

# The Sun

Newsletter

July–September 2014

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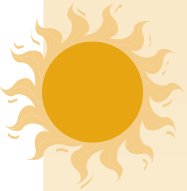
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## Our mission

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

## The never-ending need for parental signatures

**Sun contributor and executive director of the Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware, Marie-Anne Aghazadian offers an overview on "the never-ending need" for parents to sign forms during the special education process.**

When parents are first confronted with the overwhelming and confusing special education process, they often feel like the only thing schools want is their signature.

To clarify which documents require a parent's signature, why, and within what time frame, the Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware offers *Parents*

eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Download a copy of the manual at [picofdel.org/images/ParentsAreTheKey.pdf](http://picofdel.org/images/ParentsAreTheKey.pdf).

The documents covered in this manual and their page numbers follow:

- prior written notice (PWN)—16, 32
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- excusal of relevant IEP (individualized education program) members—20
- invitation to the IEP meeting—19
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Signing these forms may be mandatory or voluntary. Signing any other documents and forms is voluntary for parents. "Sometimes," notes Aghazadian, "the school wants parents to sign a form because the school is unsure if a signature is required."

Take advantage of the many learning opportunities PIC of Delaware offers both families and professionals. You will automatically receive information about these opportunities once you subscribe to PIC's weekly *News and Events*. You will also receive important news about autism research and evidence-based educational practices.

For more information about PIC of Delaware resources, visit [www.picofdel.org](http://www.picofdel.org).

*Are The Key, A Manual about the Rights and Responsibilities for Parents of Children with Special Education Needs in Delaware.*

Developed in collaboration with the Delaware Department of Education and with support from Autism Delaware, this manual is an easily understood guide to both the parents' and the schools' obligations in providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities, who are



**The Sun**

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**Autism numbers increasing**

**The time for advocacy is NOW**

As I write this column, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has just come out with new estimates for autism prevalence. The CDC now projects that one in 68 children has autism spectrum disorder (ASD). When Ethan was first diagnosed 17 years ago, we were told that the number might be one in 10,000, but that no one really knew for sure. That's an astonishing increase in knowledge and understanding in a relatively short amount of time. But this didn't just happen.

A big part of the reason that the CDC is better at estimating the numbers now is thanks to some legislation signed into law by President Bill Clinton. Known as the Children's Health Act of 2000, this law set in motion the first efforts in this country to track the number of children with ASD. At that time, Autism Delaware was a new organization, but we recognized the importance of this legislation and worked hard together to lobby our congressional delegation, even traveling to Washington as a group to meet with our legislators. It was an exciting time, we truly felt like we made a difference, and it's amazing to see the fruits of that effort still reaping benefits today.

So now that we know the alarming statistics, what do we do about them? We double our efforts at advocacy, of course! At Autism Delaware, we are focusing much of our advocacy energy on supporting the Delaware Strategic Plan to improve services and supports for individuals with ASD. Generally known as the "blueprint for

collective action," it is an exciting effort that began as a collaboration between the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies, Autism Delaware, and many other stakeholders statewide. The plan is big and bold. (For a copy of the final report, visit [udel.edu/cds/Autism\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://udel.edu/cds/Autism_Final_Report.pdf); for a blueprint update, see page 3 in this edition.) And we know it will take time to realize the blueprint's entire vision. As a first effort, we are specifically targeting improving the structure of the Delaware Autism Program (DAP) and, by extension, the education system for every child with ASD in Delaware.

The DAP was founded in 1979 with a visionary plan to educate a small number of children with ASD. The founding parents who pushed through the legislation to establish the DAP were tireless advocates. Some even camped out at Legislative Hall to persuade legislators of their dedication and commitment. Their efforts paid off and have benefited hundreds of children with ASD since then. But the model that was so ahead of its time 35 years ago has been straining to keep up with the realities of ASD in the 21st century. We are proposing a new structure for overseeing programming as well as teacher training and technical support.

**Continued at top of page 3**



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**A service of Autism Delaware**



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**The time for advocacy is NOW** Continued from p. 2

We need to make sure that every child with ASD in every district is receiving the high-quality services we have historically been able to deliver in Delaware. To make that happen, we will need lots of voices advocating in support.

That's where you come in. Connect with your state senator and representative. Make sure they get to know your family and your child with ASD. If you don't know who your legislators are, we can help you find out and even help you contact them. Keep in touch with us at Autism Delaware so that you know and understand the issues. Even as this edition of *The Sun* helps you navigate the specific ins and outs of your child's issues at school, remember that there is a bigger picture, too, and that you can help make a difference. With one in 68 children being diagnosed, our families are a force to be reckoned with. Make sure your voice is heard. Join us today as we advocate for a better future. You'll be amazed at what we can accomplish together.

