

The Sun

Newsletter

April-June 2016

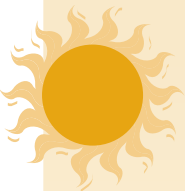
The ABCs of adapted PE

Whether you know “adapted physical education” as adapted PE or APE, it’s a hot topic for many families with children who are on the spectrum and still in school. In this issue of *The Sun*, Autism Delaware addresses some of the many issues and begins by defining “adapted PE” and explaining the law pertaining to it.



People are always looking for the single magic bullet that will totally change everything. There is no single magic bullet.

—Temple Grandin



Our mission

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



Specially designed PE

Basically, adapted PE is physical education that is specially designed so any student can participate.

Defining adapted PE as “the art and science of developing and implementing a carefully designed physical education instructional program for an individual with a disability,” the Texas Woman’s University (TWU) website for Project INSPIRE points out that appropriately designed PE is “based on a comprehensive assessment, to give the individual the skills necessary for a lifetime of rich leisure, recreation, and sport experiences” (<http://www.twu.edu/inspire/definition-adapted-physical-education.asp>).

“Each child with a disability must be afforded the opportunity to participate in the regular physical education program available to nondisabled children,” adds the website for special-education law and advocacy, *Wrightslaw.com*, “unless the child is enrolled full time in a separate facility or the child needs specially designed physical education, as prescribed in the child’s IEP [individualized education program]” (<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/pe.index.htm>).

Moreover, adapted PE is mandated by federal law.

Specially designed PE is appropriate,

Public school PE education Rights & strategies

High interest in physical education (PE) for students with autism is being spurred by both recent federal guidance and studies highlighting its benefits. This article will cover

- the right to PE;
- the scope of PE;
- strategies to secure meaningful PE; and
- parent options to resolve disputes.

The right to PE

Special education law requires PE to be offered if EITHER provided to students without disabilities in the same grade OR if necessary to meet unique needs and included in the IEP (individualized education program).¹ Since a Delaware regulation directs public schools to provide PE “for each grade K to 12,” students with autism in those grades must be offered PE.² Preschool students can still obtain PE under the second prong of the eligibility standard (that is,

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We need your voice

April is National Autism Awareness Month—but *every month* is autism awareness month for Autism Delaware and the individuals and families we serve. Today, one in 68 kids has autism. That means virtually everyone is a part of the autism community—even if they don't know it yet.

Some of the most influential members of this community are our legislators. These are the people who work on the legislation that, ultimately, affects individuals and families affected by autism. In Delaware, it's relatively easy to find and talk to our legislators—and we need your help in grabbing their attention now!

To make them aware of how their legislation affects families with autism, we need you to share your personal story. The greatest impact happens when real people tell their stories directly to their legislators—whether in person or in a letter. When one legislator receives five calls or visits on the same subject, this legislator will take notice and come to understand that autism isn't an isolated problem but a serious issue that affects way too many families. This is what changes the game.

During the current legislative session, Autism Delaware and a broad coalition of advocates are working hard to pass two pieces of legislation. Senate Bill (SB) 92 and SB93 comprise the Autism Services Advancement Package (or ASAP, for short). Sponsored by Del. Sen. Margaret Rose Henry (D-Dist. 2) and Del. Rep. Earl G. Jaques (D-Dist. 27), the ASAP bill package gets more

resources into the office of the statewide director of the Delaware Autism Program (DAP). In turn, the director can deploy more training and technical assistance teams to support teachers of students with autism in *all* Delaware schools—not just the six DAP programs.

The bills would also create the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism. As a hub for training, the covered issues include autism and technical assistance support for teachers, adult service providers, mental health professionals, families, and many others.

To us at Autism Delaware, ASAP is a critical legislation package because it could seriously impact—in an immensely positive way—the lives of every Delawarean living with autism.

Unfortunately, 2016 is, once again, a tough budget year. Getting the funding needed to make these bills a reality and to actually work is going to be very difficult—unless everyone affected by autism makes his and her voices heard.

Of course, if the very thought of talking to your elected official makes you uncomfortable, we can help you:

- We can tell you who your legislator is.
- We can send your letter for you.
- We can make your appointment for you.

Continued on page 7



Teresa Avery
Executive Director

A service of Autism Delaware



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April is National Autism Awareness Month!

