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# *Letter from the publisher*

## Once again with pride

Families with *special children* are in need of information and support, and each time we go to print with a new issue of this magazine, we beam with pride and satisfaction in knowing that we are doing a worthwhile effort in an important niche. Helping people feels good.

Wonderful writers contribute informative pieces that we know are making a difference for our readers. Rebecca McKee, Tammy Scileppi, Jenny Chen, Kiki Bochi, Jamie Lober, and Sharon Peters are regular writers who work with us in our other magazines as well. Special thanks to Joyce Mullen, Dr. Christine Manzella, Monica Holloway, Gary Shulman, and Geri Leah Ness for caring enough to share their expertise with us in this issue.

We have run articles before about special needs children and pets. Why? Because the verdict is in and all the studies have shown that the presence of pets in a home make everyone happier. Naturally, this would translate into a reality for children with special needs. Animal-assisted intervention is becoming more established and moving forward we will undoubtedly be seeing more examples of its positive role. If you want to access past articles we've run on this or any other topic, please go to our website, [www.NYPARENTING.com](http://www.NYPARENTING.com), choose the magazine section, and then select the archives.

So many fine people throughout New York provide services, education, therapy, support, and health care for children on the spectrum. You need to know who they are and how you can contact them. That's the

point of our endeavor, to make sure you do. Connecting families with the care and attention they need to manage the daunting role of being a special needs parent is our goal.

Be sure to read Dr. Christine Manzella's piece about the complex emotions parents experience in caring for their special needs child. Dr. Manzella point out the complicated feelings of grief that emerge and how *you* can manage to cope with the process.

We continue to get positive feedback from those of you who have signed on to have this magazine mailed directly to your home, or those of you who have picked it up in your local library or special education program or therapy center.

Please let us know if you want us to set up distribution for a particular program and tell other parents about it.

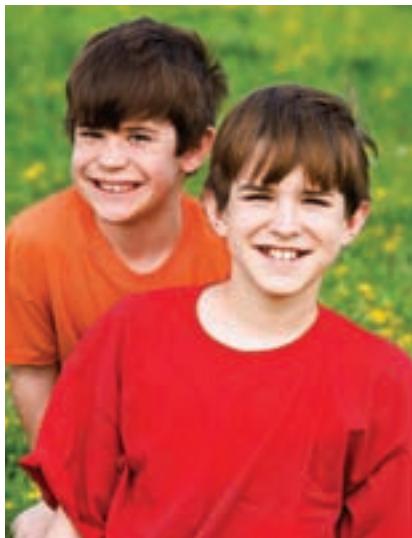
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When we began this magazine in 2007, we were so excited. We formed writer relationships, set up distribution, and now it's a regular bi-annual magazine with years of experience behind us. Thank you to our readers for your loyalty and for your support to us.



Susan Weiss-Voskidis  
Publisher/Executive Editor  
[Family@cnglocal.com](mailto:Family@cnglocal.com)

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# Twice exceptional

## When a child's learning disabilities are paired with a very high IQ

BY JENNY CHEN

**W**hen Bernadette Slowey's son, Nick, was in third grade, his teacher told her that she might consider cognitive testing for her son. He was struggling with his reading, but his teacher knew that Nick was an exceptionally bright child. As Nick progressed in school, he began getting frustrated with his differences in learning and teachers began reporting behavioral problems. It wasn't until fifth grade that Nick was tested and diagnosed as twice exceptional, with both dyslexia and dysgraphia, and above-average intellect.

The case of Nick Slowey is becoming increasingly common, as educators and psychologists become more aware of the possibilities for both learning disabilities and giftedness to exist within one child.

Dawn Beckley of the University of Connecticut wrote in her article, "Gifted and Learning Disabled: Twice Exceptional Students," that "twice-exceptional students are atypical learners who are often characterized as smart students with school problems. These students assume that learning tasks will be easy for them and are not prepared for the difficulty that arises from activities in areas of their disability."

Beckley also noted that the disconnect between intelligence and learning differences often leads to frustration, tension, and fear that eventually becomes defensiveness. Because of this frustration, these students

often tend to be aggressive, careless, and frequently off-task.

Slowey says, that, unfortunately, most schools are not equipped to deal with this.

"Schools think you're either special ed, or you're gifted — there's no room for both," she said. "With a dual diagnosis, the needs are double. You have to address both components — the differences in grasping the concept, but also the fact that students may learn quickly and get bored with the material easily."

On the other hand, with the increase in awareness of double diagnosis, there has also been more research into how best to support students with these learning differences.

Shirael Pollack, owner and director of Watch Me Grow, a sensory gym and speech language center in New York City, says that her teams takes a holistic approach to helping students succeed in the classroom. Each student works with several different professionals trained in different aspects of development, including occupational therapists, speech therapists, etc.

"Many of the students we see have ADHD or autism and can be extremely bright children, but they might have difficulty integrating their different senses," Shirael said.

For example, a student who hasn't fully developed tracking skills with his eyes may have trouble reading. A student who is hav-





ing trouble with her auditory sense may have trouble paying attention and require exercises in therapeutic listening. Another example includes correcting the posture of a student to correct his handwriting.

Vita Nemirovsky is a former special education teacher who also advocates looking at the whole child when helping any student, but especially those with dual diagnoses.

"You need to look at a child's strengths, whether they are gifted or not," Nemirovsky said. These strengths will help parents and educators better help a child develop. For example, if a child enjoys playing sports and being active, more experiential learning may help the student retain information better. However, Nemirovsky also cautions against ignoring the learning difficulties a child may face.

"As bright as they are, they need support," she said.

"Just because they are being labeled as gifted doesn't mean it's a green card. Parents need to under-

stand that on the day-to-day, as their child is faced with challenges."

Nemirovsky emphasizes the difference between a child's ability to perform an activity versus whether or not he will actually perform it.

"For example, you may tell your child to clean their room and they say they will, but half an hour later, they're distracted with something else. We need to change the focus from 'can they' to 'will they?'" Nemirovsky said.

She advocates working on the learning disability first so that the "giftedness can shine through."

Across the board, experts agree that the most important component to helping a child with a dual diagnosis succeed is unconditional support from parents. This kind of support might be difficult to give all the time, Slowey said, especially when the parent feels that there is a negative stigma associated with their child having learning disabilities.

"There seems to be a sense of failure associated with having a child with learning differences," said Slowey.

However, parental support is one of the most important things to a child who may be struggling academically and socially. Because most public schools, and even some private schools, are unaware of the specific needs of each child, parents can be a child's only and most important advocate.

Slowey says that the most valuable lesson she learned while parenting her two twice exceptional children was actually about herself. The half Vietnamese-American initially started out in the banking industry, but she left in 2009 to produce an independent film about personal discovery and spiritual journeys through India. She admits that the journey has been tough, and often lonely. She recommends that parents reach out to other parents with dual-diagnosed children. She also recommends parents get involved in their children's schools as much as possible, and build a support network within their community.

"If you could understand your children, you could understand yourself," Slowey said. "It really forces you to look in the mirror."

*Jenny Chen is a freelance writer specializing in education and parenting. She has written for Washington Parent and Mothering Magazine.*

#### **Resources:**

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted.

National Association for Gifted Children Special Populations Network.

Council for Exceptional Students.

Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students.

# Understanding AUTISM

BY MARINA FAYGENBAUM

**A**utism — the numbers are high, and we are consistently hearing about it. The neighbors are talking about it, as are the doctors, the schools, and the media. But what exactly is it? In short, autism, or autism spectrum disorder, is a spectrum disorder that is on a continuum. It ranges in severity and exhibited symptoms.

The term describes a disorder characterized by a variety of impairment within areas of development. The Autism Society of America defines autism as "a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills."

Children, as well as adults, with autism generally have trouble with social interactions, leisure or play activities, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication abilities. Many cases include poor communication skills, affecting both speech and language; in turn, interfering with the ability to express needs and desires, resulting in the use of gestures and alternative communication means.

Autism is a spectrum disorder, suggesting that every individual is affected differently and that two children both diagnosed with autism can behave completely different from each other. Early diagnosis is critical, and learning the signs of autism can give way to many beneficial intervention programs for children.

Autism varies greatly between individuals, but it can still be defined by certain behaviors. Children, as well as adults, can have any combination of the characteristics listed below. There are several behaviors that signal the need for further evaluation. For instance,

does the child babble or coo by 12 months? Are there gestures like waving or pointing by 12 months? Are single words produced by 16 months? Are two-word phrases produced on their own by 24 months? Has there been any type of language or social loss at any age? These are crucial milestones in language development, and difficulty meeting these stages in speech and language may suggest early signs of autism.

Characteristics include but are not limited to:

- Fixation on inanimate objects
  - Impairment in social interaction
  - Inability to communicate normally
  - Resistance in changes to daily routine
  - Little or no eye contact
  - Echolalia — repetition of words or phrases
  - Unmotivated tantrums — laughing or crying for no apparent reason, and showing distress for reasons not apparent to others
  - Inability to express needs verbally, using gestures or pointing instead of words
  - Apparent over-sensitivity or under-sensitivity to pain
  - No real fears of danger
  - Aggressive or self-injurious behavior
  - Preference to being alone; aloof manner
  - Tantrums
  - Difficulty mixing with others
  - Not wanting to cuddle or be cuddled
  - Unresponsive to normal teaching methods
  - Sustained odd play
  - Spinning objects
  - Obsessive attachment to objects
  - Noticeable physical over-activity or extreme under-activity
  - Uneven gross or fine-motor skills
  - Non responsive to verbal cues; acts as if deaf, although hearing tests are in normal range.
- Autism in and of itself is a very large topic that is continuously being looked at and discussed. With each day, we acquire more and more knowledge in terms of assessment, treatment, and support. We do not have a concrete answer as to what causes autism, but we do have great tools and resources for both the individuals with autism and their families.
- Marina Faygenbaum is a bilingual speech-language pathologist and teacher of speech and language disabilities with a Master of Science and a Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech Language Pathology.*



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# A sneak peek inside a child therapist's office

BY GERI LEAH NESS

**Y**our 4 year old just cannot master toilet training even though you have read the books and followed all the instructions. Your 5 year old has been very aggressive at preschool and kindergarten, hitting other kids, and the teachers are complaining. Your 6 year old is struggling to keep up with the other students in learning the new skills taught and expected in first grade.

These are all issues that bring children into the offices of child therapists, sometimes at the urging of the teachers or the pediatricians, and sometimes just from the parents' own frustrations.

Since visiting a therapist is a new experience for most people, it can be a bit scary to start this process without knowing much about how it all works. As a child therapist with 20 years in the field, it is one of my first tasks to help the parents feel comfortable with bringing their children to see me.

If you are finding yourself in any of these situations and are thinking about taking your child to a therapist, then perhaps a "sneak peek" inside a therapist's office would be helpful to you.

Along with the usual couch (and chairs) found in an adult therapist's office, a child therapist's office will also have a lot of toys, games, dolls, and art supplies. This is because child therapists firmly believe that "play is the language of children." Children communicate differently from adults and use the play material to express what's on their minds. They use the play material in what we call "symbolic play," which is how feelings they might not even be aware of can be expressed. They play out themes that reflect what is going on in their lives and with the therapist's help, mastery can be gained over difficult, painful, and sometimes even scary aspects of their lives.

The therapist directly observes and participates in the play with the child. Our job is to create a comfortable, non-judgmen-



tal environment so the child will feel safe enough to freely communicate his worries and concerns. And although limits are set so no one gets hurt, we want the child to play without having to worry about being messy or criticized.

An example of how this works includes a girl who was in foster care and who in the therapy room used the dolls to express some of her deepest feelings and worries. At the child's prompting, the therapist was instructed to "give birth" to many babies who, after they were born, were usually treated harshly and thrown away by the child. The play reflected her feelings that this is how she had been treated. Allowing the young patient to have a safe space to express these painful feelings was very healing and helped her to begin to master and overcome the difficulties in her life.

Another example of child therapy involved a boy past the usual age for toilet training who very obstinately refused to use the toilet for bowel movements. In the therapy room this boy used the play to show me his inner world and created a character that we had to run and hide from while it piled up lots of dirt around the room. After many months of playing this game and confronting this scary character, the boy eventually

mastered the use of the toilet and became less afraid of many other activities he had avoided as well.

Some children use the play in other ways. Older children who feel like they never win in life or get to be successful frequently gravitate to the board games to show me what it feels like to always be on the losing side. It is not uncommon that no one in their lives helps them to win or to feel like they are a winner. In the therapy room, I try to create the environment where both of these things are possible and work towards improving the child's skills and self-esteem.

