

Tying It Together 2006
Home, School, and Community

October 21, 2006

8:00 AM- 4:30 PM

Featuring

Cariann Harsh M.Ed.

Project Director, Department of Mental Retardation, Division of Autism
An Update from The Division of Autism

Paul Benson Ph.D.

UMass Boston, Associate Professor of Sociology and Senior Research Associate at CSDE -
Autism and the Family: An Overview of Current Research

WORKSHOPS

Beverly Hay MD

Genetic Disorders in Autism

Sara Ward SLP -CCC

Creating an Executive Function Culture to
Promote the Development of Executive Function Skills in Children

Deb Beauregard M.Ed. , Bethany Staruk and Danielle Kirdulis

Promoting Peer Relationships at The Secondary Level.

Lynn Williams Tonkin & Susan Talbot

Taking Care of Yourself (for Parents only)

Phyllis Samaris OTR/L & Karen Gibson OTR/L

Sensory Modulation: How to Use Good "Senses" in the Classroom

William Cannata & Ann Yas Esq.

ALEC - Autism and Law Enforcement Coalition

Johanne Pino - Project Coordinator, Mass Advocates for Children

MCAS Accommodations

Michele D. Mayer, Ed.S., BCBA Janine A. Solomon, Esq.

Transitional Services – Practical and Legal Information for Effective Implementation

Panel Discussion with Therapeutic Recreational Programs

Soccer, Accessport America, Therapeutic Horseback Riding , Special Olympics and more presenting
with a Resource Table from various providers across the region.

Donations

Anna Rogers
 Charlene Hopkins
 Flagship Bank and Trust
 Donna Quinn
 Alison Bromberg
 Dick & Kim Loring
 The Lidstone Family
 Janet Amorello

Family Steering Committee Profile Brenda Waleski

Hello, my name is Brenda Waleski from Sturbridge. I am a mother to three boys, 6 year old twins one who is developmentally delayed and has a learning disability and 5 year old who was diagnosed with Autism one and a half years ago.

I joined the steering committee last September representing the South Valley area. I joined the steering committee to give a "voice" to this area. If you are from the South Valley area then you know there are not a lot of services without driving an hour or two. That is changing. We are having support groups and activities every month in different towns from the South Valley area.

There is a wonderful group of people working for the center and helping it grow. We are all joined by autism and are on the same or similar journey. Feel free to email at bwaleski@hmea.org

New On The Shelves

I Have Autism—A Child's First Look at Autism by Pat Crissey

That's What's Different About Me! Helping Children Understand Autism Spectrum Disorders - DVD, Program Manual & Story Book by Heather McCracken

Signposts: A Vermont Guide to Transition Planning for Students and Young Adults with Aspergers Syndrome and High Functioning Autism by Katie Chaffee (Donated and updated May 2006 for MA. DOE)

Sometimes My Brother, Helping Kids Understand Autism Through a Sibling's Eyes By Angie Healy

Ten Things Every Child With Autism Wants You to Know by Ellen Notbohm

Social Skills Solutions, A Hands-on Manual for Teaching Social Skills to Children with Autism by Janis Krempa

The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (The ABLLS) 2 copies .by James Partington

Helping Your Hyperactive/ADD Child, by John Taylor (*donated by Kathy Hamelin*)

Legal Issues in School Health Services, ed. Nadine C. Schwab (*donated by Michelle Whitehead*)

Normal People Scare Me (DVD) A Film about Autism
Donated by Ann Hurst

An Introduction to Asperger Syndrome — Information for Families of Children and Adolescents AANE

Incorporating Social Goals in the Classroom by Rebecca Moyes

Finding Our Way—Practical Solutions for Creating a Supportive Home and Community for the Asperger Syndrome Family by Kristi Sakai

Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships by Dr Temple Grandin and Sean Barron

No B.O.—The Head to Toe Book of Hygiene for Preteens by Marguerite Crump

Taking Care of Myself—by Mary Wrobel

Asperger Syndrome—Success in the Mainstream Classroom (Video) by Coulter Video

Manners for The Real World—Basic Social Skills (Video) by Coulter Video

Intricate Minds—Understanding Classmates with Asperger Syndrome (Video) by Coulter Video

Ask & Tell Self Advocacy and Disclosure for People on the Autism Spectrum Ed. Stephen Shore

Notes from the Chair—Sandra Osborne



Well, a new school year is upon us and our children will be faced with new challenges as they strive to adapt to a new environment. I would like to talk a little about communication among the IEP TEAM. Perspective is an important tool we can use to improve our ability to get accommodations for our children. Most team members are parents as well as professional. Unless they have a child with special needs, TEAM members have NO IDEA what we as parents of “special” children feel. The need to protect a disabled child is far more relentless than most can imagine or understand.

