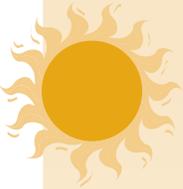


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## Our mission

To help people and families affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD)



# The Sun

Newsletter

January–March 2015

## After the diagnosis

After months of visits to doctors and specialists, your child has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (or ASD, for short). You'd stop to take a breath, but you're on a roll and asking yourself "What do I do now?" A lot depends on your child's need for assistance.

"Begin by looking at state agencies and other organizations," suggests Autism Delaware resource coordinator Heidi Mizell. "Find out what they do and how they can help. You'll also want to look at eligibility to see if your child qualifies for benefits."

In this article are 15 agencies and organizations for you to consider. The information is basic and divided here according to the type of assistance your child may need.

"Often," continues Mizell, "having access will help you move forward when you feel stuck. So begin by researching each of these organizations and choosing the ones that will help your child the most at this time."

If you find that accessing information or stepping through the process is difficult, contact Autism Delaware's Newark or Lewes office and ask to talk to a parent mentor.

Continued on pages 10–11

## Family resources

- The local branch of Family Voices®, a national network of family resources and support, is located in Wilmington, Delaware. "Like you," reads the Delaware Family Voices (DEFV) website, "we are parents of children and young adults with physical, developmental and mental health challenges, and we have firsthand experience navigating the maze of health-care services and programs in our state. We help families of children with special needs become informed, experienced, and self-sufficient advocates for their children and themselves. There is no charge for the services we provide" ([delawarefamilytofamily.org](http://delawarefamilytofamily.org)). For more information, visit [delawarefamilytofamily.org](http://delawarefamilytofamily.org). Or call (302) 669-3030.

- Family Support and Healthcare Alliance Delaware (or Family SHADE, for short) is a group of organizations, agencies, and families that joined forces to better the quality of life for children and teenagers with health-care needs and their families. Through Family SHADE's website, you can link to resources, find out about activities in your area, and connect with services, providers, and organizations. For more information, visit [familyshade.org/contact-us](http://familyshade.org/contact-us). Or call (855) 755-7423.

- The Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware supports the parents of children with disabilities and teen self-advocates. The goal is to help them gain the knowledge and skills needed to access services as well as special education programs. For more information, visit [picofdel.org](http://picofdel.org). Or call (302) 999-7394 or (302) 856-9880.

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A publication of Autism Delaware™

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## A New Year's resolution

Happy New Year! I hope your holidays have been fun and (relatively) stress free.

This time of year often prompts people to look at their lives, assess their successes and failures, and think about how to make positive changes. It's usually a hopeful time with a new year beginning.

To step back and do that same kind of assessment, the Autism Delaware Board of Directors meets for an annual retreat in early February: What are we doing well, where are our challenges, and how do we want to keep growing into the future?

It is an exciting process, but we could use your help to make sure that we are staying on course and serving the community in ways that are meaningful. Please take the time to get in touch with Autism Delaware. Let us know how you are doing, what challenges your family is facing, and what kinds of services and supports would best help you and your loved one with autism.

I know that stepping outside of the day-to-day world is not always easy and can often feel overwhelming. But staying connected to Autism Delaware can be a way to feel less overwhelmed. If you have a school-aged child, I strongly encourage you to look into the parent-child interaction therapy (PCIT) that Autism Delaware just started offering. It is a game changer! And if you are the parent of an adult, make sure you are familiar with our Productive Opportunities for Work and Recreation (POW&R) program. We are helping adults with autism live truly productive and meaningful lives.

Other ways you can stay connected—Attend a recreational outing, coffee hour, or social event, like bowling night. Give us a call, email us, or send a message through the website.

Tell us how it's going at home, at school, at work, or at play.

We really do want to hear from you, with both good news and bad. We can't be truly effective leaders in the community if we don't know what is happening to families throughout Delaware.

We have lots of opportunities to volunteer as well. And we are always working on advocacy issues that need parents and families to join in the effort. We would love to have you join us. Together, we are so much stronger and more effective than each is alone.

I have a confession to make.... About three years after Ethan was diagnosed, I made a New Year's resolution to read a book—any book—as long as it wasn't about autism. Giving myself a break and reading just for enjoyment was very freeing.

I encourage all families who are new to the autism community to write a similar resolution—Make time to have some fun! And while you're writing that list, add another resolution—Get connected to Autism Delaware in one of the ways mentioned here or throughout this newsletter. These two resolutions will help turn your *new year* into a *great year*—I promise.



