and direction that will lead them to success.

Dr. Odey Raviv may be reached at odev-raviv@aol.com. To stay informed on developments in special needs education, like his Facebook page.

Allison Plitt is a freelance writer who lives in Queens with her husband and young daughter. She is a frequent contributor to New York Parenting.



(From left) Berwin, 11 months old, with his mom at Montefiore's Wakefield Hospital NICU reunion. Nayley, 3 years old, holding her Elmo doll.

A happy reunion

Families and hospital staff celebrate progress of kids treated in NICU

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Each year, nearly 15 percent of children born in the United States spend time in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of their local hospital. According to KidsHealth.org, babies who receive care there are often admitted within the first 24 hours after birth — primarily because they are born prematurely, there are difficulties during delivery, or there are signs of health issues in the babies' first few days of life.

Only very young babies are treated in the NICU, and their care ends once the medical professionals complete their work. As a result, the medical professionals that treat these young patients rarely see how the babies progress and develop.

To remedy this issue, a reunion was hosted by Montefiore's Wakefield Hospital this past fall for a group of Bronx families that had its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to thank for sustaining their family. The families were reunited with the doctors and nurses who cared for their babies' during their most critical stages.

The hospital has been named in U.S. News' "America's Best Children's Hospitals." Montefiore is an integrated health system, which includes the largest school health program in the nation. A top hospital in both the region and the nation as a whole,

Montefiore is recognized for its patient- and family-centered care and how the institution educates the healthcare professionals of tomorrow. In particular, it has an ongoing partnership with Albert Einstein Medical College to advance clinical research.

The hospital truly stands out when it comes to patient care, so it does not seem odd that an institution like this would make efforts to reunite with its former young patients. The hospital has many in-house programs to aid families. For instance, the Suzanne Pincus Family Learning Place is a pediatric health information and resource center available to the families of patients. The materials in the resource center are available for families, so they can educate themselves and feel empowered when speaking with the health care professionals.

The institution also offers an "Explainer Program" that is designed to engage patients and their families on the technologies available to them in the hospital. Lastly, the Phoebe H. Stein Child Life Program aides families in addressing the social and emotional needs of the child while receiving treatment.

This event is just another nod to the compassion of those on staff. The children and their families attended a special party to show gratitude for successful health outcomes since their treatment. The families were there to celebrate the health of the

children who were cared for at the Wakefield Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and to come together with the healthcare professionals. Everyone enjoyed activities, food, and each other. I recently spoke to Sheri Nemerofsky, M.D., a neonatologist the Montefiore Medical Center, about the event.

Shnieka Johnson: What is the history of the Children's Hospital at Montefiore?

Sheri Nemerofsky, M.D.: The Children's Hospital at Montefiore opened in 2001 and is a world-class children's hospital that has reached many exceptional milestones, such as performing the first pediatric heart transplant in the Bronx, and the world's first successful separation of twins joined at the head. The Children's Hospital is consistently ranked as one of "America's Best Children's Hospitals" by U.S. News and World Report. In 2014-15, it was ranked in four sub-specialties — Cardiology and Heart Surgery, Gastroenterology and GI Surgery, Nephrology, and Neurology and Neurosurgery.

SJ: What are the levels of severity treated at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore?

SN: Clinicians at CHAM care for children with a broad range of medical conditions and severities, always keeping their special needs in mind. The team works collaboratively to provide each family with the best course of treatment for individual patients. Our special programs and services are de-



Sameyra, 8 years old, enjoying entertainment at the NICU reunion.

signed to address the medical, educational, and emotional needs of every child and family. Clinicians provide the entire spectrum of pediatric services to meet the needs of the community, in particular to address prevalent health issues, including obesity, asthma, and diabetes.

SJ: What resources are offered to par-

ents following their child's treatment in the NICU?

SN: Patients are offered a visiting nurse who is a valuable resource to families after discharge. Babies are also referred to our high-risk Low Birth Weight Infant Evaluation and Assessment Program, where they continue to be seen by a multidisciplinary team.

They are also given resources to continue breastfeeding.

SJ: Where did the idea for a reunion come from?

SN: The purpose of the reunion is to provide families with the opportunity to come back and see the staff that cared for their children at a critical time in their lives. It also allows the staff to see how the children have developed and progressed since their time in the NICU. Each patient becomes "family" to the medical team when they are here, and they all enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to reconnect.

SJ: What was the atmosphere of the event?

SN: The atmosphere was very joyous, with lots of laughter and appreciation.

SJ: How many families participated?

SN: Forty families were at the reunion this year. In total about 150 people, including staff.

SJ: Have you seen growth in attendance over the years?

SN: Yes, every year more families join in the celebrations.

Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website: www.shniekajohnson.com.



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Autism-friendly

TRAVEL

Popular options that make vacation with disabled kids easier

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Traveling can bring a family closer as they explore and learn together. However, the journey to the destination can be difficult. The break from structured day-to-day life, the crowds, security lines, and waiting can stress out the most patient of adults, so, how do you get your kids through the chaos — especially if the child is on the autism spectrum or has special needs? Well, the experts say that preparation is the key to successful travel.

There are a number of organizations that aid families traveling with children on the spectrum or with other special needs. The services available range from providing a list of approved resorts and airlines, to organizing group travel or arranging staff to care for children during the vacation.

Travel companies are increasingly offering additional services to become more accessible. Some airlines — such as Delta, Jet-Blue, and United — offer travel recommendations for families traveling with children with special needs, and in some cities, offer simulations of the boarding process with the help of organizations like Autism Speaks.

A few resorts — such as Club Med and Beaches — have also worked with organizations like SEED Autism Center and Center for Autism and Related Disabilities to assist in training their staff to better provide accessible facilities and offerings.

Even some amusement parks — such as Universal, SeaWorld and Disney — have developed accessibility plans, which are available upon request.

A popular option for family traveling is cruising. Some of the most popular cruise lines, like Carnival and Norwegian, leave from ports in New York. However, one cruise line that has taken accessibility a step further is Royal Caribbean, which departs from a port a short drive away in Bayonne, New Jersey. Royal Caribbean line was present at the New York Times Travel Show and had information on its autism-friendly cruise ships

front and center.

Royal Caribbean has partnered with Autism on the Seas, a leading developmental disability service provider to the cruise industry since 2007. Autism on the Seas provides cruises staffed with persons specifically trained to assist families traveling with someone who is autistic or has a developmental disability. It also provides respite and private activities that allow guests with special needs to enjoy the ship's entertainment.

The Autism on the Seas staff members are educated and experienced to work with those on the spectrum. They have also received background checks in order to work with children and are sanctioned by the cruise lines. The staffers are focused on accompanying your family on the cruise to ensure everyone has a fun, accessible vacation. They provide travel experiences onboard Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Disney, and Carnival cruises.

Of the cruise lines that the organization works with, Royal Caribbean is the only cruise line to date that has achieved bronze-level certification on all ships. This reflects the company's readiness to accommodate guests with autism and other developmental disabilities, and provide equal access to onboard services and amenities to guests with special needs.

In order to receive this certification, the cruise ships were evaluated regarding the accessibility of their accommodations and the changes they applied to become more accessible. These evaluations also support the cruise line's efforts to maintain compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Royal Caribbean's autism-friendly initiative for families includes priority boarding and departure, sensory-friendly films and toys, dietary menu options, and overall, autism-friendly training for Adventure Ocean staff. It also offers a Cruising Social Story booklet to help families prepare their child for the cruise vacation.

Group travel is a great way to get to know other families that have had similar experiences and for your child to meet and socialize with other children either through private group activities or larger ship activities. Parents can also

Check it out

AIRLINES:

www.delta.com/content/www/en_US/traveling-with-us/special-travel-needs/disabilities.html

www.jetblue.com/travel/special-needs

<https://hub.united.com/en-us/news/company-operations/pages/united-helps-autistic-children-and-their-families-fly-friendly.aspx>

RESORTS:

www.clubmed.us/cm/home.do?PAYS=115&LANG=US

www.beaches.com

CRUISES:

www.carnival.com/about-carnival/special-needs.aspx

www.ncl.com/about/accessible-cruising

PARKS:

www.universalorlando.com/Resort-Information/Accessibility-Information.aspx

<http://seaworldparks.com/en/buschgardens-tampa/park-info/special-needs>

<https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/guest-services/cognitive-disabilities-services>

SOCIAL STORY:

http://media.royalcaribbean.com/content/en_US/pdf/Autism_Social_Story_Booklet.pdf

SERVICES:

www.asdvacations.com

www.autismontheseas.com

OTHER TRAVEL:

<http://nytravelshow.com>

www.takingthekids.com/about-eileen

<http://adata.org/publication/americans-disabilities-act-faq>

ADDITIONAL LINKS:

www.seedautismcenter.com

www.albany.edu/autism



seek a little alone time while the children are in provided care on the ship.

If travel planning seems overwhelming to you, seek the help of a travel professional. ASD Vacations works with families of children with special needs in their travel plan-

ning, and specialists are sensitive to autism and related disabilities. The company has relationships with resorts and cruise lines and also partners with Autism on the Seas. Cruises can be booked through the Autism on the Seas website.

Boy voyage!

Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website: www.shniekajohnson.com.

8 tips for traveling with special needs kids

If a cruise is not for you or if you, have to fly to a port of departure, here are eight tips from family travel expert and author Eileen Ogintz regarding journeys with a child that is on the autism spectrum or has special needs:

1. Preparation is the best defense. Call ahead and inform the airline, hotel, resort, and cruise line of your child's condition and ask what special accommodations are available. Ask if you need a fridge, inside room, etc. Bring your child's own sheets, if you think that will make

him more comfortable.

2. Select an environment your child can handle.

3. Talk online with other parents who have been there, done that. Simply Google the destination and "kids with autism" and you likely can connect with a local parent's group.

4. Book low season on a cruise or at a resort like Club Med, so there will be fewer children and the staff will have more time to devote to yours.

5. Travel by car if you think flying will

be too difficult. Opt to stay some place where you can eat some of your meals in your room.

6. Be forthright explaining the situation to those you meet.

7. Develop "social stories" complete with pictures that explain to your child exactly what you will be doing and where you are going.

8. Whatever happens, stay calm.

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Notable success in music therapy

Experts share benefits of listening to and playing sounds

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

There are many ways in which music therapy can play an important role in improving kids' wellbeing. Remarkably, music therapy reaches even those who seem to be unreachable.

The power of music, applied therapeutically, can result in your children's and teens' increased ability to focus, and may help with speech development, as well as honing their fine and gross motor skills.

Music therapists like the four I spoke to seem to agree that music has proven to be an effective support therapy in reaching children with autism, and building a rapport with them, which can then be employed to improve communication and social skills.

Susan Elaine Long — a parent and former New York City resident who now lives in Rome — is a classically trained vocalist who has worked as a voice teacher for 20 years and earned her master's in music therapy from the University of West England in Bristol in 2012.



Simple musical activities create positive experiences, because one cannot make a mistake.

Long is thrilled to now have the opportunity to weigh in on autism and the healing power of music, based on her personal observations while working with children and adults with autism spectrum disorder

and Down Syndrome for the PLAI Theatre in Harlem and with children in after-school programs serviced by the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music.

"My first internship was with autistic children," recalls Long. "The room was equipped to be welcoming, warm, and resonant with wooden floors and walls. The floor was covered with simple percussion instruments such as drums, xylophones, a glockenspiel, a piano, bells, maracas, etc.

"The therapist entered the room, where a 5-year-old boy was running his hand along the wall as he ran around the room. Upon entry into the room, the child gave no sign of being aware of the therapist's presence.

"The music therapist, after observing the child's behavior and movements for a time, began playing simple rhythms and patterns using the instruments and his voice, which mirrored the child's every sound and movement, but also allowed room for silences or time for a response.

"Gradually, it became evident that the child, on some deep level, understood he was being communicated to. The child became more attentive in miniscule ways, such as slowing down and moving back and forth, toward and away from the therapist, but then returning to his previous stereotypical behavior of running and brushing the wall.

"At first, answers were only pauses in the child's movements, as he began listening to the sounds. This was gradually followed by 'answers' using vocal sounds and slight body movements and occasionally, sounds created by striking one of the instruments.