In the past, when ever I believed my son needed a particular service and the need went unmet, I was like a lioness protecting her cub. I would roar and attack those that I believed were putting him in danger [falling behind]. I would alienate those who I perceived to be resistant, distancing members one by one. Members of the TEAM would understandably avoid me therefore my child would not get the benefit of a broader viewpoint and their expertise. Team members may not understand you are fighting for your child’s fragile future.

Developing the IEP is a delicate process. At each TEAM meeting, inform the members about your anxiety and expectations. Discuss your feelings like disappointment, anger, fear and a need to protect your child. This will give the TEAM insight into your feelings and concerns. Our children are most important in our lives. Ask the TEAM members to close their eyes and put themselves in your shoes. Give them the opportunity to experience your perspective.

Doing this makes a clear connection with members of the TEAM. With this viewpoint, members can better develop the IEP that best serves your child. Their willingness to participate will enable them to define the essential elements to meet the unique needs of your child. The IEP is the blueprint for your child’s education. A well designed IEP will allow educators to teach our children successfully, assuring your child’s future happiness and acceptance within their community.

Sandra

P.S.— The Family Steering Committee would like to welcome Kathy Taylor of Holden and Stacey Lavelly of Shrewsbury to the Committee.

Kathy is a familiar face to those who attend Family Fun Activities and has extraordinary skills seeking information and resources on the web. She will make a good addition to the Committee.

Stacey has been part of the Committee for many months, serving as liaison to AFAM. At this time her schedule does not permit her to continue in that capacity but she is able and will serve as a parent on the Steering Committee. Stacey brings her creative skills as a website designer to us, and will be re-designing our website so check it out at www.arccm.org in the upcoming months!

Save the Date:

October 21

Autism Family Day at

Franklin Park Zoo!

Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts (AFAM) is proud to announce a truly special event at Boston’s famous Franklin Park Zoo. On Saturday, October 21, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., AFAM will host an Autism Family Day, open to the public, which combines outreach to the entire community with family fun activities. Plans for the day include not only full access to all the Zoo’s attractions, but special activities geared to children with special needs. There will be music, crafts, face-painting, and much more. Franklin Park Zoo is an accessible facility. Parking is free, and the Zoo can also be reached by public transportation. Advance tickets will be available from the Autism Resource Center after September 15th. Watch for further details. This event will be the perfect activity for your children with whoever is watching them that day while you attend our Annual Conference so be sure to mark your calendar for both terrific events!

The Autism Resource center is seeking a parent to serve as liaison to AFAM. This volunteer position requires the attendance at AFAM meetings in Waltham and attendance at the Family Steering committee meetings each month. If you are a parent who is interested in political advocacy and want to help others become empowered, contact the Resource Center.



Handling Homework

By the time this newsletter reaches your doorstep the initial excitement of “back to school” will be over, and the first skirmishes of the “Homework Wars” will have begun. With some planning and scheduling you may be able to forge a peace agreement with your child.

A search of numerous internet sites reveals some recurring themes in “Homework Help”

1. Get Organized

Keep homework supplies close at hand. Designate a desk drawer or get a storage bin to keep everything together. If your child’s teacher issued a supply list, use that as a starting point. Other items to be sure you have on hand: Pens, pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners, markers, crayons (for younger students) colored pencils, paper, lined & unlined, for younger grades, construction paper, glue sticks, highlighter pens, stapler & staples, paperclips, tape, sticky notes, Dictionary & Thesaurus, calculator, scissors, hole puncher, several “poster boards” plastic report covers and a presentation board for projects. This will save last minute runs to staples the night before a project is due, and decrease stress.