**Marcy Kempner**  
President

### A service of Autism Delaware



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# Spring into advocacy & awareness

Spring 2015 will bring many opportunities to promote autism awareness in Delaware:

- Autism Delaware policy & community outreach director Alex Eldreth will ask the Delaware General Assembly to pass a resolution declaring April to be Autism Awareness Month. If you would like to be there, email Eldreth at alex.eldreth@delautism.org, or call him at (302) 224-6020, ext. 204.
- April 2 is Smart Cookie Day, the day Autism Delaware sets aside every year for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families to tell their personal stories to the Delaware General Assembly. In addition to sharing what it's

like to live with ASD, families share cookies with the legislators. If you would like to take part in this effort, contact Alex Eldreth at alex.eldreth@delautism.org.

## How can I help raise awareness?

- Share a post or tweet about autism spectrum disorder (ASD) on social media, and ask others to do the same.
- Take a photo of yourself and your co-workers dressed in blue for World Autism Awareness Day, and post it on social media. Then, forward your photo to alex.eldreth@delautism.org so he can post it on Autism Delaware's Facebook page.
- Suggest to your company's human resources or benefits department that it sponsor a lunch-and-learn session, and then call Autism Delaware to schedule a speaker and set a date.
- Sign up for the Walk for Autism. Have fun designing a team T-shirt. And create a fundraising webpage for your personal autism story. For details, visit autismdelaware.org.

- Also on Smart Cookie Day—Autism Delaware is planning a statewide media campaign. If you would like to participate, contact Carla Koss at carla.koss@delautism.org by January 30.
- April 2 is also World Autism Awareness Day. Every year, Autism Speaks asks home and business owners to take part by decorating with blue lights. For more information on the "Light It Up Blue" campaign, visit autismspeaks.org/liub.

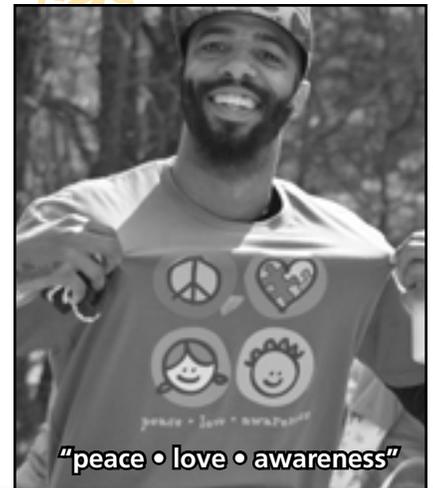


Photo by Carol Manion



**Del. General Assembly Rep. Stephen T. Smyk (R-Del 20th Dist.) on Smart Cookie Day 2014**



**Walkers at the 2014 Walk for Autism in Lewes**

Photo by Carol Manion

Autism Delaware™ is interested in a variety of viewpoints about autism and emerging research, but reference to any treatment, therapy option, program, service, or treatment provider is not an endorsement. We publish information only for informational purposes and assume no responsibility for the use of any information. You should investigate alternatives that may be more appropriate for your specific needs.



**Autism Delaware family service coordinator Dafne Carnright (front row, fourth from left) gave a presentation at Delaware State last April.**

# PARENT PARENT

Written by parents  
for parents

A few years after my son, Jake, was diagnosed with fragile X syndrome, I couldn't shake the feeling that I wanted to do something—anything!—to help my son and the fragile X community at large. But what? Researching possible treatments was out of the picture because I am not a scientist. Many other options were out, too, because I am not a doctor or therapist.

The first opportunity to help presented itself while Jake was receiving early intervention services at Easter Seals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore. There, I attended every one of Jake's therapy sessions and asked how to further the therapists' efforts by helping Jake at home. I also was granted permission to research fragile X on the Easter Seals' computers and began holding informal support groups with the other moms. Eventually, a counselor at Easter Seals helped us work through our grief and fear. As a result of all my participation, the Easter Seals' board of directors asked me to join!

What I never saw coming was being asked to speak in front of the Delaware General Assembly Joint Finance Committee in Dover. I was given the opportunity because of my knowledge of early intervention services at Easter Seals and how they were helping Jake. So, I got to tell our state's legislators

how important early intervention services are to our children and why funding is imperative to better the lives of our kids. For the first time, I felt like I was helping the cause in my own way, and it was a humbling and exciting experience.

With these experiences under my belt, I was ready to take on a little more. So, I asked some local parents of children who also live with fragile X to join me and some of my close friends at a handful of fundraisers I had organized: dances in the local church hall and motorcycle runs, all with silent auctions to help raise even more money.

And we raised a nice amount, too. The proceeds helped fund the scientific research that benefited everyone who lives with fragile X syndrome.