“It takes a village to raise a child,” says the old adage, and National Autism Awareness Month affords a perfect opportunity to reflect on this truth. Again and again, the importance of community understanding is proven by the success of our youth and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). And as understanding increases, we all work together more. As a result, quality of life improves for everyone.

Helping to celebrate autism awareness, Delaware Autism Program (DAP) statewide director Vincent Winterling, Ed.D., answers the fundamental question *What is autism in general?* And one of our community, Jillian Mathews, answers a few questions from *Sun* contributor Dafne Carnright. See page 7 for more about National Autism Awareness Month.

What is autism in general?

by Vincent Winterling, Ed.D.

Autism spectrum disorder is a serious, lifelong disorder in brain development that, generally, is thought to be present at birth and affect children’s abilities to interact verbally and respond to and initiate social interactions. They may also be observed engaging in repetitive or restricted patterns of behavior. Autism may also affect the way in which children learn and respond to changes in their environment. In some cases, children with autism may also experience severe levels of emotion that may manifest as problem behaviors (for example, hitting and kicking) that can be directed at others in their environment or themselves.

Autism was first presented to the scientific community in 1943 by Dr. Leo Kanner. Since then, considerable research has been conducted to understand how best to teach children with autism. Multiple research studies now have shown the utility of applied behavior analysis (ABA). Using approaches based upon ABA has been shown repeatedly to positively influence the development of age-appropriate social, communicative, educational, and community skills. Additionally, to the extent parents and care providers are trained to use these methods, their children’s learning is enhanced as important life skills may be practiced in all of the settings in which the child participates.

It is now estimated that one in 68 children is born with autism. Autism affects every culture and requires a well-trained intervention team to ensure appreciable short- and long-term outcomes. Autism cannot be diagnosed by any medical test; rather, the diagnosis of autism is behaviorally defined and conducted by a skilled practitioner (typically, a physician) who observes the child and gathers information regarding the child and his or her development from the child’s parents or care providers.

While children with autism are generally healthy, some do have medical issues that are difficult to treat (for example, seizure disorders, problem behavior, and feeding issues). The diagnosis and treatment of co-morbid conditions may also have an ongoing impact on the child’s progress.

Jillian’s awareness

Jillian Mathews, who is 21 and will graduate from the Charlton program in May of this year, is very excited to share some important information to increase autism awareness. “It’s important to understand people with autism and what their interests are,” says Mathews. “For me, it’s Special Olympics, theater, comic books, and Nancy Drew books.”



Jillian Mathews

Learning about the interests people have helps us form connections and increase understanding. “Sometimes,” notes Mathews, “people with autism are different from people around them. They may have difficulty with something and may say the same thing over and over or ask the same question over and over. Other people may not understand this.” Mathews wants us all to know that sometimes individuals with ASD may only need patience or to have something explained further or in a different way.

Diagnosed with autism at three, Mathews wants us to know that, while she occasionally thinks it’s not a good thing that she has autism, she often thinks it is good because “you’re doing all sorts of special things!” The experiences and opportunities that she has had and the people that have helped along the way are magnificent, she explains. For example, she enjoys the Very Special Arts (VSA) time at school, where she works on theater activities with peers who both do and do not have disabilities. And she has loved being able to participate in a play every spring. Mathews is thankful for VSA’s Ms. Stefanie, who rehearses her theater group at school, as well as for all of her teachers at school.

Mathew’s parents, Cindy and Bill, agree that having autism has provided Jillian with positive experiences and opportunities. They have gotten to know so many wonderful people through their journey, people who they would not have met otherwise, “like Coach Butch at the Rookery, who volunteers his time to teach the youth golf. We didn’t know when Jillian was three how far she would go, but it’s because of all the special activities, programs, schooling, and things, like Autism Delaware™, that she has far exceeded all expectations. We are so grateful and so proud of her!” says Cindy.

Mathews and her family want us all to remember this: “It’s tough sometimes, but you get through. It can all work out to be good!”

INSIDE Autism[™] Delaware



Dafne Carnright
Family Service Coordinator (Kent & Sussex)

Presentation takes surprising turn

When central and southern Delaware's largest health-care system called Autism Delaware in June 2015, the request was for general information about autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Dafne Carnright responded to the call. As the family service coordinator for Kent and Sussex Counties, Carnright started with a template of a presentation and fine-tuned it to meet the needs of an audience of medical and security staff at Kent General Hospital and Milford Memorial Hospital.