"Gradually, it became apparent that the

child was making sounds and waiting for the therapist to answer. This dialogue continued with increasing participation on the part of the child until, toward the end of the hour session, the child was in the therapist's arms. It was amazing! I — and my fellow intern — had tears of wonder in our eyes.

"Maybe it had been just a 'good day,' but change is built on more and more good days.

"This is how music therapy reaches even those who seem to be unreachable. This child was non-verbal, but music, used therapeutically, was a language that he could understand and use to communicate with the world outside of his head. Music, as in this example, was being used to create social interaction, build connection and communication.

"Simple instruments can be played by anyone and can be modified to fit the ability of the client where physical handicaps are also present.

"Playing an instrument requires and therefore develops coordination. Music therapy is often used with physically handicapped individuals as a pleasant means to develop motor skills. Music requires not only hearing, which is involuntary, but listening, which alongside the use of motor skills, develops cognition, and in addition, as stated above, communication skills.

"Simple musical activities create positive experiences, because one cannot make a mistake. By using quality instruments, the experience provides beautiful sounds as well. This leads to increased self-esteem. The client is empowered by successfully creating something pleasant. And music is fun!



“I have been collaborating over the past two years with Plai Theatre, (Performers Linked by Able Imaginations) a privately funded organization that works throughout Greater New York combining theater and music. The combination of theater and music gives even more opportunity for incorporating the whole body and activating the entire central nervous system. This work has given me many opportunities to work with autistic children and adults.

“Groups we worked with were usually made up of various development disorders. Depending on the severity of the diagnosis, sessions were created to meet the needs of the participants, while stimulating skill development (communication, coordination, socialization, self-esteem, impulse control, motor, and cognitive).

“With a group of Down syndrome and Asperger children, we wrote, played, sang, and produced a show with and for their families and friends (props, costumes and all). Family members were encouraged to participate, which also helps improve relationships

by sharing an enjoyable activity together.

“Families often become overwhelmed by the needs of a disabled family member and are under great stress themselves. The activity gave siblings and parents a chance to let off some steam, too. The children loved the work, which was developed over a three-month period of weekly encounters, but it was the family that appreciated, was deeply moved, and sometimes surprised by the abilities of their disabled child.

“The most frequent comment of parents was the gratitude they felt seeing their child succeed. There is still little room in our world for the disabled, and they are often excluded from the possibility of experiencing personal success. They know they are ‘different’ and this becomes equated with ‘less.’ Therefore, the pride one experiences in performing even a simple show can be exhilarating and psychologically nourishing.”

PLAI Theatre [4768 Broadway in Manhattan, (917) 426-7524, www.plai-theatre.org].

...

Ana C. Leguisamo, of Ready, Set, Grow

Pediatric Occupational Therapy, P.C., located in Rego Park, Queens, weighed in about her work in music and therapy with children ages 3 to 10.



Music was one of the most powerful instruments that I used ... in order to elicit a response from him.

“Music is one of the most powerful tools we as occupational therapists can use in our treatment sessions with children that have sensory integration processing disorders and autism,” said Leguisamo.

“In my office, specifically, we use a wide variety of music, such as baroque — Mozart, Vivaldi, and Bach — as well as music with increased bass to help children self-soothe, self-regulate, decrease anxiety, organize, decrease or increase arousal level, improve focusing and concentration skills,

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

and increase the amount of neural connections that are made, so that we can achieve faster progress.

"We have also seen remarkable results in children with autism and sensory integration processing disorders that partake in the intensive therapy model of the integrated listening system music home program that we offer at our office.

"One of my clients with a diagnosis of autism and apraxia came in to see me when he was 4 years old. He had been receiving early intervention services since he was 2, as well as all related services, such as speech, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, but he was not demonstrating progress, so his school referred him to my office for outpatient services.

"When he first came into my office, I found him pacing back and forth in my waiting room, 'stimming,' and not playing with the toys. When he came into my gym, he moved in a lethargic and slow manner. He did not make eye contact, did not talk; did not even respond to his name or simple, one-step commands, such as 'sit down' or 'stand up.' He also did not make any type of vocalizations or sounds.

"Music was one of the most powerful instruments that I used in conjunction with all the other modalities that I used in order to elicit a response from him. I found that certain types of music helped to 'wake up' his body, as well as [helped him to] organize and self-soothe. His response to this type of intervention was incredible. His mother reported to me that he made more progress in one year than he had done in all his previous years of receiving intervention.

"The child is now 6 years old, turning 7 soon. He has [improved by] leaps and bounds but continues to present with significant delays. I found that I was able to help him to achieve a more optimal level of arousal and [lengthen his] attention span when I played music from Vivaldi and upbeat music with loud bass. I also found that music by Mozart helped to decrease his anxiety level and increase his focusing skills. His mom and I felt that this is what really helped him the most."

Ready, Set, Grow Pediatric Occupational Therapy, P.C. [65-11 Booth St. in Rego Park, (718) 406-9296 readysetgrowtherapy.com].

...

Brooklyn parent Toby Williams has served as director of Music Therapy at The Brooklyn Conservatory of Music since 2011. She is also an adjunct professor at New York University. Her daughter Cleo, 7, attends PS 321.



This little girl became fully verbally communicative. She started to sing before she started to speak.

Williams has worked with many children who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, and shares her valuable experiences with parents.

"One little girl I work with started with me at 7 years old and was non-verbal," recalls Williams. "Though social seeking (eye contact, getting excited about playing), she had very little functional language. Some of this is due to apraxia (a speech disorder where a child's ability to coordinate cognitive speech messages with the motor planning involved in articulating the words is impaired). 'Nancy' immediately related to music. She picked up the guitar and very quickly learned to hold it and form approximated chordal patterns and fairly accurate strumming patterns. Her imitation skills were very high.

"Soon, she began to vocalize as we sang. I provided some songs that gave her opportunities to fill in vocal sounds, progressing to bi-labial sounds like 'b' and 'p' and 'm.' I followed the developmental line of speech and language development from infancy to articulation through playing in music.

"I consulted with her speech therapist to see what sounds she was targeting, and I placed those sounds into simple songs that gave Nancy the time it took her to make the consonant and vowel sound and vocalize.

"Singing engages the breath, and her breathe support was also very weak. I introduced the harmonica to her to work on breath support by making sustained sounds. Over time, this little girl became fully verbally communicative. She started to sing before she started to speak. She can now sing a song all the way through, such as her favorite, 'Stand by Me,' and get every word almost fully articulated and in tempo.

"All the wonderful therapies and learning tools are beneficial and we work in tandem. However, working with children with autism in music creates many opportunities for progress in a naturally motivating environment in many different areas of need at one time.

"Parental involvement in school settings is minimal. However, at The Brooklyn Conservatory of Music's Music Therapy Program, which I run, our parents are very involved. Parents come to the first intake session, communicate regularly with their child's music therapist, and sometimes sit in on sessions. Our Music Therapy for Early Intervention program has a par-

ent component where we help parents to understand how they can relate to their children through music, while working on developmental skills."

Toby Williams at The Brooklyn Conservatory of Music [58 Seventh Ave. in Park Slope, (718) 622-3300 X 216, toby.williams@bqcm.org.]

...

Dr. Alan Turry is managing director of the Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy at NYU Steinhardt, as well as researcher, senior clinician, level III trainer and educator and supervisor for advanced trainees and therapists, and teaches clinical improvisation in the NYU Graduate Music Therapy Program.



These musical experiences are recognized ... as essential in improving brain functioning.

The center provides music therapy sessions for toddlers, children, teenagers, and adults on the autism spectrum. Musical interactions between child and therapist in individual therapy, or among children in a group, constitute the essence of the therapy.

"Nordoff-Robbins music therapy addresses therapeutic goals via in-depth utilization of the structural and expressive elements of both improvised and pre-composed music," explains Turry.

"The clinical improvisation techniques that the Nordoff-Robbins music therapist employs helps coordinate the child's playing by establishing a basic beat, offering opportunities to imitate rhythmic patterns in a spontaneous fashion, and generate a sense of anticipation with melodic phrases and harmonic cadences.

"These musical experiences are recognized by research scientists specializing in music and autism as essential in improving brain functioning in those diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders."

Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy at NYU Steinhardt [82 Washington Square E. in Washington Square, (212) 998-5151, steinhardt.nyu.edu/music/nordoff].

Organizations like Autism Speaks (www.autismspeaks.org) answer questions and offer support to families and individuals with autism and other developmental disorders. To learn more about music therapy and the many settings in which it can play an important role in improving wellbeing, consult American Music Therapy Association (www.musictherapy.org). If you would like to find a music therapist in your area, consult the Certification Board for Music Therapists (www.cbmt.org).



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A closer look at cerebral palsy

Symptoms, causes, treatments & more associated with this disorder

BY JAMIE LOBER

While most people have heard of cerebral palsy, they may be unsure of how to define it.

“Cerebral palsy is a spectrum of issues that is caused by brain damage that occurs either at birth or in utero such as lack of oxygen in a difficult childbirth process or something in the internal development while the baby is in the womb,” said Shelly DeButts, director of marketing and communication for United Cerebral Palsy. The extent of the damage depends on what symptoms someone has.

“It can affect people in many different

ways depending on what part of the brain is affected and can result in mild or significant physical disabilities, developmental delays, or intellectual disabilities,” said Al Shibley, vice president of communications at United Cerebral Palsy. Some people may have slight fine motor problems while others may not be able to speak clearly or use their limbs.

Some kids with cerebral palsy are easier to recognize than others.

“They may have a slight stiffness in their arms or legs, or might walk with a slight shuffle, or may use a speech app on an iPhone to communicate, so there is a huge range,” said DeButts. Diagnosis can be challenging. “It is mainly a medical professional making a

judgment call on a set of symptoms such as certain developmental milestones not being met or physical problems being present like involuntary muscle contractions and then ruling out other causes of that.”

The biggest thing people can do is be respectful.

“Our mission is to help them achieve everything they are capable of and to have the greatest integration in society as possible,” said Shibley. Families affected by cerebral palsy face some of the same challenges as other families. “They may be struggling to make ends meet, find employment, find housing, medical care and support and be accepted into the community.”

Folks need to be reminded that there are legal protections in place to ensure that employers cannot discriminate based on a disability.

"Putting a ramp on a building or making sure a child with a wheelchair can go onto the playground is part of inclusion," said DeButts.

Parents tend to have the hardest time with the diagnosis.

"When you are a new parent, there are expectations, and when you are told that your child may not be able to walk or will have difficulty speaking, your expectations are rocked a bit, so you need to find people to talk to, get the right facts and information, and be prepared for what is going on," said DeButts. While there is no prevention, women should continue to take good care of themselves. "Good prenatal care and obstetrical care for mothers can prevent some cases."

Services vary from case to case.

"It may include physical therapy to improve strength, coordination, and the ability to stand, walk, or sit; there are educational plans that help students in school; and there are occupational therapies to maintain mobility," said Shibley.

There are public and private programs to help families with cerebral palsy have vital, satisfying lives.

"Much is supported through government programs with Medicaid and private insurance, and we are continuing to advocate for a consistent level of supports and services to help people be active in their community and lead lives that they consider fulfilling," said Shibley.

While there are some treatments to make things less painful and improve mobility, there is no cure.

"We like to stress early intervention, because while it typically happens at birth, a lot of kids are not diagnosed until months or years later, because they fail to meet a developmen-

tal milestone like not walking or rolling over," said DeButts.

Progress has been made.

"The largest improvement is probably in the general perception and acceptance of people with disabilities, and there has been legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Homestead Plan that have made a difference," said Shibley. Communication technologies have made huge leaps and bounds over the years.

"In decades past, people would just assume that someone with cerebral palsy who had speech difficulty was not intelligent, and you may actually have a genius in front of you that cannot speak to tell you," said DeButts. And mobility is made easier. "The difference between wheelchairs then and now is incredible in terms of ergonomics, portability, and ease of use and a lot of people use scooters," said DeButts.

The future for people with cerebral palsy is promising.

"There are breakthroughs on the horizon of exoskeletons that are fitted onto a person's legs and can be controlled with brain impulses where it moves their legs for them," said DeButts.

Researchers are working hard to make things better.

"There have been a lot of developments in terms of managing pain from involuntary muscle spasms," said DeButts.

Kids are reaching out and befriending classmates with cerebral palsy and differences are minimized.