Finally, I felt the satisfaction of a job well done. It definitely aided in curbing that nagging feeling that I needed to do something to make life better for Jake. If you need to silence a nagging feeling, too, work always needs to be done somewhere. Your talents—no matter what they may be—can be put to good use in new and unique ways. Just stay connected. You never know where a connection may lead!

—Jen Nardo

My son, Jared, received his autism diagnosis just over two-and-a-half years ago. It was the week before he started kindergarten, and although my husband and I were expecting the diagnosis, it still brought a great deal of emotion into our lives—and many new things. In that first year, we learned a whole new language, terms like "medical classification" and "educational classification," "DSM IV" and "DSM V," "individualized education program," "vestibular stimulation," "echolalia," and "auditory processing disorder."

We were fortunate to be able to participate in a parent education program at our son's school. The meetings were a great source of support for me personally and taught both of us a great deal about how Jared functions in school and in the world. The parents in that group also introduced us to various services and programs we were not aware of—and for that, I'm grateful!

The following year, I began to get more involved in parent groups. I went primarily to meet other parents of children with ASD (autism spectrum disorder) but found myself asking questions. I wanted to understand the system of services that was helping Jared make great progress—and why similar results weren't being produced for everyone.

Through some additional committees and workshops, I learned another new language, a soup of acronyms and initials: DAP, IDEA, MRB, PAC, DDDS, CDS, PIC, and the list goes on and on. And I found myself reading publications like the *Blueprint for Collective Action* and *Delaware's Administrative Code*. Plus, I met even more amazing people: more parents,

teachers, and therapists; district and state personnel; and leaders in the autism field.

I've had the pleasure of meeting Marie-Anne Aghazadian and Marcy Kempner, who helped create the Parent Information Center of Delaware and Autism Delaware, respectively. These agencies support my son—and Aghazadian and Kempner are still advocating and mentoring parents like me. I'm grateful for everything they have done as well as others who have laid the groundwork and continue to push improvements for programs, such as the Delaware Autism Program (DAP).

The educational system currently addressing the needs of Delaware's kids on the spectrum was developed when fewer than 50 children in the state were diagnosed with ASD. More than 1,200 kids with ASD attend Delaware's public schools today. As a result, the system struggles to keep up, and kids are "falling through the cracks."

There are no easy solutions, but we can do better—and our kids deserve nothing less. It's time to let our collective voices be heard—at the state level and in our local school districts. Let's build on the groundswell of momentum now that education is in the media so much: Go to a local PTA meeting, or join the autism task force. Meet other parents at Autism Delaware's parent coffee hours. Educate yourself on autism issues, and start by visiting [autismdelaware.org](http://autismdelaware.org). Most importantly, add your voice to the conversation. Everyone is needed if our children are to get the education they need to live as independently as possible.

—Dawn Maloney

# Adding the family dog to your child's daily therapy

**Sun contributor Lynne Robinson is executive director of PAWS for People, whose mission is to lovingly provide elders, children, and folks with disabilities with individualized therapeutic visits with gentle, affectionate pets.**

You know what your child with autism spectrum disorder needs. Maybe it's calming during stressful periods. Maybe your child doesn't relate to others or recognize their emotions. Or maybe your child doesn't get that others need care, too. With all these things, the family dog can help. And Frisky needn't be an obedience champ. And you needn't be a professional dog trainer either.

Check out these tips to see how a little in-home pet therapy might help support your child's needs and improve the quality of your family life:

**Tip #1**—Taking care of the family dog can help develop awareness in your child. As the one who

provides the basic needs for your pup, your child will acquire a "right here" understanding that someone besides him has needs—and your child can be a positive part of helping to meet these needs.

If your child takes over Frisky's care, he will also learn things above and beyond Kibbles 'n Bits®: When to feed the dog teaches the value of routine, how much to feed the dog teaches measurement, and where to feed the dog teaches the appropriate place to eat. Plus, your child gains a sense of control. All these factors encourage nurturing behavior and will deepen the bond between the child and his dog.

**Tip #2**—Use the family dog to get your child to put down the remote and video games. All dogs need to be exercised, and walking the dog encourages movement and exercise—outside!

Of course, being outside, your child will be approached by neighbors asking about Frisky. Encourage your child to answer the questions, and guide any conversation with strangers so your child has a pleasant experience. When walking the dog becomes routine, your child will meet the same folks and find more opportunity to develop relationships. Meanwhile, your child is getting exercise and liking it.

**Tip #3**—Making your child the "dog trainer" can be very empowering. When your child teaches commands to the dog in a patient and consistent manner—and the dog obeys—your child will earn a sense of accomplishment and control. Additionally, a lot of communicating happens—and give and take as well!