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.



The blueprint's final report is available at [udel.edu/cds/Autism\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://udel.edu/cds/Autism_Final_Report.pdf).

**Blueprint update**

**Attentive legislators and eager advocates**

The Delaware Strategic Plan ("the blueprint") began as a statewide planning initiative to improve services and supports for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In another step toward this goal, the stakeholders formed the Interagency Committee for Autism (ICA). The stakeholders include parents of children with ASD, local educational agencies, the Delaware Autism Program (DAP), medical professionals, Autism Delaware, the Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware, and various state agencies, such as the State of Delaware Department of Education, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Two ICA members shared the blueprint this spring with the Delaware General Assembly and DAP's statewide parent advisory counsel (PAC).

Assembly Rep. Michael Barbieri (D-Del 18th District), Sen. David Sokola (D-Del 8th District), Sen. Margaret Rose Henry (D-Del 2nd District), Sen. Ernesto Lopez (R-Del 6th District), Sen. Bethany Hall-Long (D-Del 10th District), and Lt. Governor Matt Denn.

Avery, who is also Autism Delaware's executive director, presented the prevalence statistics. Recently, the CDC had announced that one in 68 children is now being diagnosed with ASD. "That really got everyone's attention," says Ekbladh, who is a staff member at the Center for Disabilities Studies as well as the blueprint's program coordinator.

"Then, I presented the recommendations from the blueprint. From our evaluation of the state's needs, we had identified four areas where the general assembly could provide support: a resource center, care coordination, technical assistance and training, and additional support for adults with ASD in college and jobs."

Afterward, Barbieri and Hall-Long spoke to the ICA members about training needs and wanted to know how ICA envisioned the resource center and how technical assistance and training could be offered.

**O**n March 26, ICA members Annalisa Ekbladh and Teresa Avery co-presented the blueprint's findings to Delaware General

"They were very engaged," adds Ekbladh, "and asked about the next steps. The legislators seemed concerned about the DAP. I had presented that the program was originally designed for 30 to 40 kids—and it's currently serving more than 1,200! We wanted the legislators to understand that, with the enormous expansion of the program, an increased need exists for professional development, training, and coaching."

**O**n April 7, Ekbladh took the ICA update to the DAP's statewide PAC: "I talked to parent leaders for different DAP programs across the state, at least one from each county. They are really motivated to advocate for change and additional resources.

"One issue is guidance for family members who are leaders in the programs," continues Ekbladh. "They said 'Tell us what to do and how to do it.' Marie-Anne Aghazadian [executive director of the PIC of Delaware] offered support to help families advocate for the changes they want to see.

"The parents also voiced frustration—in getting other parents in the DAP to be active and to get the school administration involved in informing parents about the issues—and expressed a desire to understand what's going on in the community and get involved.

"It's encouraging to see parents who want to make change for others as well as their own families," smiles Ekbladh. "The ICA will make sure that our legislators keep this on their radar and talk about how to get it done."

# PARENT PARENT

Written by parents  
for parents



**Sun contributor Cory Gilden with her son Casey**

As the parent of a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), I am a member of my child's IEP team (the group of professionals that works to implement Casey's individualized education program as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

I am also the group's coordinator. In other words, I am the glue that holds together the team of doctors, thera-

pists, teachers, administrators, and staff for extracurricular activities. And as the one who knows my child the best and is most invested in his development, I am a crucial member of the team.

I take the job of IEP team member very seriously. It is a contract of service and one of the few safeguards we have for our kids. So, about two months before my son's IEP is up for renewal, I brace myself and hunker down to work.

My first step is usually to write a formal letter to the team and administrative staff to let them know that I'll be audio-recording the IEP meeting. Since the IEP is a legal document and, therefore, important, I record the process because I don't trust my puny, overwhelmed brain to remember everything that happens during the meeting.

In the letter, I also express my desire to see working versions of the goals as they will be written in Cory's IEP from each team member a week or two before the meeting. If I don't

see the goals ahead of time, I request that the upcoming meeting be used as a workshop session and that a second IEP meeting be scheduled for shortly afterward.

With formalities out of the way, the real work begins.

I generally spend 30–40 hours of the next month evaluating my son's progress, observing him in school, talking to other parents, emailing and talking to his school team, and scouring the Internet and other resources to figure out what the best next steps are for my son.