"If we start inclusion at the beginning, then children could hopefully grow up in a society where they do not see anything odd or different about someone with a disability, and it is just another person just like someone who has blonde hair," said DeButts.

Jamie Lober, author of "Pink Power" (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women's and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.

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A parent and child enjoying Picture This! program at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

MAKING ART accessible

Picture This! and Discoveries family programs at the Met

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Picture this: Hannah is a bright, inquisitive 8 year old with limited vision. She can't wait to explore the world around her, especially now that spring is here and summer's on the way. This little girl has a creative spirit and she and her best friend, Hector — who is blind — share a true love of art. Somehow, they find a way to draw and paint “masterpieces” together.

One day, Hannah's parents surprised her with a cool adventure. They invited Hector,

7, and his 14-year-old sister (with unimpaired vision) to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The kids were super excited, since it was their first visit, and because they had heard about a special program for children who are blind or have low vision. They couldn't wait to find out what it was all about.

When everyone got there, they were thrilled to discover that the museum's unique Picture This! family program offered a lot of cool things to do, see, and hear. Not only was it fun, but it also turned out to be an awesome learning experience centered

around art, and it took place in an interactive workshop environment where kids like Hannah and Hector could actually touch original artworks.

Also, the entire family took part in an interesting tour; teaching artists provided detailed descriptions and other multisensory experiences. Hannah and her peeps were already looking forward to their next artistic adventure.

The Met's special programs create a welcoming environment for families and young art lovers, ages 5 to 17, who can't seem to

get enough of the museum's exceptional offerings.

Rebecca McGinnis, senior museum educator, oversees Access and Community Programs at the Met, including the Picture This! program. She described an innovative children's book that pairs works of art from the museum's collection with raised line drawings and Braille, "Art and the Alphabet: A Tactile Experience." Published in 2003, it demonstrates to parents and teachers how art can still be enjoyed by children with visual disabilities.

"Children and families can explore art at the Met through a variety of programs, and children of all abilities are welcome to participate in any program. We aim to make all programs accessible and inclusive through multisensory activities and a flexible approach to engaging children with various learning needs and styles," McGinnis explained. "Picture This! family programs support multiple areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum, including orientation and mobility, social skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, and sensory efficiency skills."

Through Picture This! workshops, kids and teens have access to the Met's collections, exhibitions, buildings, programs, and services and even have choices in how, when, and where they experience art. While expressing themselves and exploring ideas through art, they can also make deep social connections.

A wide range of programming and accommodations to make the museum and its collections accessible to visitors with disabilities are offered: <http://www.metmuseum.org/events/programs/programs-for-visitors-with-disabilities>.

For children and adults with developmental and learning disabilities and those on the autism spectrum, the Met's Discoveries program provides a supportive environment that offers many ways of interact-

ing with art, ensuring smooth access for visitors of all ages.

These participants explore an exhibition, collection area, or cross-cultural theme. After discovering works in the galleries through multimodal experiences like sketching, posing, and discussion, they create art inspired by what they have seen. Discoveries workshops actively include parents and siblings (free; reservations required).

Did you know that the Met has a long history of programs that make art accessible to people who are blind or partially sighted? Surprisingly, there were programs for children with visual impairments back in 1913! And in 2014, the Met received the American Foundation for the Blind's Access Award, affirming that "the Museum has opened the world of art to those with visual impairments."

Picture This! takes place every other month. Discoveries programs are offered once a month.

Seizing an opportunity to create meaningful family experiences, where everyone is engaged and stimulated, is what makes regular visits to the Met truly worthwhile.

"We encourage students with disabilities to apply for the museum's High School Internship Program. We partner with City Access New York and the NYS Commission for the Blind to offer internships for high school students who are blind or have low vision," said McGinnis. (For details: www.metmuseum.org/research/internships-and-fellowships/internships/high-school).

Next Picture This! program at the Metropolitan Museum of Art [1000 Fifth Ave. at E. 82nd Street on the Upper East Side, (212) 535-7710, www.metmuseum.org/events/programs/family-programs/picture-this-programs-for-families] is "Color and the Senses" on May 31, 2-3:30 pm. The next Discoveries program, also "Color and the Senses," is May 10, 2-3:30 pm. Free, reservations required.

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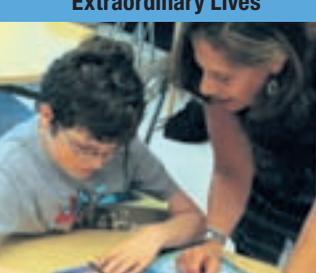


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Keys to success

A brother and sister on the autism spectrum express themselves through playing piano

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

At 19, Justin Brown is an award-winning musician and composer. Recently, he traveled to Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and played the piano for an enthusiastic audience. At his high school in New Jersey, he was honored as its “most outstanding musician.”

Justin’s parents are really proud that their son is now a sophomore at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. His mom, Monica, says Justin’s goal is to graduate with a Bachelor’s of Music in classical piano performance.

“He loves to listen to music of all genres. Justin tells us he hears music in his inner being, and composes when he has time. He has matured into such a wonderful human being and has always been such a great big

brother to his sister Serena,” adds Monica. “Justin has a love of God and loves to be around people. He’s a hard worker and an exceptional son.”

It’s clear that autism never defined Justin — or his sister, Serena.

Serena, 16, is bright and articulate. The high school junior loves to dance, enjoys Japanese music, pop songs, and Avon catalogues.

Her mom says, “She so loves life. Her name means ‘peace.’ She is passionate about social causes and loyal to those she chooses as a friend. We celebrated her sweet 16 birthday party last spring, and she was absolutely so precious that day that she literally had everyone in tears. She is simply remarkable and adores her older brother.”

When she was 3, Serena demanded to

sleep on the floor of Justin’s room for months at a time, instead of her own bed.

And like her peers, she can’t wait to go to college, where she wants to major in communications and minor in music. Serena dreams about a career in media relations. She hopes to get into TV reporting one day.

The siblings come from a happy, close-knit New Jersey family with strong ties to New York City. Married for 25 years, their parents, Monica and Elvis, grew up in Brooklyn and the Bronx, respectively. Dad worked as a software engineer for more than 20 years and currently works in Manhattan’s Financial District. Mom worked as a registered nurse before choosing to stay home to raise her kids, and says she has no regrets.

Despite autism’s powerful grip on their



Justin (now 19) and Serena Brown (now 16). Justin and Serena learned how to play the piano at the Somerville School of Music in New Jersey with the guidance of their music teacher Karen Kowalski.

young lives, both siblings were able to achieve their highest potential. But when they were tots, the surprising diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder in both of them almost dismantled their parents' hopes for their children's futures.

Other parents who have come to terms with a similar diagnosis know all too well what that "punch in your stomach" feeling does to your psyche and how surreal it all seems — until you catch your breath and start dealing with and moving forward in your new reality.

The Brown family did its best to get help for the kids, although many times, it was an uphill battle. Their faith kept them strong, and then the magic of music was introduced into Justin and Serena's lives, forever changing their destinies.

Help came in the form of a compassionate local music teacher and occupational therapist. Karen Kowalski, an instructor at Rutgers University's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, teaches piano to children with special needs, at the Somerville School of Music in New Jersey. This is where she taught the Brown children. (Serena still sees her, but Justin has graduated.)

"I met Karen [in 2004] through a program called the Very Special Arts in Somerset, New Jersey. I felt Justin was gifted in piano, and having no musical background

myself, I wanted someone to evaluate his talent," Monica recalled.

So she called the Somerville School of Music where Karen worked (and still teaches part-time), and was asked to bring Justin in.

For more than 15 years, the classical pianist has made it her life's work to help people who happen to be struggling with a variety of disabilities — autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome — and teach them to play the piano.

She observed something miraculous: her students' verbal and motor skills began to improve, while they showed progress in other areas of their lives. Suddenly, they could connect with the world in ways they hadn't been able to before!

When Kowalski first met the Brown family, Serena and Justin were 5 and 8. After years of frustration and trying many forms of therapy, their parents' prayers were answered when their kids started to play the piano and embrace a new musical experience that would ultimately transform them.

In a recent telephone interview, the music instructor indicated that she observed many positive changes along the way and felt that Justin and Serena were exceptional in terms of their abilities and how far they've come. (Kowalski didn't provide occupational therapy.)

Monica said, "Karen has become a very special part of our family and a dear friend."

So, what was that process like for the siblings?

Monica recalled that Kowalski was impressed by Justin's "gift" and started him with adult piano lesson books and warm-up exercises, stressing the use of the metronome.

"She would take lessons from various books focusing on techniques, theory, performance, and composing, and at times, would accompany him on piano," says Monica.

Kowalski is the author of "Playing it Their Way: An Innovative Approach to Teaching Piano to Individuals with Physical or Mental Disabilities," a guide for other piano teachers who wish to teach children with special needs. Her work combining music and occupational therapy is the subject of a paper she is working on this year.

"I do not teach just classical music, as I have the ability to teach a variety of genres of music — really, I look at what the individual is most interested in learning and take it from there," Kowalski explained. "I have taught everything from Chopin and Beethoven to Scott Joplin to Elton John, the Beatles and Bruno Mars.

"I typically use a combination of traditional music education series (such as Kjos, Alfred or Bastien method series), which I then adapt, and then also have put together adapted music, which contains a color coded system so the individual can better understand right from left hands and position of notes on the pian," she adds.

Monica recalled that before Justin started working with his favorite music teacher, he was just finishing his elementary third-grade school year with inclusion classes. She said he spent the summer at a specialized camp for children to help support his needs. And Serena was in the midst of transitioning back into their district's elementary school. She had completed her program at the Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center of Rutgers University in New Brunswick.

Many opportunities have opened up for Justin and Serena.

They have performed for the local food

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Continued from page 23

bank, churches, at a Passover Seder, fine arts festivals in North Carolina, Florida, and Michigan, and have participated in various charities and fund-raisers. They have also competed in the New Jersey Branch of the NAACP's Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological, and Scientific Olympics in Texas and Florida.

Ask any parent who has a child with a disability, and she'll tell you that a communication barrier is difficult to overcome.

"Music brought my children back to me!" says Monica. If she could, she says she would probably yell it from the rooftop of her family's home. It allowed Serena and Justin's mom to communicate with them. She said the piano made her children more focused and open, and she believes that in their music, they found their voices.

A two-minute video: "Piano Helps Autistic Children Find Their Voice" (<http://bit.ly/11o2hud>) details the Brown family's transformation through music. It features Justin, Serena, and Kowalski discussing their relationship with this therapy — even more impressive when the viewer knows that at age 9, Justin was mute.

Kowalski, who has formed a special bond with the Brown family, pointed out that one exciting milestone in the siblings' musical journey was their ability to perform their music in front of a large audience and have eye contact. Most people would never even attempt it.

They bowed, smiled, and engaged with their audience, both verbally and through their music.

"At our music studio, we have concerts twice a year," said Kowalski. "They also perform at a benefit to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House."

Children with autism face a lifetime of challenges and have a lot more on their plates than many of their peers. Kowalski noted that verbal expression seems harder for Justin, and he can't always tell people what he feels; that's why, she says, the piano is so effective and powerful.

She explained that while Serena expresses herself more, she has a harder time establishing friendships because interpreting nonverbal communication may be difficult for her, but indicated that since



"Music brought my children back to me!"

Serena is very verbal and has that internal drive, she'll do very well in her career choice.

There are many kids like Justin and Serena who have made great strides. You just never know how far your child can go developmentally, unless, like Monica, you try different therapies, and music therapy seems to be effective, according to experts. (See part 2 of this look into music therapy and its benefits for special needs children.)

Kowalski described Serena and Justin as a "once-in-a-lifetime brother-and-sister pair," and said she had "many other students who have a strong interest in music, and the ability, but none like Justin, in particular. He's exceptional, because he wants to become a pianist."

She also pointed out that like all people, those on the spectrum have all kinds of abilities and can participate in activities they find interesting, and eventually adapt.

"The story of Justin and Serena is an excellent example of that."

These days, Justin is preparing himself for his second semester of required music classes and is learning Italian. His father hopes he will continue on with his math.

"On occasion, he performs at our local church and other community venues. He presently drives to school when the car is available. Justin's hope is to work in a job where he will showcase his musical talents," said Monica.