In order to accomplish real change for the children, in addition to the play therapy, it is important that the parents are part of the treatment. The therapist meets separately, but regularly, with the parents so she can learn more about their child's history and current living situation. This helps the therapist to better understand what the child is trying to communicate in the play. Work is also done towards helping parents better understand and relate to their children. If parents are flexible and amenable to understanding their role in their children's difficulties, then the work can be even more productive and successful. This can be hard, but is an important aspect of the treatment.

Play therapy can produce long-term change. Children need a safe, comfortable, non-judgmental atmosphere if they are going to reveal their innermost selves. This is the most important part of the work and in this aspect is no different from what is needed for therapy patients of all ages.

I hope that this peek into a child therapist's office will make it easier for struggling parents to feel less trepidation in seeking out a child therapist if and when the need arises.

*Geri Leah Ness has her master's degree in social work and practices as a psychotherapist in Park Slope. She sees children, adolescents, and adults in her private practice.*



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# The social network

## For autistic children, interpersonal relationships at school offer opportunities — and challenges

BY REBECCA MCKEE

**I**t's a brand new school year, fresh with clean paper, sharpened pencils, new teachers, and unfamiliar faces of children sitting in classrooms. At least, these faces may seem unfamiliar to those students living with autism spectrum disorder. After all, it is a different setting — a new room with a new number of students and a teacher with new features and a new name. All of this leads us to taking the time to help these students learn how to navigate the

unwritten social rules in this brand-new classroom.

Review, reiteration, and role-play are important ingredients to assisting a person with autism spectrum disorder feel comfortable and independent in social interactions. The family members of a child, who lacks spontaneous speech, may have pragmatic language on the top of their list of goals to achieve each school year, but we need to be sensitive to the responsibilities of the teachers and teaching assistants. Within those classroom walls, there is the teaching of

academics to average, above-average, and below-average learners, as well as those who have English as a second language, those who have special needs, and those who learn best visually, using the sense of hearing or through a multi-sensory approach. Now we have to add in those children who have conduct and behavioral challenges that need to be addressed in a scheduled, proactive fashion. And, as another addition to making a whole child, social skills are crucial for all to learn and practice, but they are mandatory for children living with autism or other social

Social skills are crucial for all to learn and practice, but they are mandatory for children living with autism or other social communication disorder.

communication disorder.

So, how can we implement these social goals into a new school year? How can we help these students with autism, or similar social needs, assimilate seamlessly with their new classmates and establish school-based friendships? Take small, simple steps to achieve greater goals.

**Suggestions for promoting a fresh social start this new school year**

- With permission, the staff takes photos of happy social moments during the school day. Each week, families get copies of the photos. Families of children with autism (or any families who can benefit from this activity) will create photo albums with the child. These can be used to help your child re-live past memories of social interactions with peers that were positive. Language can be elicited. First names of classmates can label faces — if using names is an area of uncertainty among other parents in the class, simply be a messenger of awareness and sensitivity.

Most children with ASD will complete an entire year of school and not be aware of most names of their classmates. This is simply a teaching tool so that he or she can know your child's name when we see you out in the community.

- When you receive the class photo after picture day, label the students with their names at home. Cover the names and play "I spy." Say, "I spy Mary," and then your child will point to his classmate Mary.

- Teachers sometimes struggle to find a "job" for a child with language-processing needs. Tap into his visual, quiet side. One job for him is to

return tests or homework (he won't gossip about anyone's grade, for one thing!) and he can practice visually scanning for the name and face. During this activity, have the teaching assistant help only if the child hesitates for 25 seconds or more — give him time to process and try. This is also a social interaction with peers.

- Have the student with a social communication disorder be the person who collects the information during the morning routine. When the students provide information on what lunch they are buying, this student can be the contact person who tallies up the totals. Everyone loves the guy or girl who is in charge of the lunch order!

- If technology is allowed in your school, then utilize it. With permission, maybe the speech language pathologist can support pragmatics through your child text messaging his family and friends some highlights of the school day. Text messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and e-mail are all dreams come true for a person who struggles with some social phobias.

Families and home teams can schedule a team meeting with school during that first month of September. During this discussion, make social and behavioral topics the priority, investigate what games are played during recess, what snack time and lunch time looks like, ask questions about group work and line walking in the hallway, and learn about the restroom procedure. Basically, get as much information about the socio-behavioral goings-on, so that your child can review and role-play at home. Have a happy school year!

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# Good feedback

## Building positive behavioral supports with your kids

BY REBECCA MCKEE

**I**t's nice to feel happy and to smile. It feels good when we are experiencing tranquil moods. Positivity creates all-good moments. Positive behavior supports equals eliminating challenging behaviors and replacing them with pro-social alternatives. Each family, classroom, and work space benefits from building positive behavioral supports. Here are some tips to help teach your little one.

Try mixing positive verbal language with responsive language. Notice the difference between "stop whining" versus "let's practice using a kindergarten voice with sentences when we talk." Immediately follow-up with role play — and have fun! One family member can be "the whiner" and another can be "a super talker."

Reinforce appropriate behaviors as you catch them. Just as you schedule time to read aloud with your children at bedtime, pencil in time when parental focus will lie on reinforcing the right behaviors. During these moments, catch them while they are being good. These rituals will strengthen your skills as a parent establishing positive behavioral supports, as well as providing time for your children to practice making the right choices.

Positive reinforcement is adding something or someone to a situation to increase desired behavior. These reinforcers can be social (smiles, thumbs-up), active (spending extra time together), and tangible (stickers, allowance). Negative reinforcement is simply removing something or someone from a situation to increase desired behavior. This may include being allowed to exit the dinner table early for polite manners.

Try to be specific when reinforcing behaviors by labeling exactly what you are happy with. A behavior-specific phrase may sound like this: "you were so calm and quiet in church today, nice job." This style of speech will begin to flow off your tongue as positive behavioral supports flourish.

Every child thrives on structure and rules. A life lesson to learn at an early age is when important rules are broken, consequences occur. Keep punishment simple and specific. Punishment is either positive or negative; you can add or remove some-



thing or someone to decrease undesirable behavior.

Rules to follow at home work best when written in positive language. A rule may appear on the kitchen blackboard as, "When I am told 'no' I will stay calm and say 'okay, maybe we can talk about it tomorrow.'" If a consequence was to be given, it can be

spoken as, "Right now you are screaming because I told you 'no;' the TV will be OFF until after dinner. Let me know when you are feeling calm."

When we build habits, we rehearse to create synchronicity and behavioral momentum. Practice makes perfect. Positivity becomes contagious.



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# Getting a grip on adolescent anger

BY JOYCE MULLEN

**K**evin is a pretty typical 13-year-old boy. He likes baseball, plays the piano, and wishes he had a Rottweiler. But, Kevin's mom noticed that he had socialization issues and became angry quickly, with frequent outbursts and tantrums. He was impatient with his younger brothers, uncooperative around the house, and disconnected from his classmates.

Kevin's teachers reported that he was distracted, depressed, and inattentive in school, resulting in poor grades and an unwillingness to participate in class. His mom tried to get through to him, but Kevin kept his emotions bottled up until he reached his own breaking point. Then he'd explode with angry outbursts — throwing or punching things. His behavior was impacting the well-being of his family and was particularly hard on his siblings, who wanted to look up to their older brother. His mom sought medical advice and Kevin was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, a lifelong condition that can affect both how a person feels and how acts.

Bipolar disorder is a mood disorder thought to be caused by chemical imbalances in the brain, which can result in extreme swings in mood — from manic highs to depressive lows. Treatment includes medication and therapy, as well as creating an individualized, healthy living plan that encourages regular sleep, healthy meals, exercise, and stress reduction techniques.

## Finding help

Under a doctor's care, Kevin started to show improvements, but his mom wanted him to learn to open up more and to understand his particular needs. She also thought it would be beneficial for him to understand that there are other kids like him who have learned to deal with their challenges in a



healthy and constructive way. Kevin began attending group and individual skill-building activities one hour each week with Family and Children's Association's Home and Community-Based Services in Hempstead. During these sessions he established goals for himself to control his anger, and have more patience and spend more time with his brothers, ages 6 and 8.

It was hard at first to commit to the program because Kevin was so unaccustomed to talking about his feelings. He got emotional when he tried to express how he felt and that made him uncomfortable. Then, slowly, he started to feel things change.

"Slowly, my anger retreated and I started to feel happier," says Kevin. "I got along better with my brothers who were also doing skill-building exercises to help them understand why I felt the way I did and how to cope with me."

Kevin's mom also saw the changes and felt relieved that the stress at home was dissipating, and Kevin was bringing home

much better grades. By including siblings in Kevin's care, the entire family was able to work toward improving their home life and everyone benefited from the process. Family meals became more enjoyable, the brothers were able to play well together and learn from each other, and family life was slowly becoming healthier and more positive.

## The importance of school involvement

Kevin's counselors felt that his school environment could be improved, so they recommended a transfer to a Therapeutic Support Program at Eagle Avenue School in Hempstead. There, Kevin could flourish within an individualized and supportive environment.

Even after transitioning to a new school, Kevin continued with his individual and group counseling sessions before moving to a stepped-down program for on-going support. He continues to work on increasing positive relationships in his life, including getting along better with his brothers and parents, as well as making new friends. He is also keeping up with his success in school — he is on the travel baseball team, was named student of the month, and is studying hard to realize his dream of becoming an architect.

Getting a grip on his anger was just the beginning for Kevin. He has the rest of his life to realize all his hopes and dreams, with his family at his side.

## Resources for parents:

- National Alliance on Mental Illness: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
- Family and Children's Association: [www.familyandchildrens.org/Home-Community-Based-Services](http://www.familyandchildrens.org/Home-Community-Based-Services)

*Joyce Mullen is a freelance writer and publicist who directs communications projects for Family and Children's Association, the Executive Women's Golf Association, and other organizations on Long Island.*

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# Maximizing your child's ADHD greatness

## Groundbreaking app helps families find students' strengths

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**F**itting in at school is a really big deal, especially if you're a kid with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder or attention-deficit disorder. Biologically based research shows that the disorder occurs in children, teens, and adults because of an imbalance of chemical messengers, or neurotransmitters in the brain, causing symptoms that include inattention, impulsiveness, and sometimes, hyperactivity.

People with the disorder typically have difficulty with some aspects of daily life: getting homework done, focusing in school, time management, and organizational skills.

So it's crucial that enlightened parents, caregivers, and teachers work out a system whereby everybody is on the same page. This will ensure that your child's "greatness" is maximized, according to interna-

tionally renowned child and adult expert, author, and speaker, Dr. Kevin Ross Emery.

For more than two decades, he has offered an approach to the condition that reveals it as a gift that, when properly managed, contains the potential for remarkable multitasking skills, creativity, and more.

Since there's no instruction manual for parenting, navigating the baffling symptoms and nuances of the disorder is a bit like trying to solve a psychological mystery. You probably have, "I can't take it anymore!" days (like most parents), where you're pulling your hair out in frustration and shouting, "I give up!"

Now there's a game-changing app on the market that provides real, everyday advice and valuable tips on dealing with and tackling the disorder head on, while teaching you how to help your bright, specially gifted child, adolescent, or teen do better in school

and manage tasks at home (so you can stay sane, and he can learn and be happy). As you gradually find out what makes 'em tick, you (and, hopefully, your youngster's teacher) will understand how to best parent, guide, support, feed, and educate your child — without losing your cool.

### About the app

The ground-breaking Managing the Gift app is designed to unwrap your "gifted child," whose positive traits and abilities often get masked by attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and attention-deficit disorder. It provides comprehensive and unbiased insight into the workings of your child's brain, thanks to pioneering research done by its developer, Emery.

"First, recognize that it's not a disorder, but an evolutionary process that functions differently than what we are used to, and that

## Parenting the child with ADHD or ADD

According to Dr. Kevin Ross Emery, the "gifts" of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and attention-deficit disorder are:

- Intelligence
- Ability to hyper-focus
- Increased sensory input
- Creativity
- Think differently, making for better problem solvers and inventors
- Sense of justice
- Innocence
- Ability to manage emotions
- Loves to learn
- Loves to teach
- Natural born rebels
- Increased psychic abilities

• • •

Emery's best parenting style to manage kids and teens with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and attention-deficit disorder:

- Parenting should be action and conse-

quence based.

- Include the child in the decision-making process.
- Empower the child to advocate for themselves.
- Use critical thinking skills with the child to reach decisions.
- Utilize the unique organizational, time management, and homework models based on their shade.
- Advocate with your child when school systems or other family members want to disable or enable them because of the label.

Fact: Did you know that overly strict parenting — which may involve punishing your child for things he can't control — can actually make attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder symptoms worse?