Honestly, I don't like to use vacation days from work to observe my son at school or to spend my evenings writing emails to his therapists and teachers when I just want to crawl into bed. And I hate nagging the rest of the IEP team just as much as I'm sure they hate being nagged. But this is my kid. He's depending on me to be his voice and look out for him. And he is the most worthy cause I know.

By the time the actual IEP meeting rolls around, I'm a haggard mess. At that point, you could talk to me about a PLEP, a BIP, or AC/DC and it'd all be the same to me. (For the record, that's a "present level of educational performance," a "behavior intervention plan," and the Australian hard rock band.) Obviously, I would not be able to read and fully comprehend a 20-page legal document in the one hour allotted for the IEP meeting—all while six pair of eyes stare at me from around the table! For this reason, I have yet to sign the IEP at the meeting. Taking it home and reading it again while snuggled in the cocoon of a blanket is so much more effective.

After I sign the IEP and the rest of the IEP team recovers from shock, I do my happy dance and thank everyone for their time and service. We all heave a collective sigh of relief that we have a plan that will take my son into the next stage of his development—and that we don't have to see an IEP again for a while!

—Cory Gilden

## To record or not to record

Taping an IEP (individualized education program) meeting is neither authorized nor banned in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 or any other federal statute. The decision belongs to two parties: the parent or guardian and the department of education (DOE) or school district.

As the parent or guardian, you have the right to understand the child's educational needs and how the school will provide the education appropriate to the needs of the child. "If you need to tape-record the meeting so you can review all the documents and information later," notes one of Autism Delaware's parent mentors, Heidi Mizell, "then I recommend waiting to sign anything until you've reviewed it all."

On the other hand, the DOE or school district has the right to ban recording. "But," notes the Wrightslaw Way (a website on special education law and advocacy), "if a school has a policy that prohibits parents from recording meetings, that policy must include exceptions to ensure that parents understand the IEP" ([wrightslaw.com/blog/?p=1654](http://wrightslaw.com/blog/?p=1654)).

In Delaware, the Parent Information Center (PIC) recommends asking the school team for a copy of the written policy on tape-recording an IEP meeting. PIC of Delaware also suggests notifying the school team of your intent to tape-record before the actual IEP meeting ([home.comcast.net/~rhdesign/pic\\_del/learn/pic\\_tips.html#4](http://home.comcast.net/~rhdesign/pic_del/learn/pic_tips.html#4)). For more, visit [picofdel.org](http://picofdel.org).



# Sensory challenges that may come up in school

**Sun contributor Michelle Desmond Richards, MSW, is a floortime treatment specialist with All The Difference, a Wilmington, Delaware, nonprofit concerned with the impact of sensory integrative processing on people's lives.**

According to many experts in sensory integration, all children with an educational or medical diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have issues, in one way or another, related to the way their sensory systems process information from the environment. Sensory systems include touch, movement, smell, taste, sight, hearing, and balance.

These experts also believe that 10–15 percent of all children (not just children with ASD) have difficulties with sensory processing. These difficulties create challenges when performing countless everyday tasks, most often in a school

setting. Parents and teachers may be telling the children to sit still, focus, and pay attention, but their bodies are telling them to move.

Because each child has a unique set of sensory needs, how can we help each one stay regulated and focused during the school day?

For the child who needs to move:

- Allow activities that provide physical input, including climbing, swinging, jumping and safely “crashing.” And allow frequent movement breaks—not as a reward but as an addition to the child’s daily schedule.

- Assign the child tasks within the classroom that involve movement and carrying objects with weight to them.
- Have the child sit on an exercise ball or inflatable cushion instead of a chair when doing sedentary tasks.
- Give the child an object to fidget with, such as a fabric tab sewn into a pocket, a piece of soft cloth attached to the underside of a desk, a hair band, a band of stretchy material placed around chair legs so the child can push his or her shins and ankles against it, or a Koosh ball (a toy made of rubber strings attached to a soft rubber core),

For the child who needs oral input:

- Offer the child an object to chew on, such as a Chewy Tube, Pencil Topper, ChewEase, or Chewable Jewelry.
- Provide the child with crunchy or chewy snacks.
- Allow the child to chew gum.
- Allow the child to suck thick liquids through a straw, such as a smoothie or a milk shake.

For the child who craves touch or deep pressure:

- Offer squeezes or skin brushing, or teach the child how to give him- or herself this type of input.
- Provide the child with a weighted vest or blanket.