This sounds so easy because it is. Once you start viewing your dog as a partner in what you're trying to accomplish for your child, you'll begin seeing many ways to incorporate Frisky into your child's daily routine. In turn, Frisky can help soothe your child during meltdowns, improve your child's sleep routine, encourage interaction, and provide appropriate controls.

If this PAWS-itive approach seems doable for your family, visit [PAWSforPeople.org](http://PAWSforPeople.org), or call (302) 351-5622 and ask about the class, *What Do You Do with the Dog...at Home?*



## Blue Jean Ball buzzed with talent and financial support



**[Above]** On acoustic guitar, M-Perfect (far left) joined Love Seed Mama Jump on stage.

**[Far right]** Just Us front man Alan Fogelman and drummer Anthony Benevento are joined on stage by several local pageant winners—and Alan's father.

The Autism Delaware Blue Jean Ball buzzed with excitement this year as three musicians with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) stepped on stage September 20. In opening act Just Us, both front man Alan Fogelman and drummer Anthony Benevento have ASD. Plus, jamming with main act Love Seed Mama Jump was James Matthew Johnson (AKA "M-Perfect"), who also has ASD.

Buzz was also generated by the featured live auction item, an acoustic guitar signed by American country singer Luke Bryan. Local businesses and individuals donated goods and services that were either enjoyed by the evening's more than 300 party-goers or sold in the event's live and silent auctions.

"We were very lucky this year to be able to enjoy so much talent and generosity," says Autism Delaware events manager Deanna Principe. "The net proceeds from the Blue Jean Ball amounted to 33 percent more than we brought in last year—and it's going to much-needed programs and services statewide."



# INSIDE Autism™ Delaware

## How does Autism Delaware serve the community?

The demand for Autism Delaware programs and services can be overwhelming. Where only 152 public school students in Delaware were classified as having autism in 1991, 1,298 were classified in 2013. That's an increase of more than 754 percent in 22 years!

To help meet the skyrocketing needs of Delawareans with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Autism Delaware not only is expanding existing programs and services but also is creating new ones. Below is a summary of our programs and services.

**Family support** includes parent coffee hours, a speaker series, and support groups for the grandparents, dads, and spouse-partners of people with ASD.

**Awareness** is also a piece of Autism Delaware's family support budget. Awareness provides much-needed information to the community at large as well as to the growing autism community, including

- the parent packet (an in-depth collection of names, numbers, and overviews that every parent with a newly diagnosed child should have),
- this quarterly newsletter that you're reading,
- periodic updates for Autism Delaware's Google group, and
- social media, such as Facebook.

As of November 2014, Autism Delaware had 2,821 followers of our organizational Facebook page, 2,285 followers for our Twitter account, 1,130 subscribers to our Google group events and information email list, and 333 subscribers to our parent support email list.

1,255 families as of September. Of the 1,255 contacted families, 274 were first-time contacts; the remainder were follow-ups.

**Adult services** are provided by the Autism Delaware program familiarly known as POW&R. Short for Productive Opportunities for Work and Recreation, the program offers community-based vocational services; competitive, supported, and self-

Acknowledging the importance of socialization for people with ASD, Autism Delaware also offers recreational outings (summer day camp, summer swim club, junior golf, and teen/tween game night) and social events (sensory friendly bowling, roller skating, and movies; the annual beach picnic and holiday parties; train rides and Blue Rocks games).

Where Autism Delaware held 178 informational, social, and recreational opportunities for families in 2013, in 2014, 197 had been scheduled.

And where Autism Delaware parent mentors contacted 556 families in 2011 and 1,020 in 2012, in 2014, they contacted

employment; and social and wellness activities. The goal is to support each individual's ability to live, learn, and work to his or her fullest potential.

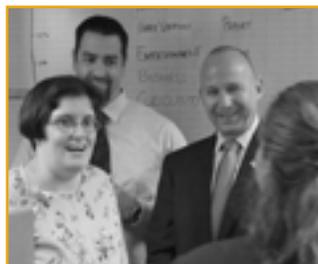
After analyzing the program for two years, SEDL's National Advisory Panel of the Vocational Rehabilitation Service Models for Individuals with ASD Project named POW&R one of 10 effective programs nationwide for adults with ASD.

Where Autism Delaware's POW&R program served 53 participants in January 2012, 89 participants were served as of November 2014. That's a 68-percent increase! POW&R currently works with 46 Autism Delaware community partners.

**Clinical services** were added as a three-year pilot program in January 2012. The goal was to expand therapeutic opportunities in Delaware, and various programs were considered for optimum effect in the autism community. Today, the Autism Delaware pilot program offers diagnostic evaluations, individualized parent-child interaction therapy (or PCIT, for short), and staff training.