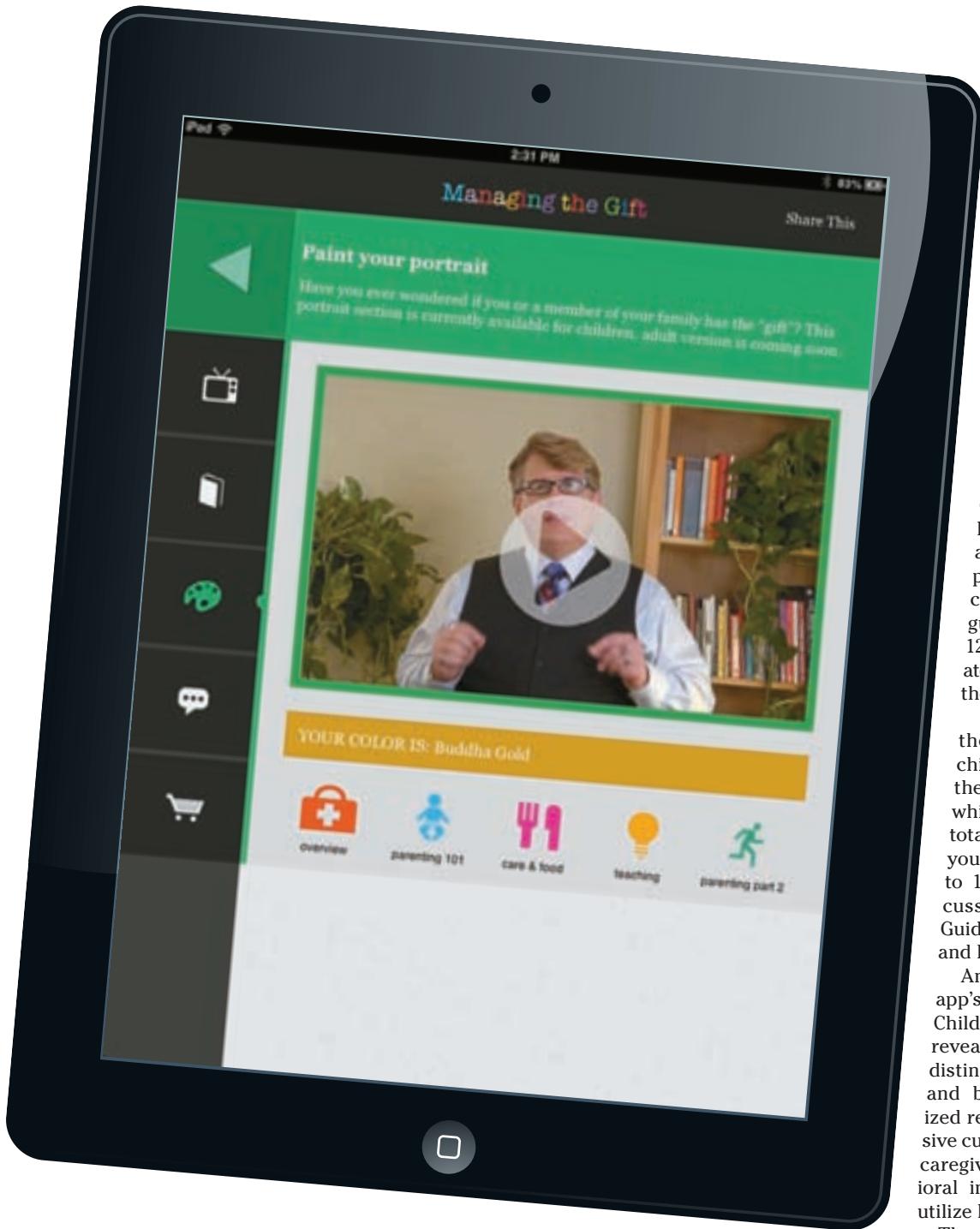
And, it's not a lack of discipline, but rather brain chemistry that's responsible

for bad behavior in your child, who may blurt things out at the wrong time, or cause mischief in class. It's just that he cannot control his impulses.

"Those who face criticism from parents, teachers, and others for perceived laziness and bad behavior may face a lifetime of emotional problems," warns Emery. "In addition, the loss of this population's insights, brilliance, and creativity — their greatness — is all too often sacrificed in order to help them 'fit in' to society. We as a culture need to celebrate and nurture those living with ADD-HD as they are, so that they can, in turn, love and respect themselves and realize their full capabilities — to the benefit of us all."

"It is time to acknowledge that these people have many gifts and insights that can help us move more clearly into the 21st century. They possess a kind of intelligence that allows them to go where we have never gone before."





these individuals don't have a disability but a diff-ability," said Emery. "They learn and process information and the world around them differently. Understanding that, in and of itself, makes a huge difference.

"Also, there are insights (in the app), as to dietary shifts that can be made, as well as ways of communicating with your child, both of which will garner better results."

## How it works

The content and tools in this unique app are the result of Emery's 15-plus years of

front-line attention-deficit disorder counseling experience, working with individuals of all ages, coupled with extensive field research for his books, "Managing the Gift of your ADD/HD Child" and "Managing the Gift: Alternative Approaches to Attention Deficit Disorder."

Unlike other apps currently on the market that are merely self-diagnostic or generalized surface-level advice in nature, this first-of-its-kind app has a feature that offers highly detailed, custom-tailored reports for each child, helping the user find his true

potential.

So how does it help teens find their way in a complicated, competitive world?

"With more self-awareness, better abilities to advocate for themselves, and management of the ways in which their gifts can work against them, how could it not?"

The app works by accessing highly detailed, custom-tailored reports based on user inputs (as explained by Emery):

In the "Paint Your Child's Portrait" section, hit "create the account" and then decide which report option you wish to purchase. The user will then be guided through a series of 12 questions, which will create a unique report based on those answers.

Once you have completed the questionnaire, your child is assigned a shade on the "Dr. Kevin rainbow," of which there are 64 shades total. With that assignment, you get a report that is 17 to 19 pages long, which discusses Parenting, Teaching, Guiding, Supporting, and Care and Feeding.

Among other features, the app's personalized "Paint Your Child's Portrait" interactive tool reveals and defines a child's distinct "ADD-HD personality," and based on the individualized results, provides an expansive custom report that provides caregivers with valuable behavioral insights to recognize and utilize his strengths.

The information gleaned from the custom-tailored reports also helps caregivers make critical decisions about diet, guidance, and other common areas of concern and confusion, while also providing tools and techniques to help ensure the child flourishes amid the unique capabilities and aptitudes identified through the app.

The Managing the Gift app also offers direct access to informative instructional videos, books, and other highly vetted caregiver resources, as well as relevant news

*Continued on page 20*

and information feeds about attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

App users will also be the first to gain access to Emery's peer support community when it is launched later this year, which will include streamlined access to the doctor.

The app itself is free, but the optional "Paint Your Child's Portrait" reports are offered through the app for an additional nominal fee. Managing the Gift app is compatible with any iPhone, iPad, or iPod Touch with iOS 5.1 or greater and is available in the iTunes Store. Once you open it, hit the "tour" button and you will be well on your way!

### **Getting teachers involved**

Your child's individualized report can be shared with his teacher so everyone supporting your child knows his strengths and how to help him succeed.

"Either parents will have teachers that want to be involved; who would take something like the teaching section of the report in the app and run with it, because it gives them such a head start in who your child is, and how they need to be educated, or they don't," said Emery.

Fact: The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires public schools to address the special needs of all children with disabilities, including children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Special accommodations, such as extra time on tests, level the playing field so that these students can learn as successfully as their classmates.

### **About Emery**

Emery, who currently lives in Phoenix, Ariz., has first-hand knowledge of attention-deficit disorder and a lifetime of personal experience dealing with it himself.

"Papa understood me, my mother loved me, and my stepfather struggled with me. I was a highly energetic, intelligent, and creative child who was very psychic and very opinionated. I loved openly, did not suffer fools well, and challenged everything. There was one attempt to put me in a slow class, until Papa proved that the problem wasn't I was a slow child, but that I didn't have a teacher who knew how to teach a really bright one!"

Emery was among the very first to publicly acknowledge attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and attention-deficit disorder as a step in the evolution of



humanity that will eventually allow it to reach new levels of achievement — a view often at odds with a culture that can be quick to resort to medicating children who show signs of it.

"I see this as part of an evolutionary process that broadens the bandwidth of humanity, which we should celebrate, rather than stifle. I see that there are a number of factors that exacerbate the gift [and turn it into] a curse," said Emery. "From that perspective, if someone's foot is hurting, because the shoe is too small or because there is a pebble in it, do we really need to be prescribed oxycodone or do we get the right size shoe and take the pebble out?

"However well intended, society's collective attempts to medically treat and otherwise manage ADD-HD individuals often negatively impacts their self-worth and self-esteem and significantly hinders their ability to reach their full potential. Indeed, the stakes are high when it comes to finding a successful treatment plan."

Here, Emery describes a young man he worked with, the summer between his seventh and eighth grade years.

"He was barely passing, on drugs for ADD-HD, constantly in trouble at home for not doing things, was constantly getting detentions — some leading to suspensions. Over the summer, I got the family to change the diet, explained to the child

"However well intended, society's collective attempts to medically treat and otherwise manage ADD-HD individuals often negatively impacts their self-worth and self-esteem and significantly hinders their ability to reach their full potential. Indeed, the stakes are high when it comes to finding a successful treatment plan."

and parents better ways to see language and understand things. Explained to him how he needed to be taught, receive information. I told him, 'I am going to teach you how to teach them how to teach you, because they don't know how.'

"He entered his eighth grade year, medication-free and graduated his eighth grade class, top of his class and captain of his football team. He never went back on medication, graduated high school with honors, went ROTC and became an officer in the military. He looked me up last year to thank me for the life he had, the way he understood himself and the things he accomplished."

• • •

Emery's new-age philosophy centers on celebrating and nurturing children (and adults) living with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and a attention-deficit disorder, while turning negatives into positives. Hopefully, new attitudes will emerge, changing how these disorders may be perceived.

"The first step in understanding ADHD and ADD is knowing that they are simply labels, which are not meant to define or limit a child in any way," urges Emery. "Rather, the Managing the Gift app will give caregivers the knowledge and tools needed to truly comprehend the gifts — not the label — given to a child living with this diagnosis."

*Learn more at [www.MyDrKevin.com](http://www.MyDrKevin.com).*

*As with any medical issue, those concerned about the diagnosis, treatment, or management of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder or attention-deficit disorder are encouraged to speak to their physicians.*



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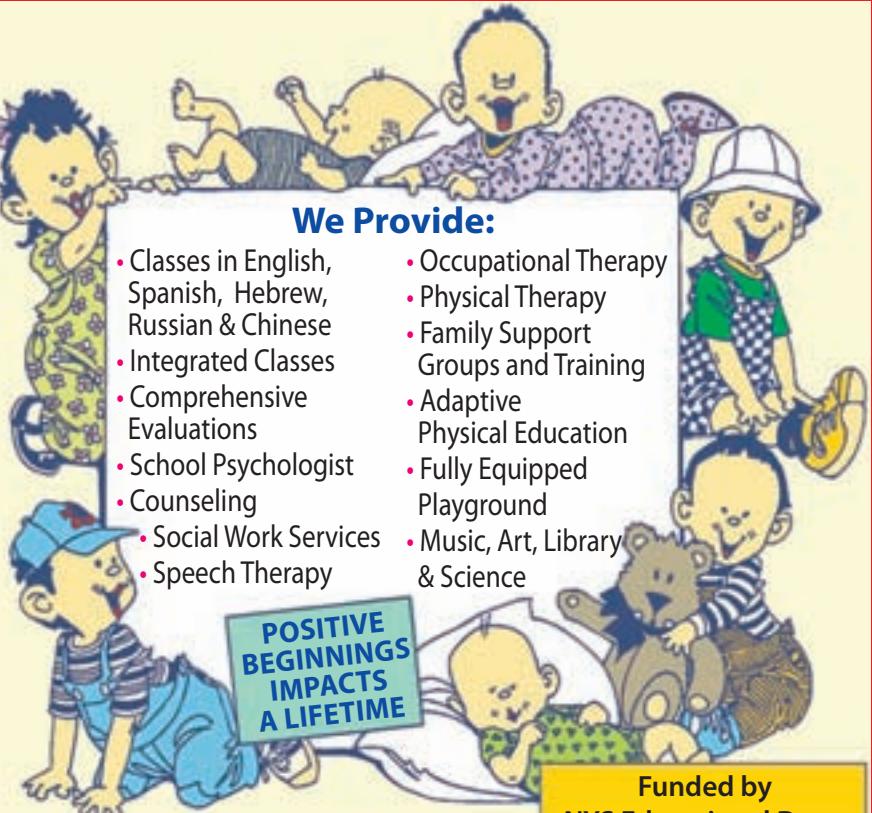
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# Tips for play dates for children with autism

BY MONICA HOLLOWAY

Inclusion of children with special needs can promote good understanding, awareness, and acceptance for all involved. We must encourage after-school play dates with peers as an opportunity for interaction and socialization for those with autism. Here are some tips, with help from recent articles by Autism Speaks and ABC News:

- Build skills. Help your child to develop a set of play skills. Can your child play nicely in parallel or engage with sensory toys? These are building blocks of first play dates.