If the child with ASD either seeks out or avoids any of these types of sensory input, consider getting guidance from an occupational therapist who specializes in sensory integration-based OT.

## Online resources

- [allthedifference.org](http://allthedifference.org)
- [sensorysmarts.com](http://sensorysmarts.com)
- [spdfoundation.net](http://spdfoundation.net)

## Improve study skills now!

by Beverly Stewart, MEd, President/Director of Back to Basics Learning Dynamics, Inc.



What exactly are study skills? If your child has struggled in school, “study skills” is likely a catch phrase that has been bandied about by well-meaning teachers and administrators but not always fully explained. Simply, study skills are a collection of techniques that children can use to become more successful in school and, ultimately, in life. Best of all, study skills can be learned.

**How?** First, your child needs to get organized. For some children, organization is intuitive or quickly learned from the adults in their lives. For others—those who lose completed homework in the depths of a chaotic locker or repeatedly forget upcoming assignments—getting organized appears overwhelming.

**How can parents help?** Establish a daily routine for your child. And set up a dedicated work area where supplies are close at hand. These first steps can make a dramatic difference for students who have a hard time getting started.

Creating a work system is also a key component. Whether it’s a three-ring binder for homework, a calendar for upcoming tests, or a computer system with steps spelled out for projects, the system that works best is the system that fits your child.

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# INSIDE **Autism**<sup>™</sup> Delaware

## Walk for Autism

### 2014 event a statewide success

Breaking last year's record for the most walkers at the annual statewide event, the 2014 Walk for Autism drew more than 700 participants to the Lewes leg and more than 2,500 to Wilmington. In total, they helped raise more than \$210,000 for Autism Delaware's much-needed programs and services.



"We offered more incentive to join our fundraiser this year," explains Autism Delaware's events manager, Deanna Principe. "We moved the Wilmington leg of the Walk for Autism to Fox Point State Park, and emcee

Josh Grant announced each team crossing the start-finish line with the Delaware River behind them.

"The Lewes walk took place in Cape Henlopen State Park again, but many folks who needed a little help crossing the finish line took a newly revamped shortcut. It was a big hit."



Before each event, the president of the Autism Delaware Board of Directors, Marcy Kempner, who is also a top fundraiser, thanked everyone, including the 150 volunteers who donated their time and expertise to everything from committee work to cleaning up after the event.

With help from these volunteers, Autism Delaware is able to apply more of the raised funds to the programs and services needed by an unprecedented number of individuals affected by ASD across Delaware.

Kempner then introduced the first-ever grand marshals for the Walk for Autism: for the Lewes leg—Ginger Shaud; for the Wilmington leg—Sean Tuohy.

Autism Delaware also gratefully acknowledged the event's champion sponsor, CapitalOne, as well as the following organizations and individuals who supported the fundraiser as Walk for Autism sponsors: advoserv; Bath Fitter®; Bear-Glasgow Dental; Carman FIAT; C-Ink; Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield; Lorne Solway; Peninsula Oil and Propane; Tybout, Redfearn & Pell; Beebe Healthcare; Brain Balance Achievement Centers; Corporation Service Company; Delmarva Power; Del-One Foundation; Freeh Group International Solutions; John F. Kleinstuber & Associates, Inc.; McAndrews Law Offices, PC; Smyrna Elementary School; Brandywine Technology; Sharp Energy; Eagle Nail & Tool Supply of Milford; Bellinger's Jewelers; Re/Max Above & Beyond; Schab & Barnett; Chimes Delaware; Greater Newark CHADD; Delaware Orthopaedic Specialists; ServiceSource®; A-1 Sanitation Service, Inc.; PATS Aircraft Systems; Denise Beam, State Farm Agent; and Dover Downs Hotel & Casino.

## 2014 Smart Cookie Day

### Families advocate for autism

Twenty-five families gathered on the stairs of Legislative Hall in Dover for Smart Cookie Day on April 9. They brought fortune cookies and cards to remind their legislators that autism-related issues are important and need to be addressed. Many families had made appointments in advance to meet personally with their legislators, too.



**Above (L-R) are Delaware PTA representative Bill Doolittle, Gerard Brady, and Denise Bradley, chair of the Autism Delaware Legislative Issues Committee.**

In addition, the families gathered to hear the Delaware legislature proclaim April as Autism Awareness Month.



**Presenting her homemade cake is parent Lisa Garbutt.**

Later in the day, the families greeted legislators at Fraizer's Restaurant in Dover. Like earlier at Leg Hall, the meet-and-greet event offered an opportunity for families and self-advocates to share information about autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and how it affects their lives.