"Serena is completing her junior year at Franklin High School. She just finished her

color guard season with her band class and is preparing to perform with the band class in the Disney World parade. She had the opportunity to travel to Hawaii and perform with her high school Keyboard Ensemble class," says Monica. And Serena is looking forward to traveling to New York to tour with her piano class.

Serena is also part of the Newspaper, French, Yearbook, and Anime clubs.

Monica said Serena "wants to be in front of the camera one day. We bought her a video camera and finally, she is able to start taking some film classes at the high school." And she loves languages, as well, and is presently taking French, and hopes to learn Chinese, Japanese, German, Italian, and Latin!

The aspiring TV reporter is in the process of looking at colleges and preparing to take the SATs. Mom says Serena may work as a music accompanist and counselor for their school district, taking care of young children during the summer.

"The children and I were fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to New York City with their high school keyboard class," said Monica. "Their trip itinerary included the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, the Steinway Museum, Radio City Music Hall, and 'Wicked.'"

"We enjoy the shows, festivals, and NYC's kaleidoscope of people, cultures, and food," she said.

The Brown family visits the city often; they have family and friends living here.

"We love to visit the city with our kids," said Monica. "We have in the past, celebrated my son's birthday at Dave and Busters in the Times Square area and a previous birthday surprise for Serena, the Broadway show, 'Mary Poppins.' We took Justin and Serena to see 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time' in December. That show was awesome. My kids were able to relate to the main character's 'uniqueness.'"

Parents who wish to consult with Karen Kowalski, author of "Playing It Their Way: An Innovative Approach to Teaching Piano to Individuals with Physical or Mental Disabilities," may contact her at zielinka@shrp.rutgers.edu.



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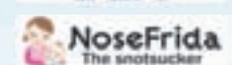
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PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA



SEEKING SUPPORT

Tips for parents trying to cope with caring for special-needs children

Dear Sharon,

My son has been diagnosed as being on the spectrum. I feel depressed and angry and unable to cope. It's not his fault, and I feel myself failing him. What kind of counseling do I look for? I need help but I don't know where to begin.

Dear Parent,

Your reaction to your son's diagnosis is more than understandable. There are many parents who have experienced similar responses and have begun

to feel less overwhelmed once sufficient information and support are in place.

When seeking help, I think it is best to find professionals who have worked with or parented a child with special needs. It is hard for anyone who hasn't personally been exposed to the emotions and responsibilities that come with parenting a special-needs child to empathize with what moms and dads can go through.

One excellent place to begin a search for assistance is the Brooklyn Public Library's "The Child's Place for Children with Special Needs." Located at the central branch at Grand Army Plaza, it offers information and a

variety of referrals to organizations throughout New York that service families with special-needs children. It also hosts a variety of programs.

This spring there are workshops on advocacy and handling challenging behaviors as well as a Music for Autism concert. See www.bklynlibrary.org/only-bpl/childs-place for more information. I also believe that one of the most effective ways to counteract the depression, frustration, and isolation that can come with parenting a child on the spectrum is to meet other parents who are confronting similar challenges. Whenever a parent can tell that she is not alone with the difficulties she faces, it can make a world of difference.

Joining a parent list such as BrooklynSpecialKids@yahoo-groups.com can provide moms and dads with immediate online access to discussions and information from other parents juggling similar demands.

Becoming a member of a parents of special needs support group can also prove to be indispensable. Finding a safe place to regularly share personal joys and frustrations while listening to others who are confronting similar challenges often provides an invaluable source of practical ideas, strength, and consolation. Members of groups also can form lasting friendships with parents who "understand."

Of course, keeping personal pediatricians regularly informed is important for medical and emotional support. They can also provide information about local community resources to turn to for a variety of services.

I personally know that the shock waves that follow an upsetting diagnosis can feel overwhelming at best. After parenting several children with special needs and talking to many parents who have done the same, I am consistently inspired. Watching parents and children with special needs grow and flourish as they form deep, loving bonds, learn to appreciate their strengths, and realize their unique potential, is truly remarkable.

Sharon C. Peters is a mother and director of Parents Helping Parents, 669 President St., Brooklyn (718) 638-9444, www.PHPonline.org.

If you have a question about a challenge in your life (no issue is too big or too small) e-mail it to Dear Sharon at Family@cnglocal.com.



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A holistic approach to ADHD

Consider diet & other aspects of life when treating this common cognitive disorder

BY JULIANNE DAVIDOW

Today, more children (and adults) in the U.S. are being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder than ever before — and more prescription drugs are being issued all the time as well. Currently, millions of North American school children take medications for the disorder.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the term used by the American Psychiatric Association for a group of symptoms characterized by getting easily distracted, being hyperactive or restless, and acting on impulse. There are many other traits that fall under these general categories. Although all children have these traits to some degree, they are more intense in those diagnosed with ADHD.

It is one of the most commonly diagnosed cognitive disorders. But this diagnosis is based on subjective assessments of perceived behavior. That is, the diagnosis depends on the person making it. And when it comes to diagnosing children, where do we draw the line between normal behavior and a disorder? It's natural for children to be boisterous, have a lot of energy, and have difficulty sitting still for long periods. Diagnosing a child is also problematic because children develop at different rates. In addition, other disorders may have similar symptoms to ADHD.

This is not to say that some children and adults do not have problems with attention and hyperactivity that exceed the norm. Some researchers say the increase in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder diagnoses has been heavily influenced by our modern way of life, in which we are surrounded by so much stimulus and technology and which encourages distraction.

In addition, the condition has been exacerbated by the increased pressure to perform academically and professionally, which is higher than it's ever been before. Family background, diet, sleep habits, and many other factors also come into play.

Whatever the cause, parents and teach-

ers face the challenge of finding ways to help children channel their energy in useful, healthy ways, and this takes time and patience. There are many creative, intelligent children and adults who do not do well in traditional school and work settings, but who thrive when they are given one-to-one attention and are able to do the things they love.

ADHD children are often gifted. Although they can be easily distracted, forgetful, not able to follow instructions well — and jump from activity to activity without finishing any one thing — when they do find something that really interests them, they can stay focused for long periods of time.

Taking medication is an individual decision. But medication is not an effective long-term solution, and it does not address the deeper issues of the disorder. Also, the long-term effects of these drugs on developing minds and bodies is still not clearly understood.

A holistic approach means thinking of the mind, body, and life situation as one system. In this approach, all aspects of a child's life are taken into consideration. Treatment methods might include making changes to dietary and sleep patterns; getting fresh air and exercise; taking certain supplements; practicing mind-body skills such as mindfulness, yoga, and breath work; limiting technology; and working with strengths and talents. While there is no one magic bullet, using a combination of therapies can be extremely effective.

Here are some natural options for an integrative treatment plan:

Healthy body, healthy brain

The more healthful and balanced our diets, the better our brains will function. Sufficient protein is particularly important because it prevents surges in blood sugar that may increase hyperactivity or restlessness. It also triggers neurotransmitters, the chemical messengers in our brain that help us to stay alert in a calm, focused way. Add protein foods in the morning and for snacks to improve concentration.

Be sure to include complex carbohydrates such as fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils, and whole grains.

Also important are omega-3 fatty acids, such as those found in tuna, salmon, and other cold-water white fish, walnuts, and olive and canola oils.

Artificial ingredients and allergies

Many children are affected by the artificial colors and flavors found in foods today. In fact, most children will benefit from eliminating — as much as possible — foods with artificial colors and flavors.

In addition, your child may have allergies to certain foods. You can test this by trying an elimination diet. Avoid the food for two weeks and see if it makes a difference. Then, try adding it back again and see what happens. You may also choose to visit a nutritionist and allergist for guidance.

Sugar

There is no hard and fast evidence that sugar worsens behavior in children, but there is certainly a lot of anecdotal evidence! In addition, a growing body of scientific research shows that the overconsumption of sugar can lead to such conditions as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Sugar is a hidden ingredient in many foods, and is highly addictive.

Pesticides

Pesticides can be found in high concentrations in fish, meat, and dairy products. Certain kinds of commercial fish, including Atlantic or farmed salmon, bluefish, wild striped bass, flounder, and blue crab, may contain particularly high amounts. Wild fish is a better choice, as is organic meat and poultry. Organic meat packages should state that animals have not

been given antibiotics, have outdoor access, are raised on organic land, and have been organically fed.

Produce that contain the highest amount of pesticides include: apples, grapes, nectarines, peaches,

pears, red raspberries, strawberries, bell peppers, carrots, celery, green beans, hot peppers, potatoes, and spinach. If you cannot buy all organic produce, at least choose organic from the items in this group. A helpful website is the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy Food and Health: www.iatp.org/about/programs/food-and-health.



Supplements

A good diet, eliminating harmful additives, and eating organic as much as possible will definitely improve body and brain function; but adding supplements can be beneficial as well. Some studies have found that levels of zinc may be lower in children with the disorder. Another helpful supplement is fish oil, which contains omega-3 fatty acids.

There are many other natural supplements that can help with focus, attention, and hyperactivity. The book "Non-Drug Treatment for ADHD" by Dr. Richard P. Brown and Dr. Patricia Gerbarg, is an excellent resource for information on supplements, and on all aspects of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, known as CAM. For more visit www.breath-body-mind.com/

Mind-body practices

Mind-body practices such as meditation, yoga, and breath work can be particularly helpful for all the symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and other co-existing conditions such as anxiety and depression.

The slow, gentle movements of yoga can help to calm and focus the mind. Yoga also improves attention and self-awareness. Breathing practices can calm the mind, increase alertness, and improve attention and memory. Relaxation and meditation help to calm and strengthen the nervous system, and have many other benefits as well.

Mindfulness is one kind of mind-body practice that is effective in treating ADHD symptoms and is the subject of ongoing scientific research at major universities. Mindfulness means learning to pay attention to present moment experience, in an accepting and non-judgmental way. Like a muscle, mindfulness is supported through repeated practice. Even small children can learn mindfulness and meditation, and some schools have begun implementing mindfulness as part of their education program.

Scientists now know that the brain has "neuroplasticity." This means that it is capable of changing and healing itself. Our brains will develop new neural connections based on learning. Although this ability is strongest during the developmental stages of childhood and young adulthood, it continues throughout life. Practicing mindfulness and other mind-body skills can actually change the structure of our brains for the better.

A certified coach specializing in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, writing, and creative pursuits, Julianne Davidow uses a holistic approach, incorporating mindfulness skills and positive psychology strategies in her work and daily life. She lives in the greater New York City area. Contact her at info@admindfulness.com.

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www.chadd.org
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new-york-city@chadd.net

Services Provided: Educating and support groups.

HJD-NYU ADD Center

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(212) 598-6490
www.hjd.med.nyu.edu

Services Provided: Diagnostics and Treatment, and Parenting Skills Training

AUTISM

AHA-Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism Association

303 Fifth Ave., Manhattan
(888) 918-9198
www.ahany.org
pats@ahany.org

Services Provided: educating parents of special needs children, support group.

Association for Metro Area Autistic Children

25 West 17th St., Ground Floor
New York, NY 10011
(212) 645-5005 (877) 645-5005
www.amac.org
info@amac.org

Services Provided: Case Manage, Community Education, Information and Referral, Treatment, Vocational Employment

Other: Residential Camp

Autism Science Foundation

419 Lafayette St., Second Floor
New York, NY 10003
(646) 723-3977
www.autismsciencefoundation.org
contactus@autismsciencefoundation.org
Services Provided: Information and Provides Founding for Medical Research

Autism Society of America

Queens Chapter
188-83 85th Rd.
Holliswood, NY 11423
(718) 464-5735
Brooklyn Chapter

224 Ave. S
Brooklyn, NY 11223
(718) 336-9533

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

Brooklyn Autism Center Academy

111 Remsen St.
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www.info@brooklynautismcenter.org

Services Provided: BAC is a private, not for profit school dedicated to providing high-quality education to children with autism and support to the general autism community.

Downtown Spectrum Parents, Parents of Individuals with Autism Support Group

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North Central Bronx Hospital

3424 Kossuth Ave., room 15A11
FSPDD at North Central Bronx Hospital
(718) 519-4797

NY-Bronx@autismsocietyofamerica.org

Services Provided: Autism support group, provides information and support..