- Practice with adults. Use role playing to teach playdate activities to your child.

- Find a good fit. Set up playdates with children who have similar interests to your child, and who have play skills around the

developmental level of your child, even if they are a different chronological age. Choose a playmate who is patient and kind.

- Make a visual schedule. Draw or write out the structure of the playdate in advance, considering activities in which the kids will need to play together, nearby, or in cooperation, and include activities that all participants will enjoy.

- Keep it short. Keep the activity to about 30 minutes to start, and then add time once the playdates seem successful and are ready to be longer.

- Positive reinforcement. If your child is having a positive interaction, use reinforcements such as praise or a treat to reward the good behavior. If your child needs a reminder to share or play by the rules, provide coaching and encourage cooperation.

- Don't give up! It can be difficult at times, continue this process, and I believe you will

see progress, as well as better social skills, from your child's interaction with peers.

Through playdates, my son, Wills, developed building blocks for many life skills, including forming strong bonds with peers. Playdates weren't always easy for him, but through preparation and organization, we learned to make those types of interactions successful, positive and meaningful for all involved.

Monica Holloway is the bestselling author of "Cowboy & Wills," about a puppy that helped her disabled son Wills. She is also a Mother's Choice Award's Gold recipient, and the critically acclaimed author of the memoir "Driving With Dead People." Holloway lives with her son and husband in California. Visit her at [www.monica'holloway.com](http://www.monica'holloway.com) and [twitter.com/monica\\_holloway](http://twitter.com/monica_holloway). Learn more about her son at [www.facebook.com/cowboyandwills](http://www.facebook.com/cowboyandwills) and [www.cowboyandwills.com](http://www.cowboyandwills.com).

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# All fur love

## Benefits of pet ownership for children with special needs

BY JAMIE LOBER

**H**aving a furry friend in your family can do a whole lot of good and can offer some extra perks if you have a child with special needs. Parents may think that owning a pet entails unwanted, added expenses and means having another family member to pick up after, but that is far from the whole truth. In the majority of cases, the benefits are grand—especially for kids with special needs.

When deciding whether to add a four-legged friend to your family, remember that you know your child best, and the decision should take a lot of factors into consideration, including your family's interest in having the addition, as well as whether it can be emotionally, socially, and psychologically redeeming.

"For any child, there are pros and cons to owning a pet, and the family has to consider the in-

creased responsibilities and workload that the pet brings into the household and the temperament of the pet," said Dr. Susan Gottlie, chief of child development at New York Methodist Hospital.

Talk to your child before welcoming a furry friend in your home. Just as each child has his own unique personality, each pet acts differently as well.

"If a child does not understand that you cannot take the dog's food away, the dog will be upset, and that is a problem, because he could lash out at the child," said Gottlie.

The pet is going to be one more family member who requires additional time and care, so you want to be sure you can give him the compassion that he deserves.

"I think getting a pet should depend on the child's temperament," said Gottlie.

"And you should be clear about what expectations you have and what outcomes you are expecting to come from it."

### Pet therapy

There is such a thing as pet therapy, in which happy helpers called service dogs help physically challenged children. If you think it may be a benefit to your child, you can discuss it with a pediatrician or psychologist. Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities is an organization whose mission is to enable people with disabilities to gain greater independence and mobility through the use of specially trained dogs. At Green Chimneys in Brewster, there are programs geared toward kids with shorter attention spans.

"Children learn how to train puppies and build self-esteem," said Jennifer Mililo, director of marketing at Green Chimneys. There are so many advantages. "Using students with emotional or learning disabilities as trainers not only offers a unique approach but also reduces the cost of training assistance dogs and decreases the waiting time for the people who need these dogs," added Mililo.



## Good listeners

Having a furry friend in the home can help your child become a better reader. You can set aside time for your child to read to his new companion, and there are professional programs based on this concept as well.

"Basically, there is a time frame set up for the child to come in and simply read a book to the dog, because the dog is non-judgmental and does not care if the child mispronounces a word or if he reads slowly or skips a sentence," said Billie Smith, administrative manager at Therapy Dogs, Inc. Whether your child is struggling with an academic or behavioral issue, the dog can offer a little relaxation.

"The child can pet the dog and be calmed," said Smith. The dog can be a good distraction from any troubles in the child's life. "The child forgets about what is happening for a little bit and talking to the dog can be a real positive."

## Teach responsibility

Aside from companionship, the dog can help teach your child responsibility if he takes part in feeding or other caretaking activities. Your child's self-esteem may go up as he realizes that the pet depends on him. Even walking the dog with supervision, playing catch, or teaching the dog tricks can promote social interaction. Your child can work on communicating more effectively by teaching the pet commands like "come," "sit," and "stay." He will likely feel empowered and in control when the animal listens.

Of course, having a pretty and playful partner walking down the block can also promote the formation of new friendships, as a stranger tends to be more likely to start up a conversation with someone who has an animal at his side.

## Health benefits

Homes with dogs are healthier according to some studies.

For starters, it keeps you more active, which in turn lowers your heart rate and blood pressure. Most pet owners have no trouble getting the recommended 30 minutes of exercise per day, which keeps them in better shape and reduces their risk of cardiovascular disease.

Many may think of dogs as allergy triggers, but research shows that kids who grow up in a home with a pet are less likely to develop allergies during the course of their lives. They are also in a better mental state as they are rumored to be happier and less likely to suffer from depression. Interacting with a dog and receiving love from him can help you feel positive, and even just looking at the dog can increase the amount of oxytocin in a person, which is the feel-good chemical in the brain.

Depending on the breed and disposition of the dog, you may look into having him become a therapy or service dog. There are different requirements for each that you can learn about online or through your veterinarian.

"It is not a hard process to go through, and your dog does not have to be advanced in obedience training; all we look for is a well-mannered, calm dog with no jumping, licking, pawing, or aggression," said Smith. Small to large dogs, ranging from chihuahuas to mastiffs, are participating in these programs. Another way to do something charitable in the animal world is to find a pet through a shelter instead of a breeder.

According to Smith, "They are always grateful to be rescued in the first place."

If your whole family is on board, there really are no drawbacks to pet ownership.

"It is a win-win situation for everyone," said Smith.

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

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# What pets can do for autistic kids

BY KIKI BOCHI

The unconditional acceptance of an animal can have amazing power. People with pets already know this. But now there is scientific proof of just how positive pets can be.

A small study at the University of Queensland in Australia found that the presence of an animal can significantly increase good social behaviors among children with autism spectrum disorders.

The study compared how children with autism interacted with adults and their typically developing peers when in the presence of two guinea pigs,

compared to how they behaved in a room full of toys. The study found that when in the presence of animals, children with autism demonstrated more social behaviors like talking, looking at faces, and making physical contact. The presence of animals also increased instances of smiling and laughing, and reduced frowning, whining, and crying behaviors. What's more, autistic children were more receptive to social advances from their peers in the presence of the animals than they were when playing with toys.

Do pets make us better people? That's unclear, but past studies have shown that people are more likely to receive over-



tures of friendship from strangers when walking a dog than when walking alone, and similar effects have been observed for people holding smaller animals like rabbits or turtles. The authors of the study suggest that this "social lubricant" effect of animals on human social interactions can be particularly important for individuals with socio-emotional disabilities such as autism.

According to the researchers, the ability of an animal to help children with autism connect to adults may help foster interactions with therapists, teachers, or other adult figures. They add that animal-assisted interventions may have applications in the classroom as well.



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# Support system

## A career working with parents of children with disabilities

BY GARY SHULMAN

**M**y first week on the job as an advocate at Resources for Children with Special Needs was almost 25 years ago. I was fresh from serving as the special-needs coordinator for 10 years at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, where I got to play and revel in the wonderful artifacts and collections. I was all enthused and ready to change the world for the better.

So, as a very inexperienced advocate, I picked up the phone one day, and on the other end was a very thick accent that I quickly learned was Pakistani.

"How can I help you?" I eagerly responded.

"My niece is going to die!"

Suddenly, the reality and importance of this new journey I had chosen became crystal clear. Was I up to that task? Well, you never know unless you give it a try and dive in head first! I probed further, barely able to understand this gentleman, but what I was able to decipher was that his young niece had a very serious heart condition and his family could not find nor afford a medical facility where he lived. Of course, where he lived was Pakistan! I was told that my position entailed serving New York City families only — that was our mandate. So, the question was, do I tell this gentleman, "Sorry, sir, but I am a cold-uncaring bureaucrat," or do I live by what Plato had taught me — "be kinder than necessary because everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle." Isn't it all about making

this world a better place?

Ignoring the mandate to only serve city families, within a two-week period of time, I found the Gift of Life program on Long Island, which performs free heart operations, and agreed to perform the operation if I was able to bring the family to New York. I feverishly contacted all the airlines that flew from Pakistan to New York — not many! They had all met their quota for free flights for sick children, so my strategy quickly reverted to finding an organization that would just fit the bill of getting them here. Bless the Sunshine Foundation, one of the many wish granting-type angelic entities, which paid for the flight for the whole family!

A couple of weeks transpired and I again received a call from a gentleman with a

The caregivers I have met have taught me to appreciate the small joys and pleasures in life. Those are profound in their impact on the human spirit.

heavy Pakistani accent — no, not the uncle — but the dad.

"Mr. Shulman, you have saved my child's life. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"

So began this wonderful, heartwarming, sometimes frustrating, but always deeply gratifying, journey of working as an advocate for parents of children with disabilities.

I have learned a thing or two during those many wonderful years of supporting parents. And when I say parents, I mean all those who have raised and nurtured children with special needs — including foster parents, adoptive parents, birth parents, and all relatives and friends who have dedicated their hearts, souls, and spirits to the task of maximizing the abilities of those children while tirelessly fighting for rights, entitlements programs, and services.

The caregivers I have met have taught me to appreciate the small joys and pleasures in life. Those are profound in their impact on the human spirit. I remember during one particular workshop where I, of course, had my agenda to complete within a given time period, a parent shared that her child was just diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. I acknowledged her sharing, thanked her, and proceeded to continue with my lesson. That quickly came to a halt when a mom stood up, walked in front of me, took that parent in her arms and hugged her — both crying with cathartic tears. That's what needed to happen!

I learned a very important lesson that day. Stop and listen, really listen. Know what is truly important, and let the parents lead, teach, and share

as only a parent of a child with a disability can. That wonderful parent who interceded on that day, a dedicated self-advocate with two children both having disabilities, left this world a few years later, stricken down with cancer. To me, her legacy will always be the lesson she taught me on that day — stop, listen, react with compassion, and do the right thing.

I left my position at Resources for Children with Special Needs in November of 2013 to transition to private consulting and providing training to professionals and caregivers of children with disabilities. My gratification continues, as well as my journey of enlightenment.

So, what's my point in all this? There is value in every child. Caregivers of children with disabilities need to be heard. This is a very imperfect world, but there is richness in that imperfection if you just stop and see, hear, appreciate and give, give, give. This life I have chosen is a life so many selfless caring people have also chosen. They are teachers, therapists, volunteers, social workers, advocates, para-professionals, and on and on.

Parents of children with disabilities teach us that small victories are all around us and need to be treasured. We are all in this world together. Life is about leaving this world a better place than we found it. That takes a team effort. I am proud to continue being part of that remarkable team.

*Gary Shulman is a private special-needs consultant and trainer in New York City. His passion is helping and supporting families of children with disabilities. He can be reached at (646) 596-5642, or shulman.gary@yahoo.com.*



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# Two siblings battle for their parent's attention

Dear Sharon,

Our 6-year-old son is having development delays and, quite naturally, we are focused quite a bit on his issues. Lately, I've been worried that we are neglecting our older child, a 10-year-old boy. I feel he is angry about the amount of attention his little brother is getting, and I am wondering if you have any advice for us?



## PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS

Dear Parents,

Most siblings are upset if and when their brother or sister is "soaking up" their parents' attention. A special-needs child can easily stretch hard-working parents' attention, but there are things you can do to keep your attention balanced and help your 10 year old feel less neglected and angry. Many parents I know have counteracted the frustration and resentment that can understandably build up in an overshadowed sibling by setting a date — a designated time slot to spend alone with their "typical" child. An hour is often a sufficient amount to choose, but if there is more available, great!

It is important to keep the date consistent, ideally picking a time every week that will work well for everyone. It is also helpful to let the child choose what to do. The combination of choice and regularity can compensate for any unwanted accommodations a sibling often has to make as parents juggle his sibling's needs.