Are you interested in advocating for ASD-related issues, too? Contact Alex Eldreth, Autism Delaware's policy and community outreach director, at (302) 224-6020, ext. 204.

## Drive for Autism goes hi-tech

With proven success at Autism Delaware fundraisers last fall and this spring, smartphone technology hit the fairway at the DuPont Country Club on May 29. Players at the 13th annual Drive for Autism Celebrity-Am Golf Outing not only entered and tracked their golf scores electronically but also bid on one-of-a-kind sports memorabilia, jewelry, and art.

## Save the date

### 2015 Walk for Autism

- Lewes—April 18
- Wilmington—April 25

"The golfers didn't need to walk around with little golf scorecards and pencils," notes Deanna Principe, Autism Delaware's events manager. "Live scoring was done on their smartphones."

## And the award goes to...

This May, Autism Delaware announced the winners of the autism agency's 2014 scholarships, grants, and volunteer awards.

**Scholarships**—Veronica D'Amico, Lael Houston, Elizabeth McCabe, and Taylor Soave are this year's winners of the Autism Delaware Daniel and Lois Gray Memorial Scholarship. This award supports eligible University of Delaware students who are working toward a professional position in the autism community.

David Cook is the winner of the Autism Delaware Adult with Autism Scholarship. This award supports an adult with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who wants to attend a post-secondary educational program.

**Grants**—Awarded in support of organizations that provide needed ASD services in Delaware while aligning with Autism Delaware's goals and mission, this year's Autism Delaware community grants are awarded to Easter Seals of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore, Family Voices, Parent Information Center of Delaware, PAWS for People, and Practice Without Pressure.

**Volunteers**—The award for Outstanding Autism Delaware Volunteer goes to Jeff Carnright, Rob and Robin Delaney, Sam Johnson, Chie Kelly, Dorian Kleinstuber, Ed Martin, Jen Nardo, and John Schelich.

For volunteering their time and resources, Mervin Brittingham and George "GL" Jefferson are each named this year's Autism Delaware Outstanding Leader in the Community. And the Autism Delaware Noel Perry Smith Award for Outstanding Employer goes to Christiana Care Health Systems for the organization's effort on behalf of participants in Autism Delaware's vocational services program.

## U.S. Sen. Tom Carper visits new Lewes office

U.S. Senator Tom Carper (D-Del) toured Autism Delaware's new Lewes office on April 16 and opened a dialog about the issues faced by individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) both in Delaware and across the country. In addition to visiting with staff from the autism agency, the senator talked to POW&R participants Will Crist and Tim Magee.



Will Crist, U.S. Sen. Tom Carper, and Tim Magee.

## Lewes garden grows into POW&R job

On the weekend before the open house for Autism Delaware's new office in Lewes, a front-door garden was designed and created by the family of Madie Nicoletti, seated in the photo with Andrew Bergmann. Both are participants in Autism Delaware's adult services program, Productive Opportunities for Work and Recreation (or POW&R, for short).



In addition to plants from Pepper's Greenhouses in Milton, the garden features a bench where POW&R participants can wait for the DART bus. Madie's family—mom and dad, Lisa Nicoletti and Jay Smilyk, and siblings, Isabella Nicoletti and Jay and Evan Smilyk—intended the garden to be maintained by Madie and her friends at Autism Delaware. "Madie loves watering," explains Melissa Martin, the southern Delaware POW&R coordinator, "and this project will allow Madie and other participants to expand their garden-tending skills.

"The garden was a wonderful surprise," adds Martin. "It's so colorful and looks like it's out of *Better Homes and Gardens*. What a lovely gift to us!"

## Surprise tribute from Rep. Smyk

Following the Autism Delaware open house on April 29, Delaware General Assembly Rep. Stephen T. Smyk (R-Del 20th District) surprised staff with a tribute from the State of Delaware House of Representatives: "On this special occasion, we commend this outstanding organization for providing much-needed services and resources to Delaware's autism community. They have touched the lives of many in the ever-expanding autism community by raising public awareness, funding scholarships, educating the medical community, and holding fundraisers."



Left to right are POW&R participant Madie Nicoletti; Melissa Martin, Autism Delaware's southern Delaware POW&R coordinator; Rep. Smyk; Dafne Carnright, Autism Delaware's family service coordinator in Kent and Sussex Counties; and Autism Delaware's associate director, Brian Hall.