Overseeing these services, Susan Peterson, Ph.D., is a doctoral-level board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA-D) and a Delaware-certified school psychologist with breadth of experience plus a deep understanding that results in a unique view into the needs of the whole child.

**Advocacy** provides a "voice" for families advocating on behalf of their loved ones with ASD. Key to improving the quality of life for Delawareans living with ASD, advocacy reaches local, state, and federal levels. Handling the range of issues affecting the autism community, Autism Delaware's advocacy program helped get SB22 (the senate bill requiring insurance coverage for autism treatment) passed and signed into law in 2012 and, more recently, helped draft the legislative resolution establishing the autism educational task force. Plus, we joined forces with other advocates to have a voice in the Department of Transportation's plans to change the state's paratransit system.



**POW&R participant and Dover Motorsports office assistant Jaclyn Dotson, Dover Motorsports manager Jason Anderson, and Delaware Governor Jack Markell talked to POW&R director Katina Demetriou during the governor's visit to Autism Delaware's adult services program on October 13.**

## Enjoying Halloween treats



Autism Delaware's family support program organized Halloween treats for 95 people on the spectrum. On October 24, the haunted (but not scary) train ride pulled out of the Wilmington & Western Railroad station in Wilmington at 6:00

PM sharp. And on October 25, the Southern Delaware Fall Festival offered hay rides and pumpkin decorating in Killens State Park, Felton.

## Appreciating volunteers

Volunteers are a crucial component of Autism Delaware because, like all independent 501(c)3 nonprofits, Autism Delaware fundraises to cover the cost of much-needed programs and services. To make sure that more of the raised funds go where they're needed, volunteers help man family support programs and advocacy efforts as well as fundraisers, such as the statewide Walk for Autism.

### Call for nominations

**Nominations are now being accepted for outstanding volunteer and outstanding leader in the community. For details, visit [autismdelaware.org](http://autismdelaware.org).**

Volunteer efforts can also be witnessed in the community. Individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to improve the quality of life for all Delawareans living with ASD may be seen organizing social activities and raising public awareness as well as chairing Autism Delaware fundraising committees.

As a result, many people make a very big difference in the ASD community every day. Please help Autism Delaware celebrate their effort by nominating one or more volunteers.

It's easy to do: Download a form at [autismdelaware.org](http://autismdelaware.org), and email it to [delautism@delautism.org](mailto:delautism@delautism.org) by February 15, 2015.

Let's say "Thank you" to some of the most important people associated with Autism Delaware. Because of them, people with ASD benefit from crucial programs and services.



**Volunteering at Walk for Autism, Kohl's Associates in Action ensure that more funds go to programs and services.**

## Supporting education

Every spring, Autism Delaware awards a variety of scholarships to eligible individuals. The hope is that both highly skilled and soon-to-be professionals will remain in the community, teaching and supporting our children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Applications are now available for the following scholarship opportunities:

**Daniel and Lois Gray Memorial Scholarship**—This \$1,000 scholarship is available to an eligible University of Delaware undergrad or grad student who plans to become a professional in the ASD community.

**Adult with Autism Scholarship**—This \$1,000 scholarship supports an adult with ASD who wants to attend college or other postsecondary educational program.

**Para-to-Educator Stipend**—This \$1,000 stipend is available to an eligible paraprofessional who, in the past year, completed his or her education to become a teacher of children with ASD.

To download a copy of the scholarship application, visit [autismdelaware.org](http://autismdelaware.org). Completed applications are due in the Autism Delaware Newark office by February 15, 2015.

## PCIT helps children with ASD

In addition to diagnostic evaluations, Autism Delaware's clinical services include individualized parent-child interaction therapy. Known as PCIT for short, this therapy is an evidence-based treatment for children, aged 2–7, who exhibit challenging and disruptive behaviors. PCIT serves as a successful first-line treatment that

- builds language and conversational skills in the child,
- increases a child's attention span and ability to remain focused on the task at hand,
- addresses repetitive and self-stimulatory behaviors,
- expands the play repertoire with age-appropriate tasks, and
- improves the parent-child relationship.

At Autism Delaware, parents and caregivers work with trained PCIT therapist Susan Peterson, Ph.D., BCBA-D, to learn in 12–16 sessions the skills for building a positive relationship with their children while changing negative parent-child behavior patterns.

For more information about PCIT, visit [autismdelaware.org](http://autismdelaware.org). Or call (302) 224-6020, ext. 221.

# INSIDE Autism™ Delaware

## Grant application now available

Grant applications are now being accepted from community organizations whose objectives align with Autism Delaware's mission: helping people and families affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Delaware. Applications must also explain how the grant money will specifically impact the ASD community.

Preference will be given to organizations that Autism Delaware families are involved in or that

can provide an in-kind donation or matching funds.