Dates such as these can be nice for parents as well, giving them a chance to have space from the pressures of special-needs parenting, while creating an opportunity to have undivided attention for their other young one.

Whenever possible, it is also important to



find times to listen to the sibling of a special-needs child talk about the details of his day. Even though many 10 year olds don't have a protracted nighttime routine, they often wind down enough to "open up" at bed time. One-on-one listening time can be hard to find in a special-needs household, so taking advantage of these opportunities can help maintain close and communicative parent-child relationships.

If and when things are ever calm at home, it is also good to relaxedly check in with typical children about how things are going with their sibling. It can make a big difference for young people to have the

opportunity to share their care, as well as their thoughts and frustrations with an empathetic mom or dad.

Parents I know have also found it helpful to socialize with other families who have special-need and typical children. Even if the traditionally developing children don't talk directly about their brother or sister, it helps to know that they are not alone.

It can also be helpful to check the internet and this magazine for a list of the growing number of family camps, organizations, and meet-up groups in your area that sponsor interesting activities for special-needs families.

When I meet with parents of special-needs children, they often talk about their typical children. I am glad that you, too, are focusing on your 10 year old, and happy that he is letting you know how he feels. I think that together you can find ways to have things go well for everyone.

Sharon C. Peters is a mother and director of Parents Helping Parents, 669 President St., Brooklyn (718) 638-9444, [www.PHPonline.org](http://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](mailto:Family@cnglocal.com).



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# Good grief

How to cope with the complex emotions that emerge when you have a special-needs child

BY DR. CHRISTIANE MANZELLA, PhD

Parents of children with special needs often have complicated feelings, thoughts, and responses about caring for their child, including love, anger, sadness, disappointment, and guilt. These are all part of the grieving process, which is a normal response to any significant change (not just a death).

When you learn that your child has special needs, you can experience profound shifts in your hopes, dreams, and expectations. You may also face tremendous challenges navigating your child's care from diagnosis and intervention to advocacy and long-term planning.

The early stage of this process is grief from changed expectations. For example, you may be coming to terms with the loss of your child's health, your child's loss of functioning related to a specific condition, or the loss of the relationship you expected to have with your child.

Even though grief is addressed in self-help books for parents of children with special needs, sometimes parents don't believe it's acceptable to have these feelings



and thoughts. Many feel intense shame and guilt about these complex emotions and find it hard to discuss them with family and friends without feeling like a "bad parent."

There can be subtle (and not-so-subtle) pressure from family and friends to make the best of the situation and "move on," so parents often keep negative emotions hidden.

But having conflicted feelings is a normal part of adapting to having a child with

special needs. And not addressing these feelings can distance you from loved ones and make you feel isolated and alone. In the world of grief counseling, this is called disenfranchised grief. That term describes grief and emotional responses to change and loss that aren't considered legitimate or acceptable by society, or even by the person experiencing them.

When you and those around you don't acknowledge your emotions, you may end up feeling isolated and overwhelmed,

When you and those around you don't acknowledge your emotions, you may end up feeling isolated and overwhelmed, which can lead to rumination, anxiety, and loneliness.

which can lead to rumination (feeling stuck in worrisome thoughts), anxiety, and loneliness. Rumination, in turn, is a known risk factor for depression. So although parents of children with special needs do not automatically become depressed, rumination has the potential to diminish your ability to cope and take action. Eventually, it can diminish your quality of life.

There's no right or wrong way to grieve. But it can be helpful to know that it's a process of evolving that enables you to make ongoing, progressive adjustments to life as it is now and ultimately create a new normal.

Here are a few ways to begin the healing process:

Know that your feelings, whatever they are, are normal. Parents are often relieved to know that feeling deeply disappointed, frustrated, and sad is part of the normal grieving process. It's important to let yourself feel complex emotions as they come up.

Know that you are not alone. Connecting with other parents of children who have special needs will help you learn that you don't have to hide your disappointment or go through challenges on your own. Hearing about others' experiences will help lessen the stigma you may feel about your own complicated emotions.

Surround yourself with support. Keeping grief hidden can harm your overall quality of life and day-to-day coping skills. Find a safe person or place (such as a support group) to discuss your feelings openly.

Expect ups and downs. This is a process that will have many twists and turns. At times you may have a resurgence of grief, especially when other challenges arise. (For example, you may grieve when you become aware of a missed developmental milestone.) But knowing you're not alone and understanding that your feelings of disappointment, shame, or guilt are perfectly normal can help you work through your grief and develop new coping skills that will improve your life and the life of your child.

*Dr. Christiane Manzella is a senior consulting psychologist at the Seleni Institute and has been a therapist and grief counselor in New York City for more than 20 years. Dr. Manzella earned both her master's degree in clinical psychology and doctorate in counseling psychology from New York University and carried out her doctoral dissertation research at Beth Israel Medical Center hospice, with postdoctoral supervision in grief and bereavement work. She was named a Fellow in Thanatology: Death, Dying and Bereavement, awarded from the Association of Death Educators and Counselors, and most recently has been elected to their board. See more at <http://seleni.org/insight/news-information/grieving-when-you-have-a-child-with-special-needs#sthash.TvgFXzYO.dpuf>.*

*This article originally ran on seleni.org on Feb. 18, 2013 © Seleni Institute, 2013 and is reprinted here with permission. The Seleni Institute is a comprehensive mental health and wellness center for women in New York City. For more information about Seleni's services, please visit <http://seleni.org/care>.*



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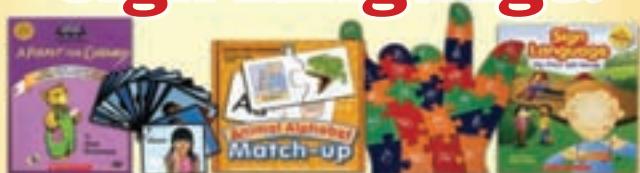
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# Journey of discovery

## Mother shares story of parenting a special needs child

BY JOANNA DELBUONO

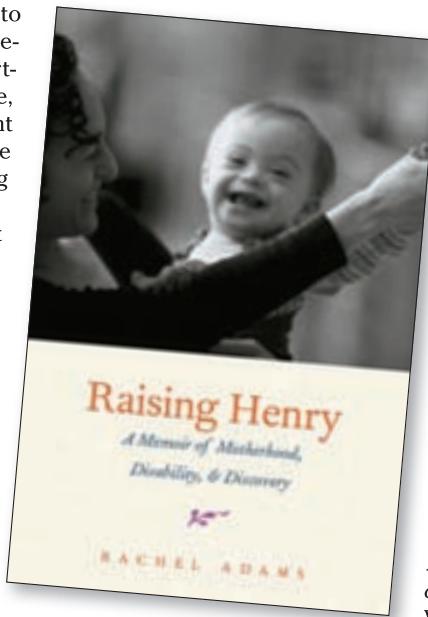
The world of author Rachel Adams came tumbling down around her when she delivered her son Henry and was told by the pediatrician that "there was something wrong." In her memoir, "Raising Henry," Rachel brings us along on her journey from denial to acceptance and everything else in between. From the endless evaluations, appointments, and ultimate mainstreaming of Henry into the school system and his growth into a joyous five year old, Rachel digs deep into her emotions to share every parents' worst nightmare, warts and all.

From Henry's initial diagnosis of Down Syndrome, Ra-

chel gives us a glimpse into the life of a parent of a special needs child. This heartwarming story is full of hope, especially for every parent who has ever had to hear the words, "There is something wrong."

Adams doesn't sugarcoat her feelings either. From her early moments of denial, to her eventual acceptance, and how she and her husband deal with the situation, this book is as much about Rachel's growth and maturity as it is about Henry's.

As a professor of English and American studies at Columbia University, Adams uses every bit of her knowledge to build a



fulfilling life and a better world for her son Henry.

"Raising Henry" is a moving memoir that tackles the very big issues of family, personhood, and disability.

Her graceful style of prose makes this an easy read, despite the seriousness of the topic.

Whether you walk in Rachel's shoes or not, this is a must-read for every parent. We all have something to learn when it comes to how we view parenthood, our own children, and how the world views us.

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# Learning from experience

## A mother, author, and advocate helps families cope with autism

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**A**s the bewildered parent of a child with autism spectrum disorder, Los Angeles mom Monica Holloway knew she had to embrace those gifts bestowed upon the love of her life, her son Wills. Even though she would never change "one freckle" on him, Holloway was aware that her own attitude on autism needed some adjustment, as she set out to rally against the misconceptions and ignorance attached to the disorder. She decided to put pen to paper, and turned her life into an open book, writing a brave and touching memoir, "Cowboy & Wills: A Love Story," about her autistic son and Cowboy, the dog who helped him connect to the world.

Holloway describes her reaction and that of her husband, Michael Price, when they first discovered their boy was "special."

"We knew by 18 months that there were some signs that looked like autism," recalls Holloway. "We were anxious and worried. What we could not have known was that our life with this child would change who we were in such incredibly deep and personal ways. We would be the ones being educated and living life with deeper connections and meaning, thanks to Wills's autism."

Her book, published by Simon and Schuster, was the prestigious Mom's Choice Awards Gold Recipient for 2010, and Holloway donates all proceeds from her book's sales at Autism Speaks events back to the nonprofit.

In 2011, the author received the Women of Distinction Award from the Special Needs Network in recognition for her work and contributions to the underserved special-needs



Wills and Monica at a Special Need Network event in Los Angeles in 2010. Monica received a Women of Distinction award.

communities in Los Angeles. Now that Wills is 16, Holloway continues to share what she has learned about autism spectrum disorder and how to be a supportive parent.

"When Wills was first diagnosed with autism, I worried excessively about whether I would have both the knowledge and the expertise to give my son what he needed," Holloway recalled. "I quickly learned that I didn't, and that was OK. When I reached out for support and did my research, I learned that there were plenty of professional people that could help Wills."

"With this understanding, my husband and I began putting a team together to support him and to teach us how to help Wills, as well. From that moment on, there was no looking back. I don't feel anxious anymore about Wills having autism, and I try to make sure he's surrounded by what he needs."

Holloway said her son has been with the same one-on-one therapist since he was 18 months old.

"We thank heavens she's taken us through

every aspect of our lives, including Wills's adolescence and all the changes that take place over the years in any family. We are so fortunate to have somebody so smart and 100 percent on our side.

"Wills has an occupational therapist and educational therapist as well, and is in a social skills group. For a different kind of therapy, Wills works one-on-one with a terrific baseball coach, too."

Wills wanted to socialize with other children, but couldn't.

"It's not that socializing made Wills unhappy, but it made him anxious, and that's different. Deep down, Wills wanted to be recognized by other children and was very interested in what they were doing as well, but making the connection seemed insurmountable given his anxiety. Now at 16 years old, it's much easier for Wills in social situations because of the therapy he's had and all of his successes."

She says her teenage boy is a huge New York Mets fan (he goes to spring training in Florida every year), loves the show "Myth-Busters," and is really interested in "Tanked" (on the Animal Planet channel).

"In fact, he just planted his own plants in his 100-gallon aquarium, because of the show," says Holloway. "His big passions are still trains and airplanes; he's deeply fascinated by the way they work."

"His newest interest is baseball, and he and his father are visiting every stadium in the country over the next five years. He has already been to eight."

Like so many devoted families who deal with autism, Holloway and her husband watched Wills stumble through life while they tried desperately to figure out what made him tick. And, as many parents of autistic kids know, learning to cope with the emotional storm that comes with raising your child is yet another challenge. It ain't easy! But whoever said being a parent would be a cake walk?

"There were so many people who would learn about Wills's autism and think that he was on one end of the spectrum, when in fact, he was on the other. I realized quickly that people didn't understand autism, just



(At left) A young Wills with Cowboy. Their relationship was the starting point for Holloway's book. (Above) Wills with one of his current companions, Buddy Rose.

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"I wanted to write a love letter to Wills about his babyhood and how brave he was."

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as I didn't understand autism before I had my son," Holloway explained. "I was hoping to spread awareness that autism is a spectrum disorder with a wide range of abilities. For myself, I wanted to write a love letter to Wills about his babyhood and how brave he was."

As an autism activist, the author, who was a New Yorker for eight years but now lives in California, has served as a spokesperson for Autism Speaks, the largest autism nonprofit in the nation, and is deeply involved in her philanthropic work, giving back to the autism community. She offers presentations on her experiences with special needs throughout the U.S., and donates copies of her books to charitable events.

"Monica Holloway is a true example of the combination of heart and determination, being the mom of a child with autism demands. Monica and her husband have raised a truly remarkable young man in their son, Wills," says Cathy Kanefsky, vice president of Chapter Development at Autism Speaks, headquartered in New York City. "Monica refused to put a ceiling on what Wills could do, but rather gave him every opportunity

to grow — academically, functionally and perhaps, most importantly, socially.