# INSIDE Autism<sup>™</sup> Delaware

## Presidential appreciation of POW&R volunteers

The President's Volunteer Service Award for 2013 was received this spring by Autism Delaware's adults services program. Known as

### POW&R volunteers acknowledged in *Hagley Magazine*

The Hagley Museum and Library acknowledged Autism Delaware's POW&R volunteers in the Summer 2014 issue of *Hagley Magazine*. In the last year, POW&R volunteers worked more than 100 hours, stuffing, labeling, coding, and stamping materials for various departments.

"We count on them, said the Hagley development coordinator, Cindy Gamble, "and they always fulfill their commitment to Hagley."

"We received this honor," says POW&R's director, Katina Demetriou, "because of the volunteer work done by our POW&R participants at the Hagley Museum and Library."

A commemorative pin and certificate were accompanied by a letter from U.S. President Barack Obama: "In my Inaugural Address, I stated that we need a new era of responsibility—a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our Nation, and the world. These are duties that we do not grudgingly accept, but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit than giving our all to a difficult task. Your volunteer service demonstrates the kind of commitment to your community that moves America a step closer to its great promise...."

Productive Opportunities for Work and Recreation (or POW&R, for short), the program offers volunteer opportunities as well as vocational services and social and wellness activities.

Presented by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the award recognizes Autism Delaware and POW&R for their "commitment to strengthening our Nation and for making a difference through volunteer service."

## Programs and services

### July

**1, 8, 15, 22, 29**—Summer swim club. Pool at the Rookery North Golf Course. 615 South Rehoboth Blvd. Milford. 5:30–6:30 PM. Register: Dafne Carnright at (302) 644-3410.

**2, 9, 16, 23, 30**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

**8**—Parent coffee hour. Hampton Inn (lobby). 117 Sandhill Dr. Middletown. 9:30 AM. Register: Dafne Carnright at (302) 644-3410.

**10**—Parent coffee hour. Holiday Inn Express. 24058 Sussex Hwy. Seaford. 9:00 AM. Register: Dafne Carnright at (302) 644-3410.

**11**—Teen/Tween game night.  
—Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.  
—Autism Delaware Lewes office. 6:00–7:45 PM. Register by July 9: Dafne Carnright at (302) 644-3410.

**18**—Inclusion night at the Delaware Children's Museum. 550 Justison St. Wilmington. 5:00–8:00 PM. Questions: Call DCM at (302) 654-2340.



### August

**5, 12 (makeup session)**—Summer swim club. Pool at the Rookery North Golf Course. 615 South Rehoboth Blvd. Milford. 5:30–6:30 PM. Register: Dafne Carnright at (302) 644-3410.

**6, 13, 20, 27**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

**8**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

**15**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Lewes office. 6:00–7:45 PM. Register by August 13: Dafne Carnright at (302) 644-3410.

**17**—Annual beach picnic. Cape Henlopen State Park. Main beach pavilion. 15099 Cape Henlopen. Lewes. 11:00 A.M.–4:00 PM. Register: Liz Carlisle at (302) 644-3410.

### September

**3, 10, 17, 24**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. Register: Karen Tuohy at (302) 633-3316.

**9**—Parent coffee hour. Panera Bread. 3650 Kirkwood Hwy. Wilmington. 7:00 PM.

**12**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 PM. Register: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

**20**—Sensory friendly roller skating. Christiana Skating Center. 801 Christiana Rd. Newark. 5:15–7:15 PM.

**Check the Autism Delaware homepage for sensory friendly movies as well as support groups and meetings.**

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



## Annual beach picnic

Sunday, August 17

11:00 AM–4:00 PM

Cape Henlopen State Park  
Main beach pavilion  
Lewes

Reserve your tickets today:  
Liz Carlisle at (302) 644-3410



## Parent coffee hour

### Hampton Inn (lobby)

117 Sandhill Dr.  
Middletown

July 8 @ 9:30 AM

### Holiday Inn Express

24058 Sussex Hwy.  
Seaford

July 10 @ 9:00 AM

### Panera Bread

3650 Kirkwood Hwy.  
Wilmington

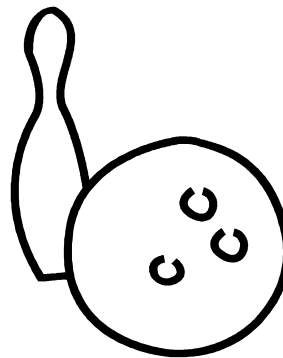
Returning after the  
summer break:

September 9 @ 7:00 PM

**Please join us!**



*The coffee is on us!*



## Bowling night

Every Wednesday

5:30–7:00 PM

Bowlerama  
3031 New Castle Av.  
New Castle

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

Free admission!  
Sensory friendly  
roller skating



\$3.00 skate rental

September 20, 2014

5:15–7:15 PM

Christiana Skating  
Center

801 Christiana Rd.  
Newark

## 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:** July 11, August 8, September 12

**Time:** 6:30–8:30 PM

**Cost:** \$30 per season (includes all three sessions)  
Must be paid at registration.

**Register:** (302) 224-6020; delautism@delautism.org

## Fall 2014 season

**Place:** Autism Delaware™ Lewes office

**Dates:** July 11, August 15, September TBD

**Time:** 6:00–7:45 PM

**Cost:** \$10 per session (Must be paid at registration.)  
Register by the Wednesday prior to the session.

**Register:** (302) 644-3410; dafne.carrnight@delautism.org

**Improve study skills now!** Continued from p. 5

Next, time management needs to be improved. How many of us have a child who chronically runs late, consistently underestimates the amount of time needed for everything from getting ready in the morning to walking home from a friend's house, or who takes on so many projects or activities that they are all completed hastily—if at all?

**How can parents help?** Improving time management means learning two important skills: setting goals and planning ahead. Have your child set a goal, such as handing in a report one day early for extra credit. Then, help your child plan to reach this goal. Ask your child, how much work needs to be done each night to complete the task? And what happens if you have another commitment during the allotted time? Then, help your child build in fail-safe steps to avoid the all too familiar nine-o'clock-the-night-before-the-project-is-due wail: "But I need it tomorrow!"

Setting up a calendar is another easy way to keep track of goals. And posting the calendar in a highly visible spot stops procrastinators from "forgetting" about upcoming deadlines.

Finally, specialized study skills—such as effective note-taking, how to write an outline, study strategies, and reading for meaning—can all be incredibly helpful, especially as your child reaches increasingly challenging middle school-, high school-, and college-level work.

If your child is still struggling in school after improved organization and time management skills, your child should be taught very specific strategies:

- **Test preparation**—Well in advance of a big test, first determine the type of test (short answer, multiple choice, essay) and the material the test will cover. Next, take steps to prepare a nightly review of outlines or notes or the formation of a study group. In addition, practice tests will help not only to develop a plan of action but also to determine how much time is needed for each question. Finally, eliminate test-taking anxiety with relaxation and visualization techniques.
- **Mnemonic devices**—phrases or rhymes used as a memory tool—can help students remember common lists or the order of things. An example is "Please excuse my dear Aunt Sally," which stands for the correct order that operations are taken to solve a math problem: parentheses, exponents, multiplication, division, addition, subtraction.
- **Graphic organizers** are the perfect study tools for the visual learner. The visual display is basically a map that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, or ideas. Graphic organizers are also sometimes referred to as knowledge maps, concept maps, story maps, or concept diagrams.

## Bullet point preparedness



Parent mentor and Autism Delaware Resource Coordinator Heidi Mizell offers this list of websites for help in handling all the paperwork associated with a child's individualized education program (IEP):

- **Autism Speaks' IEP guide and other resources**—[autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/iep-guide](http://autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/iep-guide)
- **Delaware Department of Education special education resources and forms**—[doe.state.de.us](http://doe.state.de.us) (Families & Community—Special Education)
- **National Center for Learning Disabilities IEP checklist for parents**—[nclid.org/learning-disability-resources/checklists-worksheets/iep-checklist-for-parents](http://nclid.org/learning-disability-resources/checklists-worksheets/iep-checklist-for-parents)
- **Organization for Autism Research (OAR) on navigating the special education system**—[researchautism.org/resources/reading/#Sped](http://researchautism.org/resources/reading/#Sped)
- **Parent Information Center of Delaware**—[picofdel.org](http://picofdel.org)
- **Parent & Educator Partnership on the IEP's functional behavior assessment and full inclusion program**—[pepartnership.org](http://pepartnership.org) (Resources—Search—Emotional disability—An IEP Team's Introduction to Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans)
- **U.S. Department of Education archived guide to the IEP**—[2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/indexhtml?exp=3](http://2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/indexhtml?exp=3)
- **Wrightslaw**
  - **IEPs**—[wrightslaw.com/info/iep.index.htm](http://wrightslaw.com/info/iep.index.htm)
  - **Smart IEPs**—[wrightslaw.com/bks/feta2/ch12.ieps.pdf](http://wrightslaw.com/bks/feta2/ch12.ieps.pdf)
  - **IEPs for children with behavior problems**—[wrightslaw.com/howey/iep.special.factors.htm](http://wrightslaw.com/howey/iep.special.factors.htm)
  - **Standards for the extended school year (ESY)**—[wrightslaw.com/info/esy.standards.barlev.htm](http://wrightslaw.com/info/esy.standards.barlev.htm)
  - **Assessments, evaluations, and tests**—[wrightslaw.com/info/test.index.htm](http://wrightslaw.com/info/test.index.htm)