"My presentation included information specific to their setting and how security personnel may interact with individuals with autism," explains Carnright of her July 7 presentation. "The audience was very attentive and asked questions about the communication and general needs of individuals with ASD. Many attendees thanked me on their way out.

"I had no reason to think anything extraordinary had happened during the presentation, but in October, I was invited to attend a luncheon—and was presented with a plaque in recognition of my effort! I was so surprised. At that point, I became more fully aware of the impact the presentation had on the security team and some of the other areas of the hospital.

"Honestly, I was only doing my job. What we do at Autism Delaware is intended to help people and families affected by autism, and this includes the community that serves them. This is why I'm here, why I do these types of services and offer training.

"But it's always great to hear that our work is having a positive impact. I was very touched," smiles Carnright.

Autism Delaware presentations are available statewide. To discuss a specific topic and audience, call for an appointment at (302) 224-6020 or (302) 644-3410.

All information provided or published by Autism Delaware is for informational purposes only. Reference to any treatment or therapy option or to any program, service, or treatment provider is not an endorsement by Autism Delaware. You should investigate alternatives that may be more appropriate for a specific individual. Autism Delaware assumes no responsibility for the use made of any information published or provided by Autism Delaware.

Autism conference set

On Friday, September 30, an autism conference will take place at the Chase Center on the Riverfront in Wilmington: *Autism A-Z: Beyond the Puzzle—Implementing Evidence-based Practices through Family-Provider Partnerships*.

Sponsored by Devereux in partnership with Autism Delaware, this conference is offered to families impacted by autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and the providers who support them.

As a collaboration, the conference gives participants the opportunity to customize their learning experience through a variety of workshops focused on evidence-based practices. The conference will feature speakers from a range of renowned institutions, including Drexel University, the Kennedy Krieger Institute, and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Those who attend will get to choose from a range of breakout sessions that will cover adult issues, evidence-based practices, family issues, and health and wellness.

This conference will meet the needs of family members who attend as well as professionals looking for CEU and CME credits.

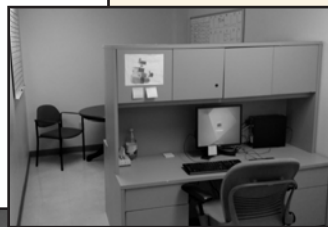
For more information, watch autismdelaware.org.

Dover office expanded

Thank you, Dover Downs Hotel & Casino, for expanding Autism Delaware's available office space! This new space was added in November, and Dover Downs donated the desks for the expansion.

With a generous grant, two new computers were also added. Thank you for the grant, Marmot Foundation! Now, Autism Delaware's Dover office is more accessible for adult employment (POW&R) staff and participants.

"We are thrilled to be able to expand the Autism Delaware office," states Pete Bradley, Dover Downs' vice president and general manager of casino operations. "The recent expansion reflects the growth of our vibrant partnership with the Autism Delaware organization and its POW&R program. We are proud to employ 11 individuals through the POW&R program. Each of them, day in and day out, makes a difference for us."



Free recreational outings

Among Autism Delaware's many recreational outings offered during the warmer months, junior golf and summer swim camp are available to youth on the spectrum.

Autism Delaware Junior Golf Program

Designed for youth aged 8–21, junior golf takes place at The Rookery South Golf Course in Milton. The program runs for five weeks in September and October, usually with alternating days of instruction and a choice of times. In addition to teaching golf techniques, professional golfer and coach Butch Holtzclaw helps students craft their personal skills, such as good sportsmanship and perseverance.



Autism Delaware Swim Camp

Designed for youth aged 4–21, the swim camp runs from June to August. Last summer, it took place in the Boys & Girls Club's pool in Milford. Instruction includes basic swimming skills and water safety while parents observe and learn how to reinforce the new skills at home. Youth also enjoy ample opportunities to learn socialization and communication skills.



Visit autismdelaware.org for details and applications closer to the program's start.

Do you know a family with a child who's newly diagnosed?

Recommend an Autism Delaware parent packet. It's free and available at autismdelaware.org.