"Knowing Monica, you can feel the lump in her throat as she writes that Wills is on his own with a group of friends in the museum, while she walks laps around the building waiting for him. You can feel her heart pounding as she sends him off for a day at Disneyland with friends. And, personally, I find myself beaming with her as she talks about his plans to attend college."

Beth Schachter, associate professor of Theatre and Dance at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania, says of Holloway's memoir, "Whether or not you know someone affected by autism, 'Cowboy and Wills' is an amazing, touching, and witty memoir — compelling for anyone who cares about children and dogs, love, and families. It does reveal a great deal about the disability, and it does so by getting inside the experiences of this family."

Holloway credits a support network with helping her.

"At my son's high school, he's part of a spectrum program, and I find tremendous support from the parents of the other children in his program. We meet twice a month, and it's incredibly helpful and positive. I also meet so many wonderful families, educators, and therapists when I travel and speak, and I find a lot of support in that."

She says her Facebook page is a true inspiration, as well, especially when other parents and family members share their stories and pictures; their triumphs and their

disappointments.

"To feel isolated is difficult. Based on my early experiences with Wills, I don't want anyone to feel isolated nor do I isolate myself any longer."

Holloway's biggest tip for others parents? Don't isolate yourself.

"Find somebody to talk to. I found speaking to a therapist was really helpful, but was also thankful for my friends. It's overwhelming, but do as much research as you can, because the more you know, the less anxiety you'll have. You won't know everything, but that's part of knowing, as well." She is presently working on her third memoir, to be published by Simon and Schuster in 2014.

And what about Cowboy? Well, sadly, he's gone now, but as Wills got older, two new friends came into his life: "Goldens" Buddy Rose, 7, and Leo Henry, 4. The author says Wills no longer needs a dog between himself and the world to help with his anxiety, though she feels having a furry companion was very important through third grade.

"Wills changed schools last year, which was a difficult transition, and we found when we brought his dogs to school and he walked with the dogs, just like when he was little, it helped with his transition. The students would come to him and learn more about the dog and him, and through that, Wills came to know many of the students of the school, who are now his friends. Next week, he's having a dog-and-friend party at the house."

# The *write* stuff

## How to help a child with dysgraphia succeed at school

BY SUE LEBRETON

**D**oes your child avoid homework or become distressed when that homework involves printing or writing? Does he have an awkward pencil grasp? Is his printing or handwriting difficult to decipher? Can he communicate his ideas verbally, but struggles to organize thoughts on paper? If any of this sounds familiar, your child may have a learning disability called dysgraphia.

Students with learning disabilities have normal intelligence but have difficulty with their brain's ability to receive, process, store, or analyze information. These disabilities are usually diagnosed after children enter school — when parents and teachers see the gap between affected children and their peers. If not addressed, this gap increases over the years as learning becomes more complex. The sooner children are identified and receive help, the better they do in school and in their social life.

There are three distinct types of dysgraphia: motor, spatial, and processing. Children can have one or more of these types of dysgraphia. Helen Painter, occupational therapist and author of "Dysgraphia: Your Essential Guide," says that it is crucial to determine which form of dysgraphia your

child has so you can choose the appropriate treatment and accommodations.

Motor dysgraphia is the easiest to recognize, as it is when a child struggles due to poor motor skills, such as a poor pencil grasp. Often, a child will be screened and will begin working on those fine motor skills with an occupational therapist. Painter suggests that the motor issue (if it occurs as the only form of the disability) can be almost fixed in a month or two. If issues continue, she says parents should have their child seen by a medical doctor or a psychologist, the professionals who are qualified to assess spatial dysgraphia and processing dysgraphia.

In processing dysgraphia, there is a missing link between working memory and the muscle movements required to do the print-

ing or writing. People with this form say they cannot see the letters or words in their "mind's eye." Spatial dysgraphia occurs when the person has difficulty understanding what the eyes are seeing. People with spatial dysgraphia struggle to see how objects are positioned relative to each other and how things are similar or different.

Unfortunately, both spatial and processing dysgraphia remain with children throughout their lives, so parents must work with educators to provide modifications and accommodations.

"It will help your child develop sound study habits and realize this is a condition that can be worked with, and it is not something that needs to be disabling. Today's children are fortunate to be able to benefit from technology, compared to kids in the past who could only have dreamed of such help," says Painter.

Despite the availability of a wide array of technology, Painter has noticed that both parents and educators are hesitant to use the technology, because they fear that children will not learn the skills if they use this crutch. Her practical experience disproves this.

"Anybody can succeed if they are given the right tools, lifelong tools. There is no excuse for not helping these kids today," says Painter.

If you suspect your child may have issues with dysgraphia, have a physician or psychologist perform testing so that your child can get the appropriate support.

*Sue LeBreton's son was finally diagnosed with dysgraphia after many years spent focusing on motor skills. He has both motor and processing dysgraphia and has become a happier, more engaged student with the help of technology.*



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# New York City Special Needs

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### ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

#### The Child Mind Institute

445 Park Avenue (entrance on 56th street)  
(212) 308-3118  
[www.childmind.org](http://www.childmind.org)

Services Provided: Education, workshops and support groups for those with ADD, OCD and ADHD

#### Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders

New York City  
P.O. Box 133, Manhattan  
(212) 721-0007  
[www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)  
[parent2parent@chadd.net](mailto:parent2parent@chadd.net)  
[new-york-city@chadd.net](mailto:new-york-city@chadd.net)

Services Provided: Educating and support groups.

#### Hallowell Center

117 West 72nd Street, Third Floor  
Upper West Side, New York, NY 10023  
(212)-799-7777  
[www.hallowellcenter.org](http://www.hallowellcenter.org)

Services Provided: Diagnostics and Treatment.

#### HJD/NYU ADD Center

301 East 17th Street, New York, NY 10003  
(212)- 598-6490  
[www.hjd.med.nyu.edu](http://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 Avenue, Manhattan  
(888) 918-9198  
[www.ahany.org](http://www.ahany.org)  
[pats@ahany.org](mailto:pats@ahany.org)

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

#### Association in Metro Area for Autistic Children

25 West 17th Street, Ground Floor  
New York, NY 10011  
(212) 645-5005 (877) 645-5005  
[www.amac.org](http://www.amac.org)  
[info@amac.org](mailto:info@amac.org)

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

#### Autism Science Foundation

419 Lafayette Street, Second Floor  
New York, NY 10003  
(646)-723-3977  
[www.autismsciencefoundation.org](http://www.autismsciencefoundation.org)  
[contactus@autismsciencefoundation.org](mailto:contactus@autismsciencefoundation.org)  
Services Provided: Information and Provides Funding for Medical Research

#### Autism Society of America

Queens Chapter  
188-83 85th Road  
Holliswood, NY 11423  
(718) 464-5735  
Brooklyn Chapter  
224 Avenue S  
Brooklyn, NY 11223  
(718) 336-9533

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

#### Autism Speaks

1 East 33rd Street, Fourth Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
(212)-252-8584  
[www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

Services Provided: Funds Autism Research and Information.

#### Brooklyn Autism Center Academy

111 Remsen Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(718) 554-1027  
[www.info@brooklynautismcenter.org](mailto: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

363 Greenwich Street, Manhattan  
(212) 219-1195

#### Eden II Programs

150 Granite Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10303  
(718)-816-1422  
[www.eden2.org](http://www.eden2.org)

Services Provided: Education, Adult day programs, Family Support and Residential Care

#### QSAC, Quality of Life & Services for the Autistic Community

253 W. 35th Street, NY, NY 10001  
30-10 38th Street, Astoria, NY 11103  
And 2509 Broadway, Astoria, NY 11106  
New York 11106  
(718) 728-8476  
[www.QSAC.COM](http://www.QSAC.COM)  
[QSACnyc@aol.com](mailto:QSACnyc@aol.com)

Services Provided: Case Management,

Community Education, Information and Referral, Residential

Other: After school programs, behavior management, Day Habilitation, Family reimbursement, In-house/overnight respite, parent support group, Parent training, pre-school, Residential Habilitation, Special education itinerant Teacher

#### New York Families for Autistic Children, Inc.

95-16 Pitkin Avenue  
Ozone Park, NY 11417  
(718) 641-3441

Services Provided: NYFAC serves any family within New York that has a child with a developmental disability. Their doors are open to any family member, friend, professional, or student who wants to learn, to develop and to grow. Their motto: "Helping Parents..Help their children..One family at a time"

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FSPDD at North Central Bronx Hospital  
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[Ny-bronx@autismsocietyofamerica.org](mailto:Ny-bronx@autismsocietyofamerica.org)

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

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331 West 25th Street  
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[www.mccartonfoundation.org](http://www.mccartonfoundation.org)

Services Provided: Education for children and Research Center

#### Thursday's Child, Inc.

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57 Willoughby Street, Brooklyn  
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[www.helenkeller.org](http://www.helenkeller.org)  
[info@helenkeller.org](mailto:info@helenkeller.org)

Services Provided: Free workshops, all ages for visually impaired.

#### Jewish Guild for the Blind

15 West 65th Street, New York NY 10023  
*Continued on page 42*



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*Continued from page 40*

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### National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI)

c/o New York Institute for Special Education  
999 Pelham Parkway, Bronx

(718) 519-7000

[www.familyconnect.org](http://www.familyconnect.org)

[jaynycnapi@aol.com](mailto:jaynycnapi@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 Street, 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 Street  
New York, NY 10022

(800) 829-0500

TTY/TDD: (212) 821-9713

[www.lighthouse.org](http://www.lighthouse.org)

Email: [info@lighthouse.org](mailto: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](http://www.campacorn.org)

### Camp Akeela

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

### Camp Chatterbox

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

### Camp Cold Brook

Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center  
P.O. Box 305  
83 Old Turnpike Road

Oldwick, NJ 08858  
[www.shhrc.org](http://www.shhrc.org)

### Camp Daisy

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

### Camp Hope

845-225-2005 EXT 207 OR 1-866-223-6369 or  
[WWW.CBFNY.ORG](http://WWW.CBFNY.ORG)

### Camp Horizons

127 Babcock Hill Road  
South Windham, CT 06266  
860-456-1032 or [www.camphorizons.org](http://www.camphorizons.org)

### Camp Huntington

56 Bruceville Rd  
High Falls, NY 12440  
866-514-5281 or [www.camphuntington.com](http://www.camphuntington.com)

### Camp Jotoni

141 S. Main St.  
Manville, NJ 08835  
908-725-8544 or [www.theearcofsomerset.org](http://www.theearcofsomerset.org)

### Camp Joy

250 Nimham Rd., Carmel  
845 225-2005 x212 or [www.cbfny.org](http://www.cbfny.org)

### Camp Lee Mar

805 Redgate Rd  
Dresher, PA 19025  
215-658-1710 or [www.leemar.com](http://www.leemar.com)

### Camp Merry Heart

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

### Camp Nejeda

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](http://www.nwood.com)

### Camp Oakhurst

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

### Camp Sun N Fun

1555 Geteway Blvd  
West Deptford, NJ 08096  
856-875-1499 or [www.thearcgloucester.org](http://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](http://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 ext 5484

### Camp Tikvah

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

### Frost Valley YMCA Camps

2000 Frost Valley Rd  
Claryville, NY 12725  
845-985-2291 or [www.frostvalley.org](http://www.frostvalley.org)

### Happiness is Camping Inc.

62 Sunset Lake Road  
Blairstown, NJ 07825  
908-362-6733 or [www.happinessiscamping.org](http://www.happinessiscamping.org)

### Harbor Haven Day Camp

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

### Kiddie Keep Well Camp

35 Roosevelt Dr  
Edison, NJ 08837  
732-548-8542 or [www.kiddiekeepwell.org](http://www.kiddiekeepwell.org)

### Maplebrook Summer Program

5142 Route 22  
Amenia, NY 12501  
845-373-8191 or [www.maplebrookschool.org](http://www.maplebrookschool.org)

### Minding Miracles Learning Center

90 Spring Hill Rd  
Matawan, NJ 07747  
732-316-4884 or [www.mindingmiracles.net](http://www.mindingmiracles.net)

### New Jersey Camp Jaycee

985 Livingston Ave  
North Brunswick, NJ 08902  
732-246-2525 or [www.campjaycee.org](http://www.campjaycee.org)

# New York City Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

### Our Victory Day Camp

46 Vineyard Lane  
Stamford, CT 06902  
203-329-3394 or [www.ourvictory.com](http://www.ourvictory.com)

### Rainbow Summer Day Program

201-343-0322 ext 270 or [www.archbergenpassaic.org/about.html](http://www.archbergenpassaic.org/about.html)