2. Choose a Homework Environment

Different kids have different environmental needs. Not everyone does their best sitting at a desk, some children do better lying on the floor or sitting on their bed. Some kids like background noise while others need absolute quiet. Music is not the distraction that TV is. Find out what works best for your child.

3. Help your child prioritize

When your child comes home panicking because of multiple assignments – help him to sort through and prioritize his homework

Each child is different for some it works best to have him do the hardest assignment first – setting aside everything else so he can focus on the task at hand- For others confidence is built by completing an easier assignment first before tackling the hardest. As assignments are completed pack them into the backpack for the next morning saving time in the morning so he won’t feel rushed and stressed. .

4. Use a planner

For younger students – this may be a picture schedule calendar of standard assignments (spelling words- to study for quiz on Friday) Grades 4 and up should have a homework planner to record assignments.

In his assignment notebook he should have a standard format:
Date Assigned
Subject
Assignment
Due Date

His teacher or parapro can review & initial the assignment. Many schools now have homework assignments on line that parents can check.

One trick that works to make the end of the day at the locker go smoothly and insures that the text books that NEED to come home do come home, is to fold a piece paper in half length wise and place into the book sticking out. At day’s end – your student simply picks out the books with paper sticking out, no need to retrieve from memory which classes they need books for homework.

For our students who experience increased anxiety at transitions and sensory overload even this is too overwhelming. Some school systems have enough text books that parents of students on IEP’s may, as an accommodation, request a second set of texts to be kept at home.

5. Bookmark It

Save useful links to reference sites on the internet. Here’s a few to get you started:

Math

www.mathforum.com/drmath/
www.webmath.com

For bookreports

www.factmonster.com/homework/writingskills1.html

Science

www.madscience.org

Homework Help

<http://schooldiscovery.com/students>

Take a break

www.funbrain.com

6. Build a Library

A small library of reference materials, in either print or electronic form is a must.

7. Stick to a Schedule

Schedule time for homework everyday – and stick to it. Find a time that works for your child to do homework. Even if there are no assignments due the next day – that time can be used for review or reading



Handling Homework

8. Transition slowly from play to homework.

Remember that transitions are hard , so set the stage for homework by interrupting play with some task your child doesn't mind doing such as feeding pets or setting a table, then move on to homework.

9. Get off to a good start

Get your child started by reviewing the assignment, making sure he understands what is expected then move away so he can complete the assignment independently.

10. Take Time Out

Set a timer for breaks or to signal the end of homework time. If your child is spending hours and hours on homework discuss the need for modification of assignments with his IEP team, and write a note to the teacher when an assignment is overwhelming. Know when to be your child's ally and don't let homework push him into a meltdown.

11. Be a Role Model

Use your child's homework time to do your own work. Read or do bills while they are working, this way you can be interrupted if they need help . A positive attitude towards homework will help set a better tone.

12. Let go of Responsibility

All kids forget homework or put it off until it is a crisis – Avoid trying to fix the problem but guide your child through the steps needed to salvage the situation. If they forget the assignment help them make a call to a classmate or check the

call to a classmate or check the homework page of the school's website . If they can't complete an assignment , don't write a note to the teacher, instead help them write a note to the teacher explaining why they have not completed the assignment and asking for an extension, and both of you sign it, this way they are taking responsibility.

Acting as a consultant to homework is ok but don't do the homework. If your child makes a mistake , point it out but let them decide if they will correct it and how. If you are not the best person to help your child , find someone else who can work with your child. This need not be a tutor , perhaps trading with another parent so that each parent can maintain a relationship with their child not marked by frustration and anger over homework .



CVS Volunteer Brian McAuliffe and Happy Camper Tim

You May be the Parent of Child with Sensory Issues IF ...

Instead of lists to organize your schedule you start doodling Mayer Johnson pictures .

A statement like “ Our OT ordered AIT ASAP to help with SI “ makes perfect sense to you.

You order at a restaurant not necessarily what you have a taste for, but according to food texture and color.

You go new clothes shopping at second-hand shops- (no breaking in necessary!)

The barber tools required for your child's haircut includes sedatives, a flashlight or night vision goggles, and a scissors silencer.

You break into hysterical fits of laughter when the doctor sends in only one nurse to give your child his immunization, and she exclaims “It will only take a second”

Seven different meals need to be planned for a family of four

The thought of your child's upcoming dental appointment gives you anxiety attacks that require therapy and medication

You do a dance of victory after dry kissing your daughter's mouth and she doesn't wipe her mouth afterwards.