Drive for Autism

New presenting sponsor and new date

The Drive for Autism Celebrity-Am Golf Outing launches its crystal anniversary year with Smithfield Foods as presenting sponsor. Smithfield's generous contribution will provide the base upon which we can build another successful year of fundraising and make a difference in the lives of so many.

Smithfield Foods needs no introduction to the autism community, NASCAR fans, and bacon lovers, because the organization serves as the primary sponsor of the iconic #43 Ford Fusion, driven by Aric Almirola in NASCAR's Sprint Cup series, running out of the Richard Petty Garage. Almirola is a six-time celebrity participant in our event and an acknowledged favorite amongst our roster of celebrities.

"We learned of the event through Aric, and we needed to be involved," says Smithfield Foods vice president of corporate marketing Bob Weber. "Autism is very personal to all of us at Smithfield, as the crew chief of our #43, Trent Owens, and our executive vice president, Hank He, both are parents of children with autism. Autism Delaware is doing outstanding work, and we trust that, through our support, so much more can be accomplished."

This year, Autism Delaware's Drive for Autism Celebrity-Am Golf Outing will be played three weeks earlier than in past years—on May 12—to ensure that we line up with the AAA 400 Drive for Autism at Dover International Speedway. Dupont Country Club will once again play host as more than 60 celebrities and 225 sponsors are expected to hit the links for an amazing day of fun and friendship.

Put us to work please!

To put to work the growing population of young adults on the spectrum, more employment opportunities are needed for Autism Delaware's adult employment program. Known as Productive Opportunities for Work & Recreation (or POW&R, for short), the type of jobs needed include the following:

- stocking
- shredding
- scanning
- data entry
- office work
- restaurant prep work

POW&R participants enjoy social and wellness activities, so more of these types of opportunities are also welcome.

For more information, call (302) 224-6020 or (302) 644-3410. Or send an email of interest to katina.demetriou@delautism.org.

Programs

April

1—Pin-making party. Autism Delaware Lewes office. 10:00 AM–12:00 noon.

5, 12, 19, 26—Lego club. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–7:30 PM. **Register:** Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

12, 19—Fun with art. Autism Delaware Lewes office. For ages 4–8: 3:00–3:45 PM. For ages 9 and older: 4:00–4:45 PM. **Register:** Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

6, 13, 20, 27—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. **Register:** Karen.Tuohy@redclay.k12.de.us.

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

9—Sensory friendly roller skating. Christiana Skating Center. 801 Christiana Rd. Newark. 5:30–7:30 PM.

10—Autism Delaware amazing race. Christiana Mall food court. Newark. 11:00 AM. **R.S.V.P.:** Heidi Mizell or Kris Grant at (302) 224-6020.

11—AT (assistive technology) night. Easter Seals Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore. 61 Corporate Circle. New Castle. 6:30–8:00 PM. **R.S.V.P.:** (302) 221-2033.

12—Parent coffee hour. Panera Bread. 3650 Kirkwood Hwy. Wilmington. 7:00 PM. **R.S.V.P.:** Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

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

16—Sensory friendly movie: TBD. Westtown Movies. 150 Commerce Dr. Middletown. 10:00 AM.

19—Parent coffee hour. Holiday Inn Express. 1780 North Dupont Hwy. Dover. 9:00 AM.

April continued

21—Grandparents support group. Autism Delaware Lewes office. 9:00–10:00 AM. **Register:** Dafne Carnright or Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

23—Sensory friendly movie: *Jungle Book*. Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall. 1365 North Dupont Hwy. 10:00 AM.

27—Bounce night. 20699 Coastal Hwy. Rehoboth Beach. 5:00–7:00 PM. **Register:** Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

May

3, 10, 17, 31—Lego club. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–7:30 PM. **Register:** Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

Volunteers needed

Autism Delaware provides a range of programs and services across the entire state—and most are free! We are always looking for volunteers to help run them.

For more information:

Northern Delaware contact
Heidi Mizell
(302) 224-6020

Southern Delaware contact
Dafne Carnright
(302) 644-3410



Bowling night coordinator Karen Tuohy (center with her children Bridget and Sean)

May continued

4—Parent coffee hour. Hampton Inn. 117 Sandhill Dr. Middletown. 9:30 AM. **R.S.V.P.:** Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

4, 11, 18, 25—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. **Register:** Karen.Tuohy@redclay.k12.de.us.