Autism Delaware reviews all submitted applications and will be responsible for approval. If approved, the awarded amount will vary with the total determined annually during the budget process. A grant can be worth as much as \$2,000.

To apply for the Autism Delaware grant, visit [autismdelaware.org](http://autismdelaware.org), and download the application. The deadline is February 15, 2015.

### Did you know?

The \$250 Autism Delaware Conference Stipend is available year round and can be applied to any related cost.

Submit a request to [teresa.avery@delautism.org](mailto:teresa.avery@delautism.org). Be sure to include the name of the conference, its date, and the costs associated with attending.

## Shop & donate at AmazonSmile

Like Amazon.com, AmazonSmile lets you shop for millions of products in an easy and automatic way, but these items will also let you donate 0.5 percent of your purchases—at no cost to you—to your favorite charitable organization. And you can choose from close to one million worthy organizations, including Autism Delaware.

"You can shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) instead of [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), and they will donate a small portion of their price to a charity of your choice," says David Gray, brother of Autism Delaware board secretary John Fisher Gray. "I am currently supporting Autism Delaware."

## Programs and services

### January

- 7, 14, 21, 28**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. Register: Karen Tuohy at (302) 633-3316.
- 7**—Parent coffee hour. Hampton Inn (lobby). 117 Sandhill Dr. Middletown. 9:30 AM.
- 9**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 13**—Parent coffee hour. Panera Bread. 3650 Kirkwood Hwy. Wilmington. 9:00 AM.
- 17**—Sensory friendly movie: *Underdogs*. Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall. 1365 N. Dupont Hwy. Dover. 10:00 AM.
- 31**—Sensory friendly roller skating party. Milford Skating Center. 1 Park Av. Milford. 5:00–7:00 PM. R.S.V.P.: Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

### February

- 4, 11, 18, 25**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. Register: Karen Tuohy at (302) 633-3316.
- 4**—Parent coffee hour. Hampton Inn (lobby). 117 Sandhill Dr. Middletown. 9:30 AM.
- 7**—Sensory friendly movie: *The Sponge Bob Movie*. Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall. 1365 N. Dupont Hwy. Dover. 10:00 AM.
- 10**—Parent coffee hour. Panera Bread. 3650 Kirkwood Hwy. Wilmington. 7:00 PM.
- 13**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 16**—Grandparents support group. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

### March

- 4**—Parent coffee hour. Hampton Inn (lobby). 117 Sandhill Dr. Middletown. 9:30 AM.
- 4, 11, 18, 25**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. Register: Karen Tuohy at (302) 633-3316.
- 10**—Parent coffee hour. Panera Bread. 3650 Kirkwood Hwy. Wilmington. 9:00 AM.
- 12**—Speaker series: *Challenging behaviors*. Mt. Pleasant High School. 5201 Washington St. Ext. Wilmington. 7:00 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 13**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 14**—Sensory friendly movie: *Cinderella*. Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall. 1365 N. Dupont Hwy. Dover. 10:00 AM.
- 16**—Dads support group. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:00 PM. Register: Brian Hall at (302) 224-6020.
- 22**—Spring bunny train ride. Wilmington & Western Railroad. 2201 Newport Gap Pike. Wilmington. 2:30 PM sharp. Register: Visit [autismdelaware.org](http://autismdelaware.org) for the Bidpal link.
- 28**—Sensory friendly movie: *Home*. Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall. 1365 N. Dupont Hwy. Dover. 10:00 AM.
- 28**—Sensory friendly roller skating party. Milford Skating Center. 1 Park Av. Milford. 5:00–7:00 PM. R.S.V.P.: Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

## Sensory friendly events! Sensory friendly events!

### Movies

Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall, 1365 N. Dupont Hwy., Dover  
10:00AM

<i>Underdogs</i> January 17	<i>The Sponge Bob Movie</i> February 7	<i>Cinderella</i> March 14	<i>Home</i> March 28
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### Roller skating