You start wearing your underwear and socks inside out because it really does feel more comfortable that way!

Please call 508 – 595-9101 to register for all events, unless otherwise specified all events take place at The Autism Resource Center

OCTOBER



October 1, 2006

Family Fun**Apple Picking -Sholan Farms**

1125 Pleasant Street

Leominster MA

1– 3 PM

(suggested donation: \$5.00/family)

October 4, 2006

Helping Our Children Achieve.

Millbury Public Library

128 Elm Street

Millbury MA 10AM

Speaker : Christine Levine, an inclusion consultant

October 4, 2006

AUTISM 101**Introduction to Autism**

presented by Sue Loring

7-9 PM

ARC North Central

564 Main Street

Fitchburg, Ma

October 9, 2006

CENTER CLOSED

October 11, 2006

Asperger Support Group

7-9 PM

October 12, 2006

Assist Special Kids

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Intersection of Route 20 & 131

Sturbridge , MA

7– 8:30 PM

Federation For Children with Special

Needs Workshop—

Creating a Vision

October 17, 2006

Autism Support Group

Whitins Community Center

60 Main Street

Whitinsville Ma

9 AM– 11 AM

October 24, 2006

Autism Support Group

Charlton Sewing Center

12 Stafford Street

Charlton, MA

9AM—11 AM

October 18, 2006

AUTISM 101**Let's Get Organized**

presented by Barbara Donati—

Family Ties

7-9 PM

ARC North Central

564 Main Street

Fitchburg, Ma

October 21, 2006

TYING IT TOGETHER 2006**Holy Cross—Hogan Center**

8AM– 4:30 PM

Parents: \$30.00

Professionals: \$65.00

October 25, 2006

AUTISM 101**Accessing Public Supports**

presented by Kris Gregoire

7-9 PM

ARC North Central

564 Main Street

Fitchburg, Ma.

October 27 2006

Mother's Network Brunch

10:30 Am—1:30 PM

October 28, 2006

SIBSHOP

For Siblings ages 7– 14 Years

Cost \$10:00/ child—\$15.00 Family

10 AM– 2 PM

Halloween Theme

Emanuel Lutheran Church

1200 John Fitch Highway

Fitchburg, Ma

NOVEMBER

November 1, 2006

Helping Our Children Achieve.

Millbury Public Library

128 Elm Street

Millbury MA 10AM

Speaker : Ted Mahan, Forge Works

Farm, on the benefits of therapeutic horseback riding

November 1, 2006

AUTISM 101**What Is ABA**

presented by Jan Bolton M.Ed.

7-9 PM

ARC North Central

564 Main Street

Fitchburg, Ma

November 5, 2006

Family Fun**Bowl & Pizza Party**

Spare Time Recreation

117 Church Street

Whitinsville MA

2– 4 PM

(Suggested donation \$5.00/family)

November 8, 2006

Asperger Support Group

7-9 PM

November 9, 2006

Assist Special Kids

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Intersection of Route 20 & 131

Sturbridge , MA

7– 8:30 PM

Federation For Children with Special

Needs Workshop -Transition



Please call 508 – 595-9101 to register for all events, unless otherwise specified all events take place at The Autism Resource Center

November 10, 2006
CENTER CLOSED

November 13, 2006
Autism Support Group
Whitins Community Center
60 Main St.
Whitinsville, MA
7:30 PM-9:30 PM

November 14, 2006
Autism Support Group
Charlton Sewing Center
12 Stafford Street
Charlton, MA
7-9 PM

November 15, 2006
AUTISM 101
Biological Interventions
presented by Sue Loring
7-9 PM
ARC North Central
564 Main Street
Fitchburg, Ma

November 17, 2006
Mother's Network Brunch
10:30 AM– 1:30 PM

November 18, 2006
SIBSHOP
For Siblings ages 7– 14 Years
Cost \$10:00/ child—\$15.00 Family
10 AM– 2 PM
Zion Lutheran Church
70 Main Street
Oxford, MA

November 23– 24, 2006
CENTER CLOSED

November 29, 2006
AUTISM 101
Basic Rights Workshop
Gayle Green M.Ed.
Federation for Children with
Special Needs
7-9 PM

ARC North Central
564 Main Street
Fitchburg, Ma

DECEMBER



December 3, 2006
Annual Holiday Celebration
Lunch and Visit with Santa
Manor Restaurant
West Boylston
Four Seatings
11–12 PM ~ 12:15– 1:15PM
1:30 PM—2:30 PM ~ 2:45 PM– 4PM
Registration Required !