12—Grandparents support group. Autism Delaware Lewes office. 9:00–10:00 AM. **R.S.V.P.:** Dafne Carnright or Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

13—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:** Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

21—Sensory friendly movie:

- TBD. Westtown Movies. 150 Commerce Dr. Middletown. 10:00 AM.
- *Angry Birds*. Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall. 1365 North Dupont Hwy. 10:00 AM.

June

1, 8, 15, 22, 29—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. **Register:** Karen.Tuohy@redclay.k12.de.us.

7, 14, 21—Lego club. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–7:30 PM. **Register:** Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

10—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:** Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

18—Sensory friendly movie: TBD. Westtown Movies. 150 Commerce Dr. Middletown. 10:00 AM.

We need your voice Continued from page 2

- We can provide talking points if you want them.
- And we can give you a ride and go with you if you want.

We promise to be there for you every step of the way, so please join us!

If you want more information, contact Autism Delaware policy and community outreach director Alex Eldreth at (302) 224-6020, ext. 204. Or email him at alex.eldreth@delautism.org.



Free community awareness training

Autism Delaware offers an easy, manageable training session for anyone interested in helping to raise community awareness—and it's free!

For more information about training in northern Delaware, contact Autism Delaware volunteer coordinator Melanie Matusheski at (302) 224-6020, ext. 219. Or send an email of interest to volunteers@delautism.org. In southern Delaware, contact Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

Thirty days of awareness in April

Autism Delaware is doing something every day during National Autism Awareness Month. The calendar below shows the plan. From Autism Delaware's many family support events—See full details on page 6—to restaurant fundraisers, Smart Cookie Day and more,

April promises to be packed with excitement.

This calendar is expanding and changing, so for full details and the updated version, go to autismdelaware.org.

Don't miss out!



AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH, APRIL 2016



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Today 1 in 68 children is diagnosed with autism Most events require registration, please call our office for details Fliers can be found on our website or Facebook page See website for updated times and locations</p>			<p>March 30 Jersey Mike's "Day of Giving" Dover and Rehoboth all proceeds support Autism Delaware</p>	<p>March 31 Bounce Night: Hopping Good Times, Camden 5:30-7:30PM</p>	<p>1 Ribbon Making Party: Lewes Office 10-12PM Breakfast and Radio, Jimmy's Grille, Bridgeville 5:30-11:00AM</p>	<p>2 World Autism Awareness Day: Wear Blue Window Cling Brigade (Volunteers Needed) Respite Training Part I, Newark</p>
<p>3 Autism Awareness Prayer Service: Cedars Church of Christ, Wilmington 10AM</p>	<p>4 Autism Delaware Open House: Lewes Office, 9AM to 7PM Eat at Red Robin, Newark 15% to Autism Delaware Flier Required</p>	<p>5 Lego Club: Newark Office 6:30-7:30PM Eat at Friendly's on 206, 20% to Autism Delaware No Flier Required</p>	<p>6 Sensory Friendly Bowling: Bowlerama, New Castle 5:30-7PM</p>	<p>7 Speaker Series: Social Security Benefits, Newark Office 6-7PM</p>	<p>8 Teen/Tween Game Night: Newark Office 6:30PM</p>	<p>9 Shrimp and Beer Fest: Lazy Susan's, Lewes 5:30PM Roller Skating: Christiana Skating Center, Newark 5:30-7:30PM Respite Training Part II, Newark</p>
<p>10 The Amazing Race: Christiana Mall Newark 11-12:30PM</p>	<p>11 Sensory Friendly Bounce Night: Launch Trampoline, Newark 5-7PM Assistive Technology Night Easter Seals, 6:30-8PM</p>	<p>12 Lego Club: Newark 6:30-7:30PM Fun With Art: Lewes Office, 3-5PM</p>	<p>13 Cheeburger Cheeburger Main St. in Newark 15% to Autism Delaware Flier Required Sensory Friendly Bowling: Bowlerama, New Castle 5:30-7PM</p>	<p>14 Smart Cookie Day: Legislative Hall, Dover 1-5PM</p>	<p>15 Eat at Bob Evan's Route 13, Dover 15% to Autism Delaware Flier Required Teen/Tween Game Night: Lewes Office 6-7:45PM</p>	<p>16 Sensory Friendly Movie: Westtown Movies Middletown 10AM WALK FOR AUTISM: Lewes 9AM</p>
<p>17 Golf the Rookery North or South: 15% to Autism Delaware Flier Required</p>	<p>18 Grandparent Support Group: Newark Office 6:30-7:30PM Autism Delaware Open House: Dover Office 11AM to 2PM</p>	<p>19 Lego Club: Newark 6:30-7:30PM Fun With Art: Lewes Office 3-5PM</p>	<p>20 Coffee Hour: Holiday Inn Ex Dover, 9-10AM Sensory Friendly Bowling: Bowlerama, New Castle 5:30-7PM</p>	<p>21 Grandparent support group: Lewes Office 9-10AM</p>	<p>22 POW&R Bounce: Launch Trampoline Newark 2-3:30PM (POW&R participants only)</p>	<p>23 WALK FOR AUTISM: Wilmington 9AM Sensory Friendly Movie: Carmike Theatre Dover, 10AM</p>
<p>24 Liturgy and Blessing for autism: St. Jude The Apostle Catholic Church Lewes 10AM</p>	<p>25 Autism Delaware Open House: Newark Office 9AM to 7PM Community Pizza Night Eat at any Grottos Pizza 20% to Autism Delaware Flier Required</p>	<p>26 Lego Club: Newark Office 5:30-7:30PM Community Pizza Night Eat at any Grottos Pizza 20% to Autism Delaware Flier Required</p>	<p>27 Sensory Friendly Bowling: Bowlerama, New Castle 5:30-7PM Sensory Friendly Bounce Night: Shell We Bounce, Rehoboth 5-7PM</p>	<p>28 Dodgeball Fundraiser For Autism: Launch Trampoline, Newark 7:30PM</p>	<p>29 Autism Professional Appreciation Day: (Download a template to say thank you to an autism professional in your life—see our web page)</p>	<p>30 Sensory Friendly Zoo visit: Brandywine Zoo 4-6PM DeLAWAREness Dance Showcase for Autism The Tatnall School, Wilmington 1PM and 6PM</p>