Milford Skating Center, 1 Park Av.  
5:00–7:00PM

January 31  
March 28

R.S.V.P.: Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410

### Parent coffee hour

**Hampton Inn (lobby)**  
117 Sandhill Dr.  
Middletown

9:30AM  
January 7  
February 4  
March 4

**Panera Bread**  
3650 Kirkwood Hwy.  
Wilmington  
January 13 @ 9:00AM  
February 10 @ 7:00PM  
March 10 @ 9:00AM



### Support groups

Autism Delaware  
924 Old Harmony Rd.  
Suite 201, Newark

#### Dads support group



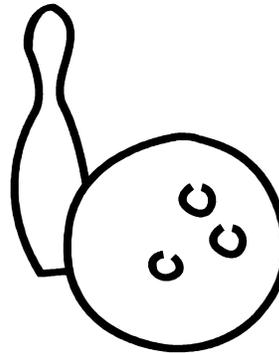
January TBA  
March 16  
6:30–8:00PM

**Register:**  
Brian Hall  
at (302)  
224-6020

#### Grandparents support group

February 16  
6:30PM

**Register:**  
Heidi Mizell  
at (302) 224-6020



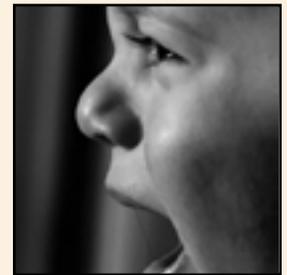
### Bowling night

Every Wednesday  
5:30–7:00PM

**Bowlerama**  
3031 New Castle Av.  
New Castle

For registration info, see  
"Programs and services"  
on page 8.

### Speaker series Challenging behaviors



March 12, 2015

7:00PM

**Mt. Pleasant High School**  
5201 Washington St.  
Ext., Wilmington

**Register:**  
Heidi Mizell  
at (302) 224-6020

## Teen/Tween game night

For teens and tweens with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who are functionally communicative, independent, and capable of playing interactive board games

**Place:** Autism Delaware™ Newark office  
**Dates:** Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 13  
**Time:** 6:30–8:30PM  
**Cost:** \$30 per season (includes all three sessions)  
Must be paid at registration.  
**Register:** (302) 224-6020; heidi.mizell@delautism.org

### Winter 2015 season

**Place:** Autism Delaware™ Lewes office  
**Dates:** TBA [For dates, visit the autismdelaware.org homepage.]  
**Time:** 6:00–7:45PM  
**Cost:** \$10 per session (Must be paid at registration)  
Register by the Wednesday prior to the session.  
**Register:** (302) 644-3410; dafne.carrnright@delautism.org

**After the diagnosis** Continued from p. 1

## State assistance

The state of Delaware maintains a department dedicated to bettering Delawareans' quality of life by "promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations" ([dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/admin/dhssmiss.htm](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/admin/dhssmiss.htm)). Known as the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), it offers a range of programs and services depending on your child's eligibility. Contact information for specific resources can be found at [dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/main/contacts.htm](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/main/contacts.htm).

For children with new ASD diagnoses, parents should focus on the DHSS division that covers developmental disabilities services, Medicaid and medical assistance, and public health:

- The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) supports people with

intellectual and developmental disabilities. For more information, visit [dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/ddds](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/ddds). For a quick reference guide to DDDS, visit [dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/ddds/go\\_to.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/ddds/go_to.html).

- The Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) offers services for babies, children, and seniors with disabilities as well as for caregivers and professionals. For more information, visit [dhss.delaware.gov/dmma](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dmma). To contact a specific resource, visit [dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dmma/index.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dmma/index.html).
- The Division of Public Health (DPH) protects and promotes the health of all Delawareans. For more information and to contact a specific resource within DPH, visit [dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/index.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/index.html). A list of services is available at [dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/servicesaz.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/servicesaz.html).



**Joey, Joe, and Sami are home base for Autism Delaware parent mentor Deanna Principe. For a mentor's help, call (302) 224-6020 or (302) 644-3410.**

## Assistive technology (AT)

According to the National Center for Learning Disabilities in New York City, "assistive technology can help children with learning disabilities leverage their strengths and work around or compensate for specific learning problems. These supports can be key to helping users become more independent in school and throughout life—on the job and in activities for daily living" ([nclcd.org/students-disabilities/assistive-technology-education](http://nclcd.org/students-disabilities/assistive-technology-education)).

In Delaware, AT is available through:

- **Easter Seals Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore**—Easter Seals' New Castle location includes a display of hundreds of assistive devices. You can also search catalogs and view DVDs for maintaining or improving independence and home safety. For more information, send an email to [resources@esdel.org](mailto:resources@esdel.org), or call (302) 221-2087. For general information about AT at Easter Seals, visit [easterseals.com/de/explore-resources/making-life-accessible](http://easterseals.com/de/explore-resources/making-life-accessible).
- **The Center for Disabilities Studies at the University of Delaware**—The Center's AT program is called the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI). DATI's goal is to help provide the tools needed by Delawareans with disabilities to live safely and independently in the community. For more infor-

mation about DATI, visit [dati.org/aboutus/index.html](http://dati.org/aboutus/index.html). Or call (302) 831-1589.