December 5, 2006
Autism Support Group
Whitins Community Center
60 Main Street
Whitinsville, MA
9-11 AM

December 6, 2006
Autism Support Group
“First Responders”
For Parents and Teachers on
Emergency Situations and Autism
7-9 PM
ARC North Central
564 Main Street
Fitchburg, Ma

December 9, 2006
Helping Our Children Achieve.
Millbury Public Library
128 Elm Street
Millbury MA -10AM
Speaker: David Pfeil, Director of
DORE Center, a program that treats
ADD/ADHD without medication.

December 13, 2006
Asperger Support Group
7—9 PM

December 14, 2006
Assist Special Kids
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Intersection of Route 20 & 131
Sturbridge , MA
7– 8:30 PM
Federation For Children with
Special Needs Workshop
Yelling Doesn't Work

Please note: As we are going to press, the Groton, Friday AM group has not set meeting dates for the group. Please check our website for updates or call the resource Center if you are interested in attending.

D.O.E. Issues Advisory on new law affecting children with ASD

In August an advisory was issued by Marcia Mittnacht, State Director of Special Education. This advisory offers guidance from the Department of Education to address a change to the special education law enacted in the spring of 2006 that affects special education programming for students with disabilities on the autism spectrum. The purpose of this advisory is to assist school districts and other interested parties in understanding these new requirements and in implementing best practices for meeting the needs of these students as schools resume instruction for the 2006-2007 school year. You can access this important advisory from the Department of Education's website: www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/07_1.html



A Program of HMEA Inc.

71 Sterling Street
West Boylston, MA 01583

Email: autism@HMEA.org

Sue Loring - Director

Julia Wild -Administrative Assistant

Julie Goren - Family Activity Coordinator

Jen Brown- Family Activity Coordinator

Kris Gregoire - Case Manager

Hours:

Mon-Tues-Thurs -Fri 9AM - 4:00 PM

Wednesdays 9 AM - 6 PM

Families Working Together



The Resource CONNECTION is a quarterly publication of The Autism Resource Center of Central Massachusetts

The Autism Resource Center does not endorse any treatments, programs or products. Articles, announcements and resources are provided for information purposes only.

FAMILY FUN DAYS AT CAMP

This year we were very fortunate to have funding from the Division of Autism to fund our Family Fun Days at Camp for June and a grant and help from CVS for August to help make Family Fun Days at Camp the best year ever!

With this funding we were able to have a watercraft instructor Cid, for every day in August, added archery with qualified instructors both weeks, and CVS volunteers made a huge difference for families. Thanks to Barbara, Brian, Laura, Tim and Rob for coming out and helping us in August. Jen Brown's creative genius made this year's crafts memorable.

Julie Goren, who is a water safety instructor, was able to work with several kids to improve their swimming capabilities.

As one child proudly showed me his new found swimming skill, we all celebrated and said we should call the Camp "CAMP CAN DO". Every year we have several children who begin the week timid and frightened about some activity and end up the week as a swimmer or a kayaker and feel good about themselves.

Then I noticed the slogan on a CVS volunteer's shirt "All Kids CAN" and realized what a perfect match our camp is with CVS's community mission.

We want to thank CVS for helping make this all possible for our families.

Family Steering Committee

Co Chairs

Sandra Osborne (Lunenburg)

Rebecca Blatz (Lunenburg)

Treasurer

Erica Ploof (Sterling)

Secretary

Stacey Lavelly (Shrewsbury)

Janet Amorello (Worcester)

Kathy Hamelin (Fitchburg)

Brenda Waleski (Sturbridge)

Bridget Zietkowski (Brimfield)

Kathy Taylor (Worcester)

Denise Rizoli (Milford)

Douglas McCallum

DMR Regional Children's and Family Services Director

Cynthia Olmsted-

HMEA - Director Family Supports