PARENT PARENT Written by parents for parents

The Autism Delaware™ Google group offered parents the chance to write about the effect of adapted physical education (PE) on their children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Here are the four questions:

- Is your child’s adapted PE experience appropriate for his or her abilities?
- Does your child’s individualized education program (IEP) include an adapted PE goal?
- Do you have any concerns about your child’s participation in PE? If so, what are they?
- Does your child work with an adapted PE teacher, or does the PE teacher consult with an adapted PE teacher?

Below are a few of the responses.

Parents Michelle Amy and Kristin Mihok responded with similar answers: Both agreed that, yes, their children’s PE experience was appropriate for their abilities. But no, they do not have PE goals in their IEPs, nor do their children have access to adapted PE instruction.

On their concerns about participating in PE, both parents felt it necessary to explain:

“I think,” writes Kristin Mihok, “my daughter could benefit from more one-on-one or specialized attention and chunked instructions [massed into one block of relevant information] to gain the most benefit from her PE experience.”

“My son,” adds Michelle Amy, “could use more one-on-one explanation of the rules of a game and what’s expected from the group. He is not able to listen very well in a large group. In health class, it’s worse because my son is so uncomfortable with the topics being discussed that he always jokes about it. He often needs redirection, which is hard for a lone gym teacher to do consistently.

“This email,” continues Amy, “raised some questions for me because I could see an adapted PE teacher being a good thing for my son, to help him learn how to do things other kids have learned already, such as whistling, snap-

ping their fingers, and riding a bike. But I bet these PE options are not available to us.”

In contrast, parent Dafne Carnright, who serves as Autism Delaware family service coordinator in Kent and Sussex Counties, said her son’s PE experience was not appropriate for his abilities. But like Amy’s and Mihok’s children, Carnright’s son does not have PE goals in his IEP.

“Despite years of meetings with IEP teams and asking for appropriate, specially designed PE, my child still doesn’t have this,” says Carnright. “To my knowledge, no adapted PE teacher is available.”



My son Robert has adaptive PE class twice a week. In each class, the students stretch, walk, and run and then play something, like basketball or soccer. Robert also has an offsite recreational activity once a week: aquatics, bowling, or roller skating.