The McCarton Foundation and School

331 West 25th St.
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www.mccartonfoundation.org

Services Provided: Education for children and Research Center

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Continued on page 32



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- ◆ One-on-one classes and independent study program available during July and August



June 26 – July 24, 2015

126 West 17th Street New York, NY 10011
 646-638-2705 ext. 688 • summer@winstonprep.edu
applications available online at www.winstonprep.edu

Watch your child improve by the time the new school year starts!



- Peak Performance
- ADHD
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Learning Disorders
- OCD
- Behavioral Issues
- Auditory Processing Disorder
- Tourette's
- Sensory Integration
- And Many Other Neurological And Emotional Issues



Farmingdale - 516-249-4488
 Port Washington - 516-944-4469

www.braincoreny.com

Melville - 631-385-1400
 Smithtown - 631-265-1223

New York Special Needs

RESOURCE GUIDE

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www.familyconnect.org
jaynycnapvi@aol.com

Services Provided: online forum, support group for parents with visually impaired children.

Parents of Blind Children (National Federation of the Blind)

471 63rd St., Brooklyn, NY 11220
(718) 567-7821 • (212) 222-1705

Individuals Served: Visual Impairments

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

The Lighthouse National Center for Vision and Child Development

111 East 59th St.
New York, NY 10022
(800) 829-0500

TTY/TDD: (212) 821-9713

www.lighthouse.org

Email: info@lighthouse.org

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral.

Other: Vision rehabilitation, low vision services, professional, Continuing education

CAMPS

Camp Acorn

P.O. Box 1383
Paramus, NJ 07653
(973) 471-2911 or www.campacorn.org

Camp Akeela

3 New King St.
White Plains, NY 20604
(868) 680-4744 or www.campakeela.com

Camp Chatterbox

Children's Specialized Hospital
150 New Providence Rd.
Mountainside, NJ 07092
(908) 301-5451 www.campchatterbox.org

Camp Cold Brook

Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center
P.O. Box 305
83 Old Turnpike Rd.
Oldwick, NJ 08858
www.shhrc.org

Camp Daisy

Hardenburg Ln. and Riva Ave.
East Brunswick, NJ 08818
(732) 821-5195 or www.ebrr.org/campdaisy.html

Camp Haverim

JCC on the Palisades
411 East Clinton Ave.
Tenafly, NJ 07670
(201) 569-7900 or www.jcconthepalisades.org

Camp Hope

(845) 225-2005 X 207 or (866) 223-6369 or
WWW.CBFNY.ORG

Camp Horizons

127 Babcock Hill Rd.
South Windham, CT 06266

(860) 456-1032 or www.camphorizons.org

Camp Huntington

56 Bruceville Rd.
High Falls, NY 12440
(866) 514-5281 or www.camphuntington.com

Camp Jotoni

141 S. Main St.
Manville, NJ 08835
(908) 725-8544 or www.thearcofsomerset.org

Camp Joy

250 Nimham Rd., Carmel
(845) 225-2005 X212 or www.cbfny.org

Camp Lee Mar

805 Redgate Rd.
Dresher, PA 19025
(215) 658-1710 or www.leemar.com

Camp Merry Heart

21 O'Brien Rd
Hackettstown, NJ 07840
(908) 852-3896 or www.eastersealnj.org

Camp Neveda

P.O. Box 158
910 Saddleback Rd
Stillwater, NJ 07875
(973) 383-2611

Camp Northwood

132 State Route 365
Remsen, NY 13438-5700
(315) 831-3621 or www.nwood.com

Camp Oakhurst

111 Monmouth Rd.
Oakhurst, NJ 07755
(732) 531-0215 or www.campchannel.com/campoakhurst

Camp Sun N Fun

1555 Geteway Blvd
West Deptford, NJ 08096
(856) 875-1499 or www.thearcgloucester.org

Camp Sunshine and Camp Snowflake

1133 E. Ridgewood Ave
Saddle River County Park, Wild Duck Pond
Area
Ridgewood, NJ 07450
(201) 652-1755 or www.sunsine-snowflake.org/sunshinemain.htm

Camp Sunshine and Summer Fun Camp

Children's Specialized Hospital
150 New Providence Rd
Mountainside, NJ 07092
(888) 244-5373 X 5484

Camp Tikvah

JCC on the Palisades
411 East Clinton Ave.
Tenafly, NJ 07670
(201) 569-7900 or www.jcconthepalisades.org

Frost Valley YMCA Camps

2000 Frost Valley Rd
Claryville, NY 12725
(845) 985-2291 or www.frostvalley.org

Happiness is Camping Inc.

62 Sunset Lake Rd.
Blairstown, NJ 07825
(908) 362-6733 or www.happinessiscamping.org

Harbor Haven Day Camp

1155 W. Chestnut St.
Suite G-1, Union NJ 07083
(908) 964-5411 or www.hhdc.com

Kiddie Keep Well Camp

35 Roosevelt Dr.
Edison, NJ 08837
(732) 548-8542 or www.kiddiekeepwell.org

New Jersey Camp Jaycee

985 Livingston Ave
North Brunswick, NJ 08902
(732) 246-2525 or www.campjaycee.org

Ramapo For Children

Rhinebeck Campus
P.O. Box 266 Rt. 52 Salisbury Turnpike
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
(845) 878-8403 or www.ramapoforchildren.org

Round Lake Camp

119 Woods Rd.
Lakewood, PA 18439
(570) 798-2551 or www.roundlakecamp.org

Summit Camp & Travel

322 Route 46 West, Suite 210
Parsippany, NJ 07054
(800) 323-9908 or www.summitcamp.com

Maplebrook Summer Program

5142 Route 22
Amenia, NY 12501
(845) 373-8191 or www.maplebrookschool.org

Minding Miracles Learning Center

90 Spring Hill Rd.
Matawan, NJ 07747
732-316-4884 or www.mindingmiracles.net

New Jersey Camp Jaycee

198 Zeigler Rd.
Effort, PA 18330
(732) 246-2525 X 44 or www.campjaycee.org

Rainbow Summer Day Program

(201) 343-0322 X 270 or www.archbergenpassaic.org/about.html

Southampton Fresh Air Home

36 Barkers Island Rd.
Southampton, NY 11968
(631) 283-5847 or www.sfah.org

CEREBRAL PALSY

United Cerebral Palsy of New York City

80 Maiden Ln.
New York, NY 10038
(212) 683-6700
www.ucpnyc.org

Services Provided: Assistive Tech Equipment, Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Residential, Treatment,

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CHALLENGE
EARLY INTERVENTION CENTER

Early Intervention Services
For children birth - 3 years with special needs

Services Provided

- Evaluations
- Feeding Therapy
- Special Education
- Nutrition Counseling
- Service Coordination
- Family Support/Counseling
- Speech/Language Therapy
- Physical & Occupational Therapy
- ABA Program – Center & Home Services

Residence Based Interventions & Collaborative Coaching

RECEPTION OFFICE:
430 20th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11220

QUEEN OFFICE:
73-28 Main Street
Flushing, NY 11355

STATEN ISLAND OFFICE:
1211 Richmond Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10314

TO REFER YOUR CHILD TO THE NYS EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM, CALL 311.

Challenge is a contractor of the NYS Department of Health, Bureau of Early Intervention, a public program for children under the age of three who are either suspected of having or at risk for developmental delays or disabilities. This program is approved, regulated and funded by NYS Department of Health and the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene. All services are provided at no cost to parents. Health Insurance may be used for approved services. A child's eligibility for the program can be determined only by state-approved evaluators under contract, and all services must be authorized by the NYC Early Intervention Official.

For more information about CHALLENGE: T. 718.851.3300 W. challenge-ei.com



EXPERT HELP FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Comprehensive, flexible, and individualized home based and community ABA therapy.

Office based diagnostic evaluations & developmental assessments.

Serving families in their homes in all NYC boroughs and Westchester with 3 Convenient office locations in Brooklyn, Bronx and Manhattan

An in-network partner with most major insurances. Private pay or school based SETTS services also available.

Now accepting new referrals.



Applied Behavioral Interventions
abisvc.com
(646) 666-3088
intake@abisvc.com

Attention families in the NYC school district!



Is your child between 14-16 years old?

Does your child receive SSI?

Does your child attend a New York City school?

If you answered YES to these questions, you and your child may be eligible to join the New York State PROMISE program! PROMISE is a free research program created to help kids with disabilities successfully transition from high school to adulthood. There is no obligation and joining does not affect your benefits.

Call 1-607-255-6270 or email nyspromise@cornell.edu to find out if your family is eligible to participate!

Learn more at www.nyspromise.org



The New York State PROMISE (Promoting the Resilience of Minors in Supplemental Security Income) is one of six PROMISE awards granted nationwide by the U.S. Department of Education in October 2015. The PROMISE intervention model was jointly developed by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the Social Security Administration (SSA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The state research demonstration will be coordinated by the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), the contract administered by the Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene, and research and capacity building activities conducted by Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute.

New York Special Needs

RESOURCE GUIDE

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Vocational/Employment

Other: Day Treatment, Day Habilitation, Early Intervention

DISABILITY GROUPS

Adults and Children with Learning & Developmental Disabilities, Inc.

807 South Oyster Bay Rd.
Bethpage, NY 11714
(516) 822-0028

Services Provided: Educational Services, Family Support Services, Day Services, Homes and Independent Living and Health Care Providers.

Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID)

27 Smith St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 998-3000/TTY/TDD
(718) 998-7406
www.bcid.org

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Vocational Employment

Catholic Charities Office for the Handicapped

191 Joralemon St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 722-6000
www.ccbq.org

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York

841 Broadway
New York, NY 10003
(212) 674-2300
TTY/TDD: (212) 674-5619
www.cidny.org

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

Children's Aid Society

150 E. 45th St.
New York, NY 10017
(212) 949-4800

Services Provided: serves New York's neediest children and their families at more than 45 locations in the 5 boroughs and Westchester County. Provides comprehensive support for children in need, from birth to young adulthood, and for their families, to fill the gaps between what children have and what they need to thrive.

Community Service Society

105 E. 22nd St., Room 303
New York, NY 10010
(212) 254-8900
www.cssny.org

Services Provided: Case Management, Information and Referral

Developmental Disabilities Center, St. Luke's Hospital

1000 10th Ave.
New York, NY 10019
(212) 523-6230

Other: Developmental assessments and evaluations.

Disabled and Alone/Life Services for the Handicapped

61 Broadway, Suite 510
New York, NY 10006
(800) 995-0066
www.diabledandalone.org

Services Provided: Assistive Tech Equipment, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Individual Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

Early Childhood Center Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center

1731 Seminole Ave.
Bronx, NY 10461
(718) 430-8900

Services Provided: Treatment

Other: Parent Support Groups

Early Childhood Direction Center

New York Presbyterian Hospital
435 E. 70th St.
New York, NY 10021
(212) 746-6175

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

Other: Preschool programs, transportation, medical, educational and Social services, evaluation and assessment services, parent education programs and resources.

Early Childhood Direction Center

1UCP of NYC, Inc, SHARE Center
60 Lawrence Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11230
(718) 437-3794

Services Provided: The Early Childhood Direction Centers (ECDCs) provide information about programs and services for young children, ages birth through 5, who have physical, mental, or emotional disabilities and help families obtain services for their children.

Easter Seals New York

40 W 37th St., Suite 503
New York, NY 10018
(212) 220-2290

www.ny.easter-seals.org

Service Provided: Medical Rehabilitation, Inclusive Child Care, Camping and Recreational, Education and Recreational Services.

EIHAB Children's Services

222-40 96th Ave.
Queens Village, NY 11429
(718) 465-8833

Services Provided: Connects disabled children To service providers, advocates, helps with entitlements, Medicaid wavers, financial assistance, care coordination.

Fisher Landau Center for the Treatment of Learning Disabilities

Rouso Building, Second Floor

1165 Morris Park Ave.
Bronx, NY 10461

(718) 430-3900
www.einstein.yu.edu/cerc

Services Provided: Health, Education and Vocational Rehabilitation

Gingerbread Learning Center, Inc

80 Woodrow Rd.
Staten Island, NY 10312
(718) 356-0008

www.gingerbreadlctr.com
gingerbread@gingerbreadlctr.com

Services Provided: Group or individual curriculums at your home, preschool or our center. Diagnostic evaluations and therapy by licensed certified professionals — placement determined by NYC CPSE. New York State-approved preschool evaluation site.