**Would you like to talk to a parent mentor?  
Call Autism Delaware to make an appointment.**

## 'Entering a new educational program?



**Jake Nardo**

*Sun* contributor and parent Jen Nardo suggests these considerations for helping your child or sibling with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) enter a new educational program:

- If the child is switching school buildings, drive by the new school a couple of times, take pictures to show your child, and ask if you can tour the building.
- Reach out to other parents or families of children with ASD. They might come up with ideas you haven't thought of. And you'll benefit from the support.
- To confirm the driver of your child's school bus, call the school district's transportation office. If a new transportation team is introduced, prep your child with verbal or visual prompts.
- Does your child need new school clothes or shoes? Buy them early enough so the child gets comfortable with the change. If the child will be wearing a uniform for the first time, have him or her try it on. Make sure the child knows these clothes are for school. And check the school's website for details on the requirements.
- Is bedtime an issue after summer break? Start the regular sleep-waking routine at least a week before school starts to ensure the child is well-rested.
- Create an informational sheet about the child for the child's teacher. Include the names of family members and pets, likes and dislikes regarding food, activities, and other important details the teacher should know.
- Let the child know how well he or she will do at school. And reward the child for a good day at school: Perhaps a special piece of candy or a favorite snack would be appropriate.
- Think about making changes to the child's routine. Depending on the child's anxiety level, now may be a good time to replace bad habits with healthy ones.

### Managed care call-in

Delaware Family Voices helps you get answers to your questions from representatives from Medicaid and other agencies.

**When:** 2nd Tues. of the month, 11:00AM-1:00PM

**Dial:** 1-800-391-2548, participant code 53192759#

**?s:** Contact Ann Phillips at [annp@defv.org](mailto:annp@defv.org).

For teens (11 and older)

## Extracurricular activities

Just because your child has autism doesn't mean he shouldn't be involved in fun activities. Even if your child cannot paddle a kayak, he can sit in a tandem kayak while you paddle. He can also learn how to paddle by himself, and then you can kayak next to him. If he's unable to do that, he can always sit in the kayak and go see the sights. The same goes for tubing, rafting, biking, bowling, horseback riding, hiking and many more activities.

Kids with ASD need more opportunities to be out and about than their peers because it [sic] gives them a break from therapy, but still engages them; it gives them much-needed exercise, a view into the real world (instead of being locked in their own); and it keeps the family from being segregated from their community, which is very common and potentially very dangerous long-term. Isolating the family results in more and more stress, which exercise and outings can help alleviate. Even if you just take a walk together after dinner, it gets everyone out of the house and keeps you healthy...

### A special note on swimming lessons

Because our kids are attracted to water and lack safety awareness, many children with autism drown every year. If your child does not already know how to swim, please try again. Now that they are older, they have many new skills and should be more capable of learning...

Help for swim instructors to work with ASD children:

- Start with your local YMCA or YWCA, or Google to find a special needs swim instructor.
- [autism.lovetoknow.com/How\\_to\\_Teach\\_an\\_Autistic\\_Child\\_to\\_Swim](http://autism.lovetoknow.com/How_to_Teach_an_Autistic_Child_to_Swim)
- [swimlessonsuniversity.com/Teaching-Children-with-Autism-Spectrum-Disorder-DVD-plu](http://swimlessonsuniversity.com/Teaching-Children-with-Autism-Spectrum-Disorder-DVD-plu) TEACHING-CHILDREN-WITH-ASD.html
- [swimprofessor.com](http://swimprofessor.com)—For "Swimming Lessons and Autism Spectrum Disorder," choose Archives, April 2009.

Reprinted courtesy of Talk About Curing Autism, this article can be found in its entirety at [tacanow.org/family-resources/teens-with-asd-extra-curricular-activities](http://tacanow.org/family-resources/teens-with-asd-extra-curricular-activities).

## Did you know?

Respite funds are available for a child with ASD from the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services—but first you must enroll. Go to Applicant Services at [dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/ddds/intake.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/ddds/intake.html).





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Newark DE 19713

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Helping People and Families Affected by Autism

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