DATI's services include

- Equipment Exchange Program,
- no-cost, short-term equipment loans that you can "try before you buy,"
- AT workshops and other training sessions,
- advocacy for improved access and funding,
- informational material in a variety of formats,
- quarterly newsletter,
- technical assistance regarding device selection and operation and access to funding,
- participation in conferences, community meetings, and health fairs, and
- equipment demonstration centers—Called an Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC), a center is located in each county to make AT accessible to all Delawareans with disabilities:
  - In New Castle County, visit [dati.org/aboutus/NewCastleSite.html](http://dati.org/aboutus/NewCastleSite.html). Or call (302) 831-0354.
  - In Kent County, visit [dati.org/aboutus/KentSite.html](http://dati.org/aboutus/KentSite.html). Or call (302) 739-6885.
  - In Sussex County, visit [dati.org/aboutus/SussexSite.html](http://dati.org/aboutus/SussexSite.html). Or call (302) 856-7946.

## For children, youth, and their families

Delaware’s Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families (DSCYF) and Department of Education offer two resources for children, youth, and families living with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

**DSCYF** (commonly referred to as the Delaware Children’s Department) provides and manages a range of services for children who experience abandonment, abuse, legal proceedings, mental health needs, neglect, or substance abuse. Services include prevention, early intervention, assessment, and treatment.

To see if your child is eligible for treatment, visit DSCYF’s Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS)—formerly called Child Mental Health—at [kids.delaware.gov/pbhs/pbhs.shtml](http://kids.delaware.gov/pbhs/pbhs.shtml). Or call (302) 633-2600.

**By law, schools** must serve children with disabilities who need special education. Every local public school district is required to identify children with disabilities and offer them a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) that provides significant learning to the child.

In Delaware, “autism” is one of the eligibility classifications, and birth to 21 is the age range for autism eligibility in school. Contact your child’s school, and request an autism-specific educational evaluation. For assistance in understanding this process, call Autism Delaware or the Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware.

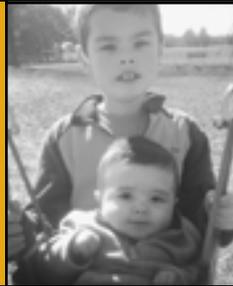
### Infants and children to age 3

The Department of Public Health (DPH) maintains an early-intervention program specifically for infants and children to the age of 3.

Called Child Development Watch (or CDW, for short), the program’s mission is to enhance not only the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delays but also their families’ ability to meet their young children’s needs.

For more information, visit [dhss.delaware.gov/dph/chs/chscdw.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/chs/chscdw.html). Or call (302) 283-7240 or (302) 424-7300.

**Bryce and Logan are the sons of Autism Delaware bilingual parent mentor Paula Broody. If you know someone who could use a Spanish translator, call (302) 224-6020.**



### Financial assistance

Until unemployed Delawareans can find jobs, they can find support from a cash-assistance program called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

For more information about TANF, visit [dhss.delaware.gov/dss/tanf.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dss/tanf.html).

Office locations can be found at [dhss.delaware.gov/dss/ofc/locations.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dss/ofc/locations.html).

### Nutritional assistance

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is sometimes called SNAP but usually referred to as “food stamps.”

Overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), this program helps low-income families buy food for a better nutritional diet.

If you register for the food-supplement program and are an eligible recipient, you will be given an electronic Delaware Food First card each month to be used at local grocery stores.

For more information, visit [dhss.delaware.gov/dss/foodstamps.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dss/foodstamps.html). Or call (800) 372-2022.

### Medical and dental assistance

- Practice Without Pressure (PWP) is a Delaware-based program that helps families find health-care providers who understand intellectual and developmental disabilities (such as autism spectrum disorder [ASD]) and prepares the individual with ASD for long-term health-care treatment goals.

Through PWP’s Practice Model™, clients practice for medical, dental, and personal care procedures in the community. For more information, visit [pwpde.org](http://pwpde.org). Or call (302) 832-2800.

- The Special Needs Alert Program (SNAP-911) provides medical information about a child’s special health-care needs when Delaware’s emergency medical services (EMS) system has been notified with a 911 call. By registering your child with SNAP-911, EMS providers will be able to give appropriate emergency care to your child—and reduce your family’s stress level.

For more information about SNAP-911, visit [dhss.delaware.gov/dph/ems/emscsnap.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/ems/emscsnap.html).

Or call Delaware Emergency Medical Services for Children at (302) 223-1350.



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Helping People and Families Affected by Autism

# 2015 Walk for Autism

**Saturday, April 18**

**Cape Henlopen State Park  
Lewes**



**Saturday, April 25**

**Fox Point Park  
Wilmington**



Photos by Andrew Zeitt

**Sign-in: 9:00 AM  
Step-off: 11:00 AM**

**Register at:**

**[autismdelaware.org](http://autismdelaware.org)**