Free tuition and transportation for all eligible children *(funding provided through state and local agencies — parent may transport for reimbursement).

Developmental areas: Behavior and socialization, cognitive development, speech and language, hearing loss, physical and occupational therapy.

Three convenient Staten Island locations.

Call or visit our school and pick up a free brochure. For information concerning the Early Intervention Program call 311.

Guild for Exceptional Children

260 68th St., Brooklyn, NY 11220
(718) 833-6633
www.gecbklyn.com
mikefer@gecbklyn.org

Services Provided: Early childhood Education, Day Habilitation Program, Other specialized services

Heartshare Human Services

12 MetroTech Center, 29th floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 422-4200

www.heartshare.org

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Residential, Treatment

IAC-

Interagency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies, Inc.

150 W. 30th St., 15th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 645-6360

International Center for the Disabled

340 E. 24th St.
New York, NY 10010
(212) 585-6000

www.icdnyc.org

Service Provided: Medical, Rehabilitation and Mental.

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Melody of Autism
harmonize your life

Melody of Autism wants to help you thrive as you navigate your special parenting journey.

We know you want a little extra time and energy to do a few things at home, go food shopping, enjoy a night on the town or help with homework. Whatever it is, we are here for you.

WE OFFER

- childcare providers
- autism sensitivity training
- learning through play workshops

We would love to hear from you!
Email us at faith@melodyofautism.com or call 347-324-7077
www.melodyofautism.com

New York's #1

Wheelchair Van Sales, Service & Rentals



Let's Go Together!

If You Can Dream It, We Can Get You There

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Life and Moving Engagement



(855) 984-7171 www.BussaniMobility.com
Bethpage • Smithtown • Mamaroneck

ABA Provider Services
An Affiliate of Theracare

Proudly serving CT, NJ and NY

Helping individuals with Autism realize their full potential

ABA services for kids with Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Increasing communicative & functional language
- Reciprocal Social Interactions with peer and adults
- Teaching children appropriate tasks to do in their leisure time
- Acquiring self help skills
- Reduction of self injurious behavior or aggression towards others
- Family Involvement & Training like going into community settings such as restaurants, parks, doctor's clinic, etc.
- Sensory desensitization (difficulty with hair cuts, bathing, loud noises, only eating certain foods, etc.)

www.abaproviderservices.com • 855-681-8555

WE ACCEPT MOST INSURANCE PLANS



Exceptional schools for children and adolescents with autism and brain injury

OUR DAY AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS COMBINE BEST PRACTICES FROM THE FIELDS OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION.

■■■

May Center Schools for Autism and Developmental Disabilities
Randolph, West Springfield, and Woburn, Mass.

May Center School for Brain Injury and Related Disorders
Brockton, Mass.

800.778.7601
www.mayinstitute.org **May Center Schools**

New York Special Needs

RESOURCE GUIDE

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Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, Inc.

135 West 50th St.
New York, NY 10020
(212) 582-9100
(800) 523-2769
www.jbfcs.org

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

Korean-American Association for Rehabilitation of the Disabled

35-20 147th St.
Annex 2F
Flushing, NY 11354
(718) 445-3929

Individuals Served: All Developmental Disabilities

Learning Disabilities Association of New York City

27 W. 20th St., Room 304
New York, NY 10128
(212) 645-6730
www.ldanyc.org

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

Living Above Disorder Shared Journeys Support group

Clinton Hill Public Library
380 Washington Ave., Brooklyn
(646) 481-6570
www.livingabovedisorder.org
info@livingabovedisorder.org

Services Provided: support for special needs children/adults, social workshops.

Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

100 Gold St.,
New York, NY 10038
(212) 788-2830
www.nyc.gov/mopd

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

Metro New York Developmental Disabilities Services Office

75 Morton St.,
New York, NY 10014
(212) 229-3000
www.cs.stste.ny.us

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Individual/Case Advocacy, Residential, Treatment, Vocational Employment

My Time, Inc.

9719 Flatlands avenue, Room 103
Other Location: 1312 E8th street, Brooklyn
(718) 251-0527
www.mytimeinc.org
infor@mytime.org

Services provided: Support group for parents of special needs children.

National Center for Learning Disabilities

381 Park Ave. South, Suite 1401
New York, NY 10016
(212) 545-7510

Service Provided: Information and Promotes Research and Programs.

New York City Administration for Children's Services

150 William St.
New York, NY 10038
(212) 341-0900

Services Provided: Protects New York City's children from abuse and neglect. Provides neighborhood based services to help ensure children grow up in safe, permanent homes with strong families. Helps families in need through counseling, referrals to drug rehabilitation programs and other preventive services.

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

www.nyc.gov/health

New York City Department of Social Services

250 Church St.
New York, NY 10013
(877) 472-8411

Services Provided: Information and Referral

Other: Services vary by county

Partnership with Children

50 Court St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(212) 689-9500

Services Provided: Partnership with Children is a not-for-profit organization that provides emotional and social support to at-risk children so that they can succeed in school, in society and in their lives.

Staten Island Mental Health Society, Inc.

669 Castleton Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10301
(718) 442-2225
www.simhs.org

Service Provided: Clinical and Education

YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities

460 W. 34th St., 11th floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 563-7474
TTY/TDD: (212) 290-2787
www.yai.org
link@yai.org

Services Provided: Assistive Tech Equipment, Case Management, information and Referral, Residential Treatment, Vocational/Employment.

Other: Early Intervention, preschool, health care, Crisis intervention family services, clinical services. Day programs, recreation and camping.

DOWN SYNDROME

Bronx and Manhattan Parents of Down Syndrome

1045 Hall Place, No. 3

Bronx, NY 10459
(917) 834-0713

Down Syndrome Amongst Us

32 Rutledge St.
Brooklyn, NY 11249
www.dsau.org

Manhattan Down Syndrome Society

124 W. 121st St.
New York, NY 10027
(646) 261-5334
manhattandowns@gmail.com

National Down Syndrome Society

666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012
(212) 460-9330 (800) 221-4602

Services Provided: Advocate for the value, acceptance and inclusion of people with Down Syndrome.

EDUCATION

Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Legal Services Corp.

1360 Fulton St.
Brooklyn, NY 11216
(718) 636-1155

Services Provided: Community Education, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

Other: HIV Advocacy and HIV Custody Planning.

BOLD - The Bronx Organization for the Learning Disabled in New York

2885 St. Theresa Ave.
Bronx, New York 10461
(718) 430-0981
www.boldny.org

Services Provided: Education, speech therapy, occupational therapy, psychological assessments and other services.

Early Childhood Direction Center Variety Pre-Schoolers Workshop

47 Humphrey Drive
Syosset, NY 11791
(516) 921-7171 (800) 933-8779
www.vclc.org

Individuals Served: Children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy,

Other: Preschool programs, transportation, Medical, educational and social services, evaluation and assessment services, parent education programs and resources.

East River Child Development Center

577 Grand St.
New York, NY 10002
(212) 254-7300
www.eastrivercdc.org

Services Provided: A Non-Profit, Family-Centered, Community based Preschool Program

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March of Dimes

RESOURCE GUIDE

New York Chapter

www.marchofdimes.org
515 Madison Ave., 20th Floor, New York, NY, 10022
(212) 353-8353

Long Island Division

325 Crossways Park Dr., Woodbury, NY, 11797
(516) 496-2100

Northern Metro Division

580 White Plains Rd., Suite 445, Tarrytown, NY, 10591
(914) 407-5000

Staten Island Division

110 McClean Ave., Staten Island, NY, 10305
(718) 981-3000

March of Dimes National Office

1275 Mamaroneck Ave.
White Plains, NY 10605
(914) 997-4488



AUTISM SERVICES

Your insurance pays, we provide.

DIRECT BEHAVIORAL SERVICES provides customized ABA services and social groups (funded by your health insurance) to children and adults with autism in Staten Island, NYC areas & NJ. No waiting list.

We work on social skills, language, play skills, self-help skills and academic skills at home, school and community. Supervised by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Call 347.559.6131 or email directbehavioralservices@gmail.com. www.directbehavioralservices.com

Private pay also accepted.



interActive therapy GROUP

646-230-8190 • outreach@mailitg.com
www.interactivetherapygroup.com

At **InterActive Therapy Group**, we provide an interdisciplinary approach to your child's early intervention evaluation & treatment



Speech Therapy • Physical Therapy • Occupational Therapy
Counseling • Special Education • ABA Services • Service Coordination

Manhattan | Brooklyn | Queens | Bronx | Staten Island | Long Island | Hudson Valley

Dental Services for Special Needs and Medically-Compromised Patients

Many patients with special needs require special care

They may be more susceptible to **tooth decay, gum disease or oral trauma**. Due to their medical diagnosis or behavior therapy they may require medication or a diet that is detrimental to their dental health.



Mary George, D.M.D./Pediatric Dentist

Ralph H. Epstein, D.D.S./Dentist Anesthesiologist

Derek Zimbardi, D.D.S./General Dentist

Cristina David, D.D.S./General Dentist

Gina Sajani, D.M.D./Pediatric Dentist

Over 30 years experience caring for the dental needs of children with special needs.

Office based general anesthesia available.

Variety of treatment modalities available depending on your child's needs.

DDSNY

Distinctive Dental Services of New York, P.C.

OFFICE LOCATION:

173 East Shore Road, Suite 201
Great Neck, NY 11023
516-487-8110



For more info please visit www.ddсны.com

Rebecca School is a therapeutic day school for children ages 4 to 21, promoting the education and development of children with neurodevelopmental delays in relating and communicating, including PDD and autism.



Our curriculum is based upon the DIR® (Developmental Individual Differences Relationship-based) model of Dr. Stanley Greenspan, which considers the variations in individual motor and sensory processing systems and tailors each child's program to his or her specific needs. We are committed to celebrating each child's strengths and supporting their limitations.



Learning Through Relationships

Elizabeth O'Shea, Admissions Director
(212) 810-4120 | cohsea@rebeccaschool.org

40 East 30th Street NYC 10016
www.rebeccaschool.org

New York Special Needs

RESOURCE GUIDE

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offering an array of Educational and Therapeutic services to children with special need between the ages of 3 and 5. These special needs include specialized instruction, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, assistive technology, and parent education.

Shield Institute for the Mentally Retarded and Developmentally Disabled

144-61 Roosevelt Ave.
Flushing, NY 11354
(718) 939-8700
www.shield.org

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/Equipment, Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Treatment.

EPILEPSY

ANIBIC (Association for Neurologically Impaired Brain Injured Children)

61-35 220th St., Oakland Gardens
(718) 423-9550
www.anibic.org

Services Provided: Physical activities for mentally disabled children.

Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York

257 Park Ave. South, Suite 302
New York, NY 10010
(212) 677-8550
www.efmny.org

Services Provided: The Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York is a non-profit social service organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of people with Epilepsy and their families.

GENERAL-MULTIPLE SERVICES PROVIDED

Adoption Crossroads

444 East 76th St., Manhattan
(212) 988-0110
www.adoptioncrossroads.org
joesoll@adoptionheling.org

Services Provided: Educate parents on handling adopted children.

Advocates for Children of New York

151 W. 30th St., Fifth floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 947-9779
www.advocatesforchildren.org

Other: Advocate for educational rights in the public school

Board of Visitors, Staten Island Developmental Center

1150 Forest Hill Rd.
Staten Island, NY 10314

(718) 983-5200

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

Brooklyn Bureau of Community Svrces

285 Schermerhorn St.
Brooklyn, NY 11217
(718) 310-5600
www.bbcs.org

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Future Planning, Treatment, Vocational Employment

Other: Job training and placement services, Home and Community Based Waiver Services, Comprehensive Medical Case Management, Parent Support Group

Brooklyn Children's Center

1819 Bergen St.
Brooklyn, NY 11233
(718) 221-4500

Services Provided: Inpatient Hospital Day, Day Treatment Program, Parent Advocate Services, Family Support Group. The Brooklyn Children's (BCC) Mission is to promote an environment for the Development of healthy children and adolescents.