### Ramapo For Children

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

### Round Lake Camp

119 Woods Rd  
Lakewood, PA 18439  
570-798-2551 or [www.roundlakecamp.org](http://www.roundlakecamp.org)

### Summit Camp & Travel

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

### Southampton Fresh Air Home

36 Barkers Island Rd  
Southampton NY 11968  
631-283-5847 or [www.sfah.org](http://www.sfah.org)

## CEREBRAL PALSEY

### United Cerebral Palsy of New York City

80 Maiden Lane  
New York, NY 10038  
(212) 683-6700 or [www.ucpny.org](http://www.ucpny.org)

Services Provided: Assistive Tech Equipment, Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Residential, Treatment, Vocational/Employment  
Other: Day Treatment, Day Habilitation, Early Intervention

## DISABILITY GROUPS

### Adults and Children with Learning & Developmental Disabilities, Inc.

807 South Oyster Bay Road  
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 Street

**Brooklyn, NY 11201**  
(718) 998-3000/TTY/TDD  
(718) 998-7406  
[www.bcid.org](http://www.bcid.org)

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

### Catholic Charities Office for the Handicapped

191 Joralemon Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(718) 722-6000  
[www.cccbq.org](http://www.cccbq.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](http://www.cidny.org)

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

### Children's Aid Society

150 E. 45th Street  
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 East 22nd Street, Room 303  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 254-8900  
[www.cssny.org](http://www.cssny.org)

Services Provided: Case Management, Information and Referral

### Developmental Disabilities Center, St. Luke's Hospital

1000 Tenth Avenue  
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.disabledandalone.org](http://www.disabledandalone.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 Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10461  
(718) 430-8900

Services Provided: Treatment  
Other: Parent Support Groups

### Early Childhood Direction Center

New York Presbyterian Hospital  
435 East 70th Street  
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 Avenue  
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 Street, Suite 503  
New York, NY 10018  
(212)-220-2290  
[www.ny.easter-seals.org](http://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 Avenue  
Queens Village, NY 11429  
(718) 465-8833

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

### Fisher Landau Center for the Treatment of Learning Disabilities

Rousso Building, Second Floor

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# New York City Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

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**1165 Morris Park Avenue**  
Bronx, New York 10461  
(718)-430-3900

[www.einstein.yu.edu/cerc](http://www.einstein.yu.edu/cerc)

Services Provided: Health, Education and Vocational Rehabilitation

### Guild for Exceptional Children

**260 68th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11220**  
(718) 833-6633

[www.gecbklyn.com](http://www.gecbklyn.com)

mikefer@gecbklyn.org

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

### Heartshare Human Services

**12 Metro Tech Center, 29th floor**  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(718) 422-4200

[www.heartshare.org](http://www.heartshare.org)

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

### International Center for the Disabled

**340 East 24th Street**  
New York, NY 10010  
(212)-585-6000

[www.icdnyc.org](http://www.icdnyc.org)

Service Provided: Medical, Rehabilitation and Mental.

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

**135 West 50th Street**  
New York, NY 10020  
(212)582-9100  
(800)523-2769

[www.jbfc.org](http://www.jbfc.org)

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

### Korean-American Association for Rehabilitation of the Disabled

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

Individuals Served: All Developmental Disabilities

### Learning Disabilities Association of New York City

**27 West 20th Street, Room 304**  
New York, NY 10128  
(212) 645-6730

[www.ldanyc.org](http://www.ldanyc.org)

Services Provided: Information and Referral,

Individual/Case Advocacy

### Living Above Disorder Shared Journeys Support group

**Clinton Hill Public Library**  
380 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn  
(646) 481-6570

[www.livingabovedisorder.org](http://www.livingabovedisorder.org)  
[info@livingabovedisorder.org](mailto:info@livingabovedisorder.org)

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

### Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

**100 Gold Street, New York, NY 10038**  
(212) 788-2830

[www.nyc.gov/mopd](http://www.nyc.gov/mopd)

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

### Metro New York Developmental Disabilities Services Office

**75 Morton Street,**  
New York, NY 10014  
(212) 229-3000

[www.cs.stste.ny.us](http://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](http://www.mytimeinc.org)

[infor@mytime.org](mailto:infor@mytime.org)

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

### National Center for Learning Disabilities

**381 Park Avenue 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 Street**  
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](http://www.nyc.gov/health)  
New York City Department of Social Services  
250 Church Street  
New York, NY 10013  
(877)472-8411

Services Provided: Information and Referral  
Other: Services vary by county

### Partnership with Children

**50 Court Street**  
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 Avenue**  
Staten Island, NY 10301  
(718)-442-2225

[www.simhs.org](http://www.simhs.org)

Service Provided: Clinical and Education

### The Arc- AHRC New York City Chapter

**83 Maiden Lane**  
New York, NY 10038  
(212)-780-2500

[www.ahrnyc.org](http://www.ahrnyc.org)

Services Provided: Education, Clinical, and Adult Day Services.

### YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities

**460 West 34th Street, 11th floor**  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 563-7474

TTY/TDD: (212) 290-2787

[www.yai.org](http://www.yai.org)

[link@yai.org](mailto: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

### Association for Children with Down Syndrome, Inc.

**4 Fern Place, Plainview, NY 11803**  
Other location: 2616 Martin Avenue  
Bellmore, NY 11710  
(516) 933-4700

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[www.ACDS.org](http://www.ACDS.org)  
[infor@ACDS.org](mailto:infor@ACDS.org)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Treatment  
Other: Recreation Program

### 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 Street  
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 Avenue  
Bronx, New York 10461  
(718) 430-0981  
[www.boldny.org](http://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](http://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 Street  
New York, NY 10002  
(212) 254-7300

[www.eastrivercdc.org](http://www.eastrivercdc.org)

Services Provided: A Non-Profit, Family-Centered, Community based Preschool Program 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 Avenue  
Flushing, NY 11354  
(718) 939-8700  
[www.shield.org](http://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 Street, Oakland Gardens  
(718) 423-9550  
[www.anibic.org](http://www.anibic.org)

Services Provided: Physical activities for mentally disabled children.

### Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York

257 Park Avenue South, Suite 302  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 677-8550  
[www.epilepsyinstitute.org](http://www.epilepsyinstitute.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 Street, Manhattan  
(212) 988-0110  
[www.adoptioncrossroads.org](http://www.adoptioncrossroads.org)  
[joesoll@adoptionhelping.org](mailto:joesoll@adoptionhelping.org)

Services Provided: Educate parents on handling adopted children.

### Advocates for Children of New York

151 West 30th Street, 5th floor

New York, NY 10001

(212) 947-9779

[www.advocatesforchildren.org](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org)

Other: Advocate for educational rights in the public school

### Rose F. Kennedy Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center (CERC)

Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University  
1410 Pelham Parkway South  
Bronx, New York 10461  
(718) 430-8500  
[www.einstein.yu.edu/centers/cerc](http://www.einstein.yu.edu/centers/cerc)

Services Provided: CERC is a voluntary nonsectarian agency that provides interdisciplinary diagnostic and therapeutic clinical services for infants, children, adolescents and adults with developmental, physical, language and learning difficulties. CERC is part of the Rose F. Kennedy University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service (UCEDD), and as such, is one of 67 federally designated regional centers that conducts interdisciplinary training, provides exemplary clinical services, and conducts research in the field of developmental disabilities and creates a bridge between universities and the community through community outreach and direct consumer involvement.

### Association for the Help of Retarded Children (AHRC)

83 Maiden Lane, New York, NY 10038  
(212) 780-2500  
TTY/TDD (800) 662-1220  
[www.ahrcnyc.org/](http://www.ahrcnyc.org/)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual Case Advocacy Legal Advocacy, Residential, Vocational/Employment Other: Camps, school and respite

### Board of Visitors, Staten Island Developmental Center

1150 Forest Hill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
(718) 983-5200

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

### Brooklyn Bureau of Community Services

285 Schermerhorn Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11217  
(718) 310-5600  
[www.bbcs.org](http://www.bbcs.org)

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

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

### **Brooklyn Children's Center**

**1819 Bergen Street  
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 East 57th Street  
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 Place  
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 Avenue, 20th Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
(212) 353-8353  
[www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)**

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral.

### **Institute for Community Living Brooklyn Family Resource Center**

**2581 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn  
(718) 290-8100, x. 4145  
(917) 495-8298  
[www.iclinc.net](http://www.iclinc.net)  
[info@iclinc.net](mailto:info@iclinc.net)**

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

### **Maidstone Foundation**

**1225 Broadway, 9th floor  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 889-5760**

**mariettte33@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 West 26th Street  
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 East 16th Street  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 677-4650, [infor@resourcesnyc.org](mailto:infor@resourcesnyc.org)  
[www.resourcesnyc.org](http://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 Avenue 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 Avenue  
New York, NY 10035  
(212) 643-2840  
[www.sinergiany.org](http://www.sinergiany.org)**

**[information@sinergia.org](mailto: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 Developmental Disabilities Services Office**

**1150 Forest Hill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
(718) 983-5200**

Services Provided: Care Management, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy, Residential, Treatment

### **Staten Island Division, March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation**

**110 McClean Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10305  
(718) 981-3000  
[www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)**

Individuals Served: All Developmental Disabilities

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral

### **Staten Island Mental Health Society, Inc.**

**669 Castleton Avenue  
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.chcycling.org](http://www.chcycling.org)  
[info@chcycling.org](mailto:info@chcycling.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 Street  
East Elmhurst, NY 11370  
(718)350-3300  
TTY/TDD: (718) 350-3056  
[www.lexnyc.org](http://www.lexnyc.org)  
[generalinfo@lexnyc.org](mailto:generalinfo@lexnyc.org)**

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/Equipment,

# New York City Special Needs

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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 2nd Avenue, 9th floor  
New York, NY 10010  
(646) 438-7802  
[www.childrenshearing.org](http://www.childrenshearing.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 Street, 8th floor  
New York, NY 10013  
(800) 244-2540  
[www.lawyersforchildren.com](http://www.lawyersforchildren.com)

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

#### Legal Aid Society of New York City

199 Water Street  
New York, NY 10038

**(212) 577-3346 (347) 245-5132**  
[www.legal-aid.org](http://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, 4th 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 Street, 11th floor  
New York, NY 10001-4007  
(212) 244-4664  
[www.nylpi.org](http://www.nylpi.org)

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

### MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

#### Muscular Dystrophy Association

11 East 44th Street 17th floor  
New York, NY 10017  
(212) 682-5272  
[www.mda.org](http://www.mda.org)

Services Provided: MDA is the gateway to infor-

mation, 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.

### SENSORY THERAPY

#### Kouli's OT Sensory Gym

3434 Tibbett Avenue Bronx, NY 10463  
917-405-3044 or [Koulisotsensorygym.com](http://Koulisotsensorygym.com)

Kouli's OT/ Sensory Gym is a pediatric therapy center located in Riverdale, NY (Bronx), created by Kouli E Nalpantidis, who believes children's therapy services are best provided in a fun, energetic and caring environment where the needs of the child come first. At Kouli's OT/ Sensory Gym your child will receive individualized attention from a dedicated and professional therapists who will work with you to determine the best approach to your child's special needs. The Gym services children through Early Intervention (EI - with approval from City Official), Preschool, School age (CSE with RSA Letter) and privately.

### TOURETTE SYNDROME

#### National Tourette Syndrome Association

42-40 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361-2820  
(718) 2242999  
[www.tourette-syndrome.com](http://www.tourette-syndrome.com)

Services Provided: Community education, information and referral.

# Developmental Disabilities Service Offices

Information courtesy of the NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

#### New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, New York 12229  
Information Line 1-(866)-946-9733  
TTY:(866) 933-4889  
[www.omr.state.ny.us](http://www.omr.state.ny.us)

#### Developmental Disabilities Service Offices by borough:

**(BROOKLYN)**  
Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Services Office  
888 Fountain Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11208  
Phone: (718) 642-6000  
Fax: (718) 642-6282

#### (LONG ISLAND)

Long Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office  
45 Mall Drive  
Commack, NY 11725  
Phone: (631) 493-1700  
Fax: (631) 493-1803

**(MANHATTAN & THE BRONX)**  
Metro NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office

75 Morton Street  
New York, NY 10014  
Phone: (212) 229-3000  
Fax: (212) 924-0580

#### (QUEENS)

Bernard M. Fineson Developmental

#### Disabilities Services Office

80-45 Winchester Boulevard  
Building 12  
Queens Village, NY 11427  
Phone: (718) 217-4242  
Fax: (718) 217-4724

#### (STATEN ISLAND)

Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office  
1150 Forest Hill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
Phone: (718) 983-5200  
Fax: (718) 983-9768

#### Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities

1050 Forest Hill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
Phone: (718) 494-0600  
Fax: (718) 698-3803

# *Long Island Special Needs*

## RESOURCE GUIDE

### ADVOCACY

#### **Association for the Help of Retarded Children**

Children of Nassau County  
189 Wheatley Road  
Brookville, NY 11545  
(516) 626-1000  
[www.ahrc.org/](http://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.ahrcsuffolk.org](http://www.ahrcsuffolk.org)

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

#### **Long Island Advocacy Center**

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

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

#### **Long Island Center for Independent Living**

3601 Hempstead Turnpike, Suite 312  
Levittown, NY 11756  
(516) 796-0144  
TTY: 516-796-0135  
[www.lilc.net](http://www.lilc.net)

The Long Island Center for Independent Living, Inc. is a provider of the NYS Medicaid Funded Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program, this unique program allows consumers qualified for Personal Care to recruit, hire & train their own caregivers. In the case of a parent of a child with special needs this program would give them control over who was providing the care for their child.

#### **Long Island Chapter March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation**

325 Crossways Park Drive  
Woodbury, NY 11797

**(516) 496-2100**

Services Provided: Community education, information and referral, individual/case advocacy.  
Other: Specializing in community education

#### **Nassau County Commission on Human Rights**

240 Old Country Road  
Mineola, NY 11501  
(516) 571-3662  
[www.nassaucountyny.gov](http://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/managedC.htm](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/dss/managedC.htm)

Services Provided: Information and referral

#### **Nassau County Medical Center, Division of Genetics, Department of Pediatrics**

2201 Hempstead Turnpike  
East Meadow, NY 11554  
(516) 572-5717

Services Provided: Community education, Future planning, information and referral, treatment.

#### **Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee, Inc.**

One Helen Keller Way,  
Hempstead, NY 11550  
(516) 292-8100  
[www.nslawservices.org](http://www.nslawservices.org)

Services Provided: This unit is funded by the Committee on Quality of Care and Advocacy for persons with developmental disabilities to provide free advocacy and legal services to this population.

#### **Suffolk Early Childhood Direction Center**

Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI)  
99 Hollywood Drive  
Smithtown, NY 11787  
(631) 863-2600

Services Provided: Information and referral

### AUTISM

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

189 Wheatley Road  
Brookville, NY 11545  
(888) 918-9198  
[www.ahany.org](http://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.

#### **Autism Speaks, Inc.**

380 Oakwood Rd.  
Huntington Station  
(631) 521-7853  
[www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

#### **Kids Success, Inc.**

2950 Hempstead Turnpike  
Levittown, NY 11756  
(516) 796-0989  
[www.all4kidsuccess.com](http://www.all4kidsuccess.com)

Services Provided: Educational and intervention services for parents, educators, schools, and caregivers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADD/ADHD Learning Disabilities, Emotional and Behavioral 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](http://www.codycenter.org)

#### **Quality Services for the Autism Community (QSAC)**

56-37 188th Street  
Fresh Meadows, NY 11365  
(718) 357-4650  
[www.qsac.com](http://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

# ***Long Island Special Needs***

## **RESOURCE GUIDE**

(516) 848-8551  
[www.unitedsupportsforautism.org](http://www.unitedsupportsforautism.org)  
 Contact: Natalia Appenzeller, Ph. D.

### **CAMPS**

#### **Camp Akeela**

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

#### **Camp Horizons**

127 Babcock Hill Road  
 South Windham, CT 06266  
 860-456-1032 or [www.camphorizons.org](http://www.camphorizons.org)

#### **Camp Horseability**

P.O. Box 410-1  
 Old Westbury, NY 11568  
 516-333-6151 or [www.horseability.org](http://www.horseability.org)

#### **Camp Huntington**

56 Bruceville Rd  
 High Falls, NY 12440  
 866-514-5281 or [www.camphuntington.com](http://www.camphuntington.com)

#### **Camp Loyaltown**

Hunter, NY 12442.  
 518-263-4242 or [www.camployaltown.org](http://www.camployaltown.org)

#### **Camp Northwood**

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

#### **Frost Valley YMCA Camps**

2000 Frost Valley Rd  
 Claryville, NY 12725  
 845-985-2291 or [www.frostvalley.org](http://www.frostvalley.org)

#### **Helen Keller Summer Camp**

Farmingdale State University of New York  
 516-485-1235, ext. 617 or [info@helenkeller.org](mailto: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](http://www.gershacademy.org)

#### **JCC of the Greater Five Towns Camp Friendship**

207 Grove Ave.,  
 Cedarhurst, NY 11516. 5

516-569-6733 or [Gayle.fremed@fivetownsjcc.org](mailto: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](http://www.sjjcc.org)

#### **Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center Aspire Program**

45 Manetto Hill Rd.,  
 Plainview, NY 11803  
 516-822-3535, Ext. 332 or [www.miyjcc.org](http://www.miyjcc.org)

#### **My Shine Program**

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

#### **NYU Summer Program for Kids**

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

#### **Our Victory Day Camp**

46 Vineyard Lane  
 Stamford, CT 06902  
 203- 329-3394 or [www.ourvictory.com](http://www.ourvictory.com)

#### **Powerpals Physical Fitness Camp**

4 Cedar Swamp Rd.,  
 Glen Cove, NY 11542.  
[www.power-pals.com](http://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](http://www.ramapoforchildren.org)

#### **Summit Camp & Travel**

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

#### **Southampton Fresh Air Home**

36 Barkers Island Rd  
 Southampton NY 11968  
 631-283-5847 or [www.sfah.org](http://www.sfah.org)

#### **TAPA (Theresa Academy of Performing Arts) for Children**

#### **with Special Needs**

516-432-0200 or [www.TheresaFoundation.org](http://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](http://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 Avenue  
 Roosevelt, NY 11575  
 (516) 378-2000

[www.ucpn.org](http://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?

*Continued on page 50*

# **Long Island Special Needs**

## **RESOURCE GUIDE**

### **Continued from page 49**

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**

(Formerly Physically Handicapped Children's Program)

Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Division of Services for Children with Special Needs

50 Laser Court

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.

#### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

Some examples of children ages birth to 21 who are eligible for services are:

Children with chronic health conditions such as spina bifida, asthma, diabetes, cerebral palsy, PKU, cancer, blood, hearing or seizure disorders, heart conditions, etc.

Parents may be asked to pay a fee based on their ability to pay.

### **Feel Better Kids**

626 RXR Plaza

Uniondale, New York 11556

(866)257-kids(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 Avenue, 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 Drive**

**Syosset, NY 11791**

**(516) 921-7171/(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 Road**

**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.

### **The Hagedorn Little Village School**

**Jack Joel Center for Special Children**

**750 Hicksville Road**

**Seaford, New York 11783**

**(516)520-6000**

Services Provided: The mission of HLVS is to provide the finest educational and therapeutic programs for infants and young children with a wide range of developmental disabilities.

ties. These disabilities may include cognitive delays, social/emotional deficits, autistic spectrum disorders, speech/language delays, orthopedic and/or motor impairments, visual impairments, and/or significant medical issues.

## **DOWN SYNDROME**

### **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.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Gersh Academy**

**21 Sweet Hollow Road**

**Huntington NY, 11743**

**Phone: 631.385.3342**

**Fax: 631.427.6332**

**www.gershacademy.org**

Gersh Academy is a special education school headquartered in Long Island, New York. Unlike other autism schools, Gersh Academy is a school where children with learning disabilities can spend their entire career, from kindergarten through college, in a coordinated learning environment customized to their individual needs.

## **EPILEPSY**

### **Epilepsy Foundation of Long Island**

**550 Stewart Avenue**

**Garden City, NY 11530**

**(516) 739-7733**

**www.epilepsyfoundation.org/longisland/**

Services Provided: The Epilepsy Foundation of Long Island serves people with Epilepsy, as well as other developmental disabilities through its Day Habilitation program; Residential program; a Community Services program that provides Medicaid Service Coordination, Respite, and Residential

# *Long Island Special Needs*

## RESOURCE GUIDE

Habilitation.

### **Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York**

257 Park Avenue South, Suite 302, New York, NY 10010  
(212) 677-8550  
[www.epilepsyinstitute.org](http://www.epilepsyinstitute.org)

## GENERAL

### **Family and Children Association**

180 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Hicksville  
(516) 935-6858  
175 Nassau Rd., Rossevelt  
(516) 623-1644  
510 Hempstead Tpke, Ste. 202  
West Hempstead

### **LDA of Long Island**

44 South Elmwood Avenue  
Montauk, NY 11954  
(631) 688-4858  
[Idalongisland@yahoo.com](mailto:Idalongisland@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](http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/departments/healthservices/children.aspx)  
Contact: Liz Corrao

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

at the Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center  
45 Manetto Hill Rd., Plainview  
(516) 822-3535  
[www.miyc.org](http://www.miyc.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](http://www.artwithoutwalls.net)  
[artwithoutwalls3@webtv.net](mailto:artwithoutwalls3@webtv.net)

Services Provided: Art without Walls, Inc. Established in 1985 is an award winning 501c3 NY state arts-heath 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 Street, New York, NY 10017  
(212) 682-5272  
[www.mda.org](http://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](http://www.tourette-syndrome.com)

Services Provided: Community education, information and referral

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

### **Nassau County BOCES Rosemary Kennedy School**

2850 North Jerusalem Road, Wantagh, NY 11793  
[www.staffet@mail.nasboces.org](mailto: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 Street, 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.

# District 75

## Dedicated to educating New York City's Special Needs children

**D**istrict 75 provides citywide educational, vocational, and behavior support programs for students who are on the autism spectrum, have significant cognitive delays, are severely emotionally challenged, sensory impaired or multiply disabled. District 75 consists of 56 school organizations, home and hospital instruction and vision and hearing services. Its schools and programs are located at more than 310 sites in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and Syosset, New York.

### Mission

The mission of District 75 is to provide appropriate standards-based educational programs, with related service supports, to approximately 23,000 students with severe challenges, commensurate with their abilities. The district is committed to working with students and their families to afford them an opportunity to maximize their potential, become contributing members of society and develop the tools to ensure maximum personal independence and self-esteem.

District 75 provides citywide educational, vocational, and behavior support programs for students who are on the autism spectrum, severely challenged, and/or multiply disabled. District 75 consists of 56 school organizations, home and hospital instruction, and vision and hearing services. Our schools and programs are located at more than 350 sites in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island and Syosset, NY.

District 75 collaborates with various institutions of learning and colleges to replicate best instructional practices, and offers state-of-the-art professional development for teachers. The district supports instruction through its offices of Autism, Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Inclusion, Transition, and Positive Behavior Supports. There are extended day programs providing academic inter-

vention strategies and extracurricular activities that provide opportunities to improve their social skills and self-esteem through art, dance, drama, and the like. District 75 delivers services to students in environments that include community-based vocational training sites, special education schools, institutional facilities, inclusive settings, community school, students' homes, high schools, hospitals, and agencies.

As mandated by the students' Individualized Educational Programs (IEP's), District 75 supports a wide range of related services that include speech, counseling, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and nursing. These services are individualized and can be delivered in a small group or a one-to-one setting. All are geared to support student achievement both in school and in the community at large.

### Goals

To accomplish its mission and to support Children First, District 75 provides extensive staff and parent education programs as well as administrative leadership training. District 75 focuses its energy and resources on the following six district goals:

- To develop and expand options, within the least restrictive environments, for the participation of students with severe disabilities in school and community settings.

- To support the development and implementation of an integrated approach to instruction, merging all components of a comprehensive program (high expectations, performance and content standards, program practices to accommodate diverse learning styles, ability levels, and assessment alternatives) to meet students' Individualized Education Programs.

- To create learning environments that provide positive behavior supports, including instruction in self-management of challenging behaviors and in social skills



development.

- To develop and implement a set of procedures that ensures the smooth transition from school to post-school adult opportunities.

To examine current regulatory, funding and administrative structures that support the achievement of the district goals and coordinate activities to facilitate systems change.

- To partner with regional general education schools under a grant for Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) in 40 general education schools, to develop and train teams on proactive behavioral interventions, so that students can remain in the least restrictive environment in their home zoned schools.

*District 75 400 First Ave., New York, NY 10010  
(212) 802-1500 <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/District75>*

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QUEENS  
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BRONX/RIVERDALE  
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New York parents find help, info and support.*



## CONNECT WITH YOUR SPECIAL NEEDS COMMUNITY



### NON PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

#### SERVICE PROVIDERS AND EVALUATORS

#### SPEECH, PHYSICAL, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

#### SCHOOLS, CAMP PROGRAMS AND PARTY VENUES

#### SPORTS, RESPITE PROGRAMS AND SOCIAL SKILLS GROUPS

#### SPECIAL NEEDS FINANCIAL ADVISORS & ATTORNEYS

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION ATTORNEYS AND ADVOCATES

#### NON-TRADITIONAL THERAPIES AND HOLISTIC TREATMENT



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PHONE 516-279-3727 OR  
EMAIL [INFO@SPECIALNEEDSEXPOS.COM](mailto:INFO@SPECIALNEEDSEXPOS.COM)



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