Brooklyn Parent Advocacy Network

279 E. 57th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11203
(718) 629-6299

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/Equipment, Case Management, Community Education, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy, Residential, Vocational/Employment

Other: HIV-AIDS, homeless housing, food program, respite, after school and day care.

Bronx Children's Psychiatric Center

1000 Waters Pl.
Bronx, NY 10461
(718) 239-3639

Services Provided: Community Day Treatment, Intensive Case Management, Crisis Intervention

Greater New York Chapter of the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation

515 Madison Ave., 20th Floor
New York, NY 10022
(212) 353-8353
www.marchofdimes.com

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral.

Institute for Community Living Brooklyn Family Resource Center

2581 Atlantic Ave.,
Brooklyn, NY
(718) 290-8100, x. 4145
(718) 495-8298
www.iclinc.net
info@iclinc.net

Services Provided: Clinical consultation, counseling, workshops, and after-school programs for special needs children.

Maidstone Foundation

1225 Broadway, Ninth floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 889-5760
mariette33@aol.com

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Vocational Employment

Other: Help people with unusual problems seek the proper help that is needed for that problem and also provide education and training.

New Alternatives for Children

37 W. 26th St.
New York, NY 10010
(212) 696-1550

Services Provided: NAC provides real help and real hope to thousands of children with disabilities and chronic illnesses and their families throughout NYC. Through an integrated continuum of health and social services, NAC keeps children safe from abuse or neglect and works with birth, foster and adoptive families to keep children out of institutions and in nurturing, loving homes.

Queens Children's Psychiatric Center

74-03 Commonwealth Blvd.
Bellerose, NY 11426
(718) 264-4500

Services Provided: QCPC serves seriously emotionally disturbed children and adolescents from ages 5-18 in a range of programs including inpatient, hospitalization, day treatment, intensive case management.

Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc.

116 E. 16th St.
New York, NY 10003
(212) 677-4650
infor@resourcesnyc.org
www.resourcesnyc.org

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral Case Advocacy

Other: Free workshop series with a focus in issues related to early intervention, preschool, school-age special education, transition to adulthood and community resources.

Also publishes several directories.

Services for the Underserved

305 Seventh Ave. 10th floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 633-6900

Services Provided: SUS is a non-profit organization that provides housing, services and support for individuals with special needs to live with dignity in the community, direct their own lives and attain personal fulfillment.

Sinergia, Inc.

2082 Lexington Ave.
New York, NY 10035

New York Special Needs

RESOURCE GUIDE

(212) 643-2840
www.sinergiany.org
information@sinergia.org
Residential Office:
902 Amsterdam Ave.
New York, NY (212) 678-4700

Services Provided: Case Management, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy, Residential, Vocational/Employment

Staten Island Mental Health Society, Inc.

669 Castleton Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10301
(718) 442-2225

Service Provided: Offers mental health and related services to children and adolescents and their families.

HEARING IMPAIRED

Center for Hearing and Communications

50 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
(917) 305-7700 (917) 305-7999
TTY/TDD: (917) 305-7999
www.chcheating.org
info@chcheating.org

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and referral, Individual case Advocacy

Lexington School for the Deaf

Center for the Deaf
26-26 75th St.
East Elmhurst, NY 11370
(718) 350-3300
TTY/TDD: (718) 350-3056
www.lexnyc.org
generalinfo@lexnyc.org

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/Equipment, Case Management, Information and Referral,

Individual/Case Advocacy, Vocational/ Employment.

Other: Mental Health Services including early intervention program, hearing and speech services and a school for the deaf.

The Children's Hearing Institute

380 Second Ave., Ninth floor
New York, NY 10010
(646) 438-7802
www.childrens hearing.org

Services Provided: The institute provides funding for research, educational support, and other programs relating to the restoration of hearing for infants and children with hearing loss or profound deafness. While CHI currently focuses much of their efforts on children who are deaf and can be helped with cochlear implant technology, they conduct research related to causes of deafness that ultimately can benefit people of all ages.

LEGAL SERVICES

Lawyers for Children, Inc.

110 Lafayette St., Eighth floor
New York, NY 10013
(800) 244-2540
www.lawyersforchildren.com

Services Provided: Future Planning, Information and Referral, Legal Advocacy

Legal Aid Society of New York City

199 Water St.
New York, NY 10038
(212) 577-3346
(347) 245-5132
www.legal-aid.org

Individuals Served: All Developmental Disabilities

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

Other: Advocacy training, and systems advocacy

MFY Legal Services, Inc.

299 Broadway, Fourth floor
New York, NY 10007
(212) 417-3700

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy.

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Inc.

151 West 30th St., 11th floor
New York, NY 10001-4007
(212) 244-4664
www.nylpi.org

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy.

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Muscular Dystrophy Association

11 E. 44th St. 17th floor
New York, NY 10017
(212) 682-5272
www.mda.org

Services Provided: MDA is the gateway to information, resources and specialized health care for individuals and families coping with muscle disease. MDA's offices serve every community through a vast program of clinics, support groups, summer camps, equipment loans and much more.

TOURETTE SYNDROME

National Tourette Syndrome Association

42-40 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361-2820
(718) 2242999
www.tourette-syndrome.com

Services Provided: Community education, information and referral.

Developmental Disabilities Service Offices

RESOURCE GUIDE

The State Office of OPWDD provides services through the following Developmentally Disabled Service Offices (DDSO) of each borough. Services include group home placement, advocacy, respite care, financial planning, estate planning, education, day treatment, children's services, and discharge planning.

Metro NY Developmental Disabilities Service Office — Bronx

2400 Halsey Ave.
Bronx, NY 10461
Voice (718) 430-0478
Fax (718) 430-0866

Metro NY Developmental

Disabilities Service Office — Manhattan

75 Morton St., New York, NY 10014
Voice (212) 229-3000
Fax (212) 924-0580

Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Service Office

888 Fountain Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11208
Voice (718) 642-6151

Queens Developmental Disabilities Service Office

80-45 Winchester Blvd.
Hillside Complex, Bldg. 12

Queens Village, NY 11427
Voice (718) 217-4242
Fax (718) 217-5835

Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Service Office

1150 Forest Hill Rd.
Staten Island, NY 10314
Voice (718) 982-1903

Long Island Developmental Disabilities Service Office

45 Mall Dr., Commack, NY 11725
Tel: (631) 493-1700
Fax: (631) 493-1803
Website: www.omr.state.ny.us

Long Island Special Needs

RESOURCE GUIDE

ADVOCACY

Association for the Help of Retarded Children (AHRC)

Nassau County
189 Wheatley Rd.
Brookville, NY 11545
(516) 626-1000
www.ahrc.org/

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, future planning, Information and Referral, residential, treatment, vocational/employment

Association for the Help of Retarded Children (AHRC)

Suffolk County
2900 Veterans Memorial Highway
Bohemia, NY 11716-1193
(631) 585-0100
www.ahrctuffolk.org

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/Equipment, Community Education, Future planning, Information and referral, residential, treatment, vocational/employment

Long Island Advocacy Center

999 Herricks Rd.
New Hyde Park, NY 11040
(516) 248-2222

Services Provided: Information and referral, Individual/case advocacy, legal advocacy

Nassau County Commission on Human Rights

240 Old Country Rd.
Mineola, NY 11501
(516) 571-3662

www.nassaucountyny.gov

Services Provided: Community education, Information and referral, individual/case advocacy, legal advocacy

Nassau County Department of Social Services

60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd.
Uniondale, NY 11553
(516) 227-8000

www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/dss/

Services Provided: Information and referral

Nassau/Suffolk Law Services, Inc.

Nassau County
Hempstead Office
1 Helen Keller Way – Fifth Floor
Hempstead, NY 11550
(516) 292-8100

www.nslawservices.org

Suffolk County
Islandia Office
(serves Suffolk West of Route 112)
1757 Veterans Highway – Suite 50
Islandia, NY 11749
(631) 232-2400

Riverhead Office
(serves Suffolk East of Route 112)
400 W. Main St., Suite 301
Riverhead, NY 11901
(631) 369-1112

AUTISM

Asperger's Syndrome and Higher-Functioning Autism Association of New York

189 Wheatley Rd.
Brookville, NY 11545
(888) 918-9198
www.ahany.org

Services Provided: Provides support and education for families, individuals and professionals affected by Asperger's Syndrome, high-functioning autism and other pervasive developmental disorders.

Matt and Debrea Cody Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities

Stony Brook University, 5 Medical Dr., Port Jefferson Station
(631) 632-8844
www.codycenter.org

Nassau-Suffolk Services for Autism (NSSA)

80 Hauppauge Rd., Commack, NY 11725
Tel: (631) 462-0386
Fax: (631) 462-4201
Website: www.nssa.net

Quality Services for the Autism Community (QSAC)

56-37 188th St.
Fresh Meadows, NY 11365
(718) 357-4650
www.qsac.com

Services Provided: QSAC is an award winning non-profit organization dedicated to providing services to persons with autism and/or pervasive disorder (PDD) throughout New York City and Long Island.

United Supports For Autism

283 Commack Rd.
Commack
(516) 848-8551
www.unitedsupportsforaugism.org
Contact: Natalia Appenzeller, Ph. D.

CAMPS

Camp Akeela

3 New King St.
White Plains, NY 20604
(868) 680-4744 or www.campakeela.com

Camp Horizons

127 Babcock Hill Rd.
South Windham, CT 06266
(860) 456-1032 or www.camphorizonsorg

Camp Horseability

238 Round Swamp Rd.,
Melville, NY 11747.
(631) 367-1646 or www.horseability.org

Camp Huntington

56 Bruceville Rd
High Falls, NY 12440
(866) 514-5281 or www.camphuntington.com

Camp Loyaltown

Hunter, NY 12442.
(518) 263-4242 or www.camployaltown.org

Camp Northwood

132 State Route 365
Remsen, NY 13438-5700
(315) 831-3621 or www.nwood.com

Frost Valley YMCA Camps

2000 Frost Valley Rd.
Claryville, NY 12725
(845) 985-2291 or www.frostvalley.org

Helen Keller Summer Camp

Farmingdale State University of New York.
(516) 485-1235, ext. 617 or info@helenkeller.org.

Gersh Academy At West Hills Day Camp

150 Broad Hollow Rd., Ste. 120,
Melville, NY 11747
(631) 385-3342 or www.gershacademy.org

JCC Of The Greater Five Towns Camp Friendship

207 Grove Ave.,
Cedarhurst, NY 11516. 5
16-569-6733 or Gayle.fremed@fivetownsjcc.org

Kehilla Vocation Experience

Henry Kaufman Campgrounds,
75 Colonial Springs Rd.
Wheatley Heights, NY 11798
(516) 484-1545 or www.sjjcc.org

Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center Aspire Program

45 Manetto Hill Rd.,
Plainview, NY 11803
(516) 822-3535, X 332 or www.mijjcc.org

My Shine Program

Sweet Hills Riding Center. West Hills Park,
Sweet Hollow Rd.,
Melville, NY 11747
(516) 551-1491 or www.myshineprogram.com

NYU Summer Program For Kids

College of New Rochelle,
New Rochelle, NY
(516) 358-1811 or donofd01@nyumc.org

Our Victory Day Camp

46 Vineyard Lane
Stamford, CT 06902
(203) 329-3394 or www.ourvictory.com

Powerpals Physical Fitness Camp

4 Cedar Swamp Rd.,
Glen Cove, NY 11542.
www.power-pals.com

Ramapo For Children

Rhinebeck Campus
P.O. Box 266 Rt. 52 Salisbury Turnpike
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
(845) 878-8403 or www.ramapoforchildren.org

Summit Camp & Travel

322 Route 46 West, Suite 210
Parsippany, NJ 07054
(800) 323-9908 or www.summitcamp.com

Southampton Fresh Air Home

36 Barkers Island Rd
Southampton NY 11968
(631) 283-5847 or www.sfah.org

Long Island Special Needs

RESOURCE GUIDE

TAPA (Theresa Academy of Performing Arts) for Children with Special Needs

(516) 432-0200 or www.TheresaFoundation.org

CEREBRAL PALSY

United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Suffolk, Inc.

250 Marcus Blvd.
PO Box 18045,
Hauppauge, NY 11788-8845
(631) 232-0011
www.ucp-suffolk.org

Services Provided: Case management, community education, information and referral, residential, vocational/employment

United Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County, Inc.

380 Washington Ave.
Roosevelt, NY 11575
(516) 378-2000
www.ucpn.org

Services Provided: All developmental disabilities

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES

Child Find Program

Suffolk County Department of Health Services
Bureau of Public Health Nursing
PO Box 6100
Hauppauge, NY 11788-0099
(631) 853-3069 (Western Suffolk)
(631) 852-1591 (Eastern Suffolk)

Service Provided: Children under the Age of three, who have significant health problems or need special health care, may be eligible to receive services from a public health nurse.

The nurse will make home visits to provide support, information and training, as well as periodic screening and assessment of infant development. The program is designed to assist families in their care of babies born with health related issues, monitor and/or identify potential growth and learning problems and provide referrals to other support services (including Early Intervention) when appropriate.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Some examples of children who are eligible are: Children who were born after a pregnancy of less than 33 weeks; Children who weighed less than three pounds at birth; children who spent more than 9 days in a neonatal or special care unit; children who exhibit growth and/or developmental problems; and children with special health problems.

Children with Special Health Care Needs Program

Suffolk County Department of Health Services
Division of Services for Children with Special Needs
50 Laser Ct.
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(631) 853-3000

Services Provided: Residents of Suffolk County under the age of 21, with chronic or disabling medical conditions may be eligible for diagnostic and/or treatment services through PHCP. Most children with chronic health problems can obtain a diagnostic evaluation to enable physicians to establish a diagnosis; a qualified family can address care plans for their child which may include surgical procedures, therapies and medications. PHCP may also assist families in securing devices such as braces, wheelchairs, hearing aids and other medical equipment and supplies.

Feel Better Kids

626 RXR Plaza
Uniondale, New York 11556
(866) 257-5437

Services Provided: Feel Better Kids is a not-for-profit children's charity whose primary mission is to help children who are seriously ill or disabled.

Long Island Infant Development Program

Nassau County
2174 Hewlett Ave., Suite 105
Merrick, NY 11566
Suffolk County
15 Smiths Lane
Commack, NY 11725
(516) 546-2333
(631) 300-2333

Services Provided: Early Intervention, Preschool, ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) services from birth through age 5

Nassau County Health Department, Early Intervention Program

106 Charles Lindbergh Blvd.
Uniondale, NY 11553
(516) 227-8661

Services Provided: Information and referral

Other: Point of entry into early intervention services

Nassau Early Childhood Direction Center

Variety Child Learning Center
47 Humphrey Dr.
Syosset, NY 11791
(516) 921-7171 or (800) 933-8779
www.vclc.org

Services Provided: Information and referral, Individual/Case advocacy

Other: Preschool programs, transportation, medical, educational and social services, evaluation and assessment services, parent education programs and resources.

National Center for Disability Services

201 I.U. Willets Rd.
Albertson, NY 11507
(516) 747-5400
www.abilitiesonline.org

Services Provided: Assistive tech/equipment, Case management, community education, future planning, information and referral, individual/case advocacy, legal advocacy, vocational employment.

DOWN SYNDROME

Alexander's Angel's Inc.

425 North Broadway, #486, Jericho, NY 11753
(516) 361-7263
www.alexandersangels.org

Association for Children with Down Syndrome Inc.

4 Fern Place, Plainview, NY 11803
(516) 933-4700
www.ACDS.org

Individuals Served: Down Syndrome, Mental Retardation

Counties Served: Nassau, Suffolk, Kings, Queens
Services Provided: Case management, community education, future planning, information and referral, Individual/Case advocacy, treatment.

Down Syndrome Advocacy Foundation (DSAF)

P.O. Box 12173
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(516) 983-7008
www.dsafonline.org

EPILEPSY

EPIC long Island

Extraordinary People in Care
1500 Hempstead Turnpike
East Meadow, NY 11554
(516) 739-7733
www.efli.org

Serves not only individuals with epilepsy, but also those with developmental disabilities and mental health challenges.

GENERAL

Family and Children Association

180 Broadway, Second Floor, Hicksville
(516) 935-6858
175 Nassau Rd., Roosevelt
(516) 623-1644

510 Hempstead Tpke, Ste. 202
West Hempstead

LDA of Long Island

44 South Elmwood Ave.
Montauk, NY 11954
(631) 688-4858
ldalongisland@yahoo.com

Services Provided: LDANY'S regional affiliates provide a variety of programs and services for children and adults with learning disabilities. Please contact the regional affiliates closest to you for local information and referrals or to find out more about specific services offered.

Services for Children with Special Needs

50 Laser Ct., Hauppauge
(631) 853-3100
www.co.suffolk.ny.us/departments/healthservices/children.aspx

Contact: Liz Corrao

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Long Island Special Needs

RESOURCE GUIDE

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The K.I.S.S. Center (Kids In Special Services)

at the Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center
45 Manetto Hill Rd.,
Plainview, NY
(516) 822-3535
www.miyicc.org

Contact: Joanna M. Diamond, MS. Ed., director

FINE AND CULTURAL ARTS

Art without Walls, Inc.

P.O. Box 341
Satville, New York 11782
(631) 567-9418
www.artwithoutwalls.net
artwithoutwalls3@webtv.net

Services Provided: Art without Walls, Inc. Established in 1985 is an award winning 501c3 NY state arts-health organization that develops original fine art and cultural programs to the disabled community. Art workshops, college portfolios, art therapy, art and cultural trips and exhibitions ages 7-18. Some adult programs are also available.

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Muscular Dystrophy Association

11 East 44th St.,
New York, NY 10017
(212) 682-5272
www.mda.org

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/equipment, case management, community education, future planning, information and referral, legal advocacy, treatment.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Suffolk County Department of Social Services

3085 Veterans Memorial Highway,
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
(631) 854-9930

Services Provided: Services vary by county

Suffolk County Department of Social Services, Family & Children's Services Administration

3455 Veterans Memorial Highway,
Hauppauge, NY 11779
(631) 854-9434

Services Provided: Child protective services, foster care placement

TOURETTE SYNDROME

National Tourette Syndrome Association

42-40 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361-2820
(718) 224-2999
www.tourette-syndrome.com

Services Provided: Community education, information and referral

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Nassau County BOCES Rosemary Kennedy School

2850 N. Jerusalem Rd.,
Wantagh, NY 11793
www.staffet@mail.nasboces.org

(516) 396-2600

Services Provided: Educational services for students with developmental disabilities from age 9-21

The Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County (Nassau BOCES)

Serves the 56 school districts of Nassau County, Long Island, by providing cost-effective shared services, including career training for high school students and adults, special education, alternative schools, technology education, and teacher training, as well as dozens of programs to expand educational opportunity and help districts operate more efficiently.

Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)

NYS Education Dept.
Riverhead office, Plaza 524, East Main St.,
Riverhead, NY 11901
(631) 727-6496

Service Provided: Assistive tech/equipment, community education, information and referral, vocational/employment

Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)

NYS Education Dept.
Hauppauge District Office, NYS Office Building,
250 Veterans Highway,
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(631) 952-6357

Services Provided: Assistive tech/equipment, community education, information and referral, vocational/employment.

New York State Special Education Parent Centers

RESOURCE GUIDE

There are Special Education Parent Centers across New York State. These centers will provide parents of children with disabilities with information, resources, trainings and strategies.

Long Island Parent Center

Center for Community Inclusion
Brentwood Campus, Long Island University
100 Second Ave., Brentwood, NY 11717
(516) 589-4562
<http://www.liparentcenterliu.org>

Covers the following BOCES: Suffolk; Nassau

Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled

27 Smith St., Suite 200, Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 998-3000
<http://www.bcid.org/>

Region served: NYC - Brooklyn

Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc.

The Manhattan Parent Center Without Walls
116 E. 16th St, Fifth floor, New York, NY 10003
(212) 677-4650

<http://www.resourcesnyc.org/content/manhattan>

Region served: NYC - Manhattan

Parent to Parent NY, Inc.

Staten Island Special Education Parent Center
1050 Forest Hill Rd., Staten Island, NY 10314
(718) 494-4872

<http://www.parenttoparentnys.org/Regional/statenisland.htm>

Region served: NYC - Staten Island

Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc.

The Bronx Parent Center Without Walls
116 E. 16th St., Fifth floor, New York, NY 10003
(212) 677-4650

<http://www.resourcesnyc.org/content/bronx>

Region served: NYC - Bronx

United We Stand of New York, LTD

Queens Special Education Parent Center
Mail to: 91 Harrison Ave.
Location: 98 Moore St., Brooklyn, NY 11206
(718) 302-4313

<http://www.meetup.com/QueensSpecialEducationParentCenter/>

Region served: NYC - Queens

The Westchester Institute for Human Development

Cedarwood Hall, Room A106
Valhalla, NY 10595
(914) 493-7665

<http://www.hvsepc.org>

Covers the following BOCES: Dutchess; Orange-Ulster; Putnam-Northern Westchester; Rockland; Southern Westchester; Sullivan; Ulster and Yonkers City School District

See more at: <http://www.parenttoparentnys.org/education/#sthash.Gm8DbPrL.dpuf>

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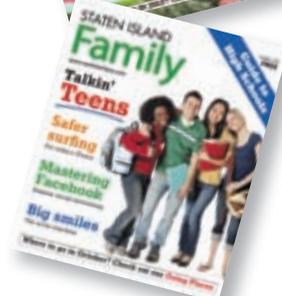
QUEENS
Family



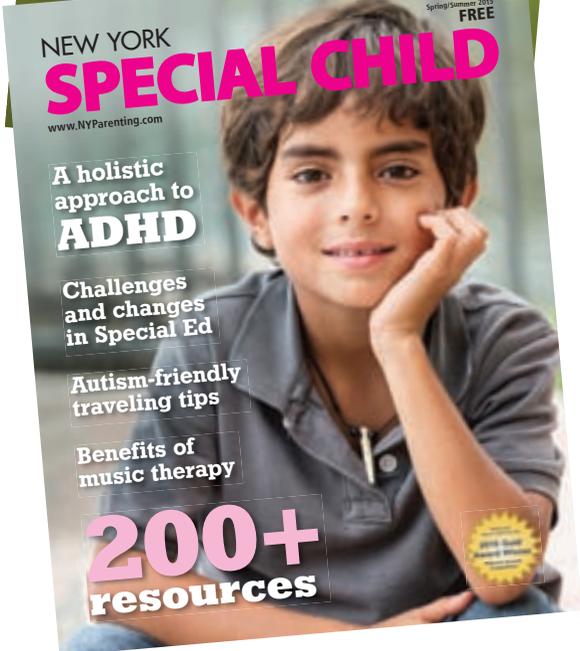
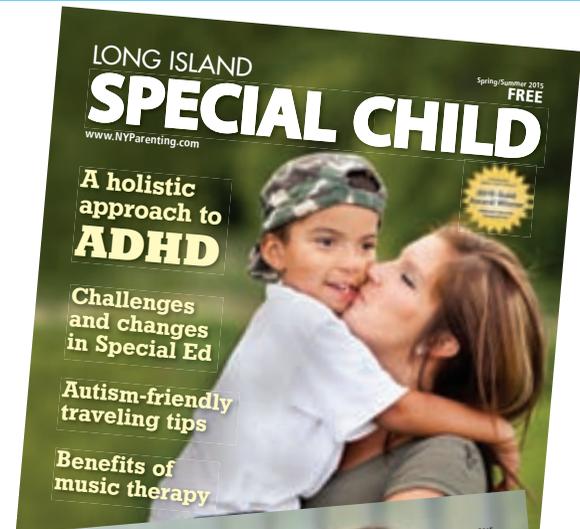
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please call **718.260.4554**
or email family@cnglocal.com



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Check us out!

NYParenting.com

*Where every child matters and
where New York parents find help,
info and support.*



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Dr. Marc Adelberg



Dr. Ericka Montalvan



Dr. Jeanine Pistilli



Dr. Marc Bennet



Dr. Jon Schecter



Dr. Jenny Abraham



Dr. Adam Postel

THREE CONVENIENT LOCATIONS

1000 F Park Boulevard, Massapequa Park, NY 62 Lake Avenue South, Suite A, Nesconset, NY 615 Montauk Highway, West Islip, NY

516.798.1111

631.360.7337

631-661-7337

Please visit us on the web at www.AMPediatricDental.com