I think he enjoys the aquatics and bowling although all the sounds and activity have the potential to overexcite him. Roller skating, he never liked, because he has always been very cautious not to hurt himself. So wheels strapped to his feet—no way!

Walking and running seem to be his favorite physical activities. When the gym activity is track, it often has a calming effect on him. I’ve noticed this at home as well. When the weather is nice, he really enjoys walking to the park near our house.

—Melanie Matusheski

My family had requested, at the last IEP meeting in March 2015, that my son have an adapted PE assessment and to incorporate his adapted PE goals into his IEP goals. We attempted several times to persuade the staff of the importance of assisting my son because of some concerns we had with his physical limitations and ability to follow instructions.

We were told that they do not provide IEP goals for adapted PE. We asked why and were told that no student has adapted PE goals in his or her IEP.

We voiced our concerns. I wrote an email on this matter, but failed to send it because of the negative response and uneasy environment we felt at our request for adapted PE goals.

We also attempted to have adapted PE goals incorporated at [another school] and were given a negative response.

Further, we asked to observe our son in a PE class and were informed we had to give the PE teacher prior notice. We were sent a picture of our son in PE class instead.

—Joy H. Corbett

Specially designed PE Continued from page 1

notes the Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS) website, when it helps the child develop fundamental motor skills and patterns as well as physical skills and skills in aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports (<http://apens.org/whatisape.html>). For more on the scope of PE, see page 10.

Adapted PE is considered a direct service (not a related service), adds the APENS website. "This means that physical education needs to be provided to the student with a disability as part of the special education services that child and family receive" (<http://apens.org/whatisape.html>).

It's the state's job, continues *Wrightslaw.com*, to ensure that its public schools carry out this service for children in adapted PE as well as for those in a regular PE class: "If specially designed physical education is prescribed in a child's IEP, the public agency responsible for the education of that child must provide the services directly or make arrangements for those services to be provided through other public or private programs" (<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/pe.index.htm>).

The PE specialist responsible for developing and implementing an appropriate plan is called an adapted physical educator. Because of the responsibilities that come with this job, "your child's physical education teacher should be included as a member of the IEP team," adds *Wrightslaw.com*. "[T]he instructor provides planning and assessment, consultation, specialized instruction, and adapts or modifies the curriculum, task, equipment, and/or environment so a child can participate in all aspects of physical education" (<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/pe.index.htm>).

"You can [also] ask the special education teacher to amend the IEPs," states *PE Central*, a provider of information about developmentally appropriate PE practices and programs. An appropriate PE plan can be developed during the IEP team meeting and should include the adapted PE-trained educator or certified adapted physical educator (or CAPE, for short). "Once the IEP has been amended to include physical education, you and the [adapted PE] teacher and/or regular physical education teachers will know what your goals are for each student" (<http://www.pecentral.org/workflow/faq/FAQdisplay.asp?ID=725>).

The adapted physical educator also has "a voice," continues the *PE Central* website, "in terms of making certain that the students with disabilities receive [PE] services in the LRE."

Short for least restricted environment, the LRE must be suitable to meet the unique needs of each student and refers to the setting in which the specially designed PE takes place (<http://www.pecentral.org/workflow/faq/FAQdisplay.asp?ID=725>).

For more about the setting, see the box below.



What is a CAPE?

An adapted physical educator who has passed the Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS) certification exam and "can make meaningful decisions for children with disabilities in physical education—within every school district in the country" (<http://www.apens.org/index.html>).

A model setting for adapted PE

According to federal law, a continuum of placements must be available in all areas, not just physical education (PE). One example of a continuum is the Leiberman and Houston-Wilson Model of Continuum of Supports and Placements. This model defines a range of settings that meets each student's individual needs. These options "allow students to move from a totally inclusive environment to a segregated environment for including students with disabilities":



- Inclusion options comprise no adaptations or support, curriculum adaptations, trained peer tutors, teacher assistants, and an interpreter.

- Part-time segregated placement options include split placement without and with support.
- Community-based options include part-time and full-time options.
- Full-time segregated placement options within a regular school district include small groups and one-to-one options.
- Segregated placement options include day and residential school for specific disabilities, home-schooling, and a hospital setting (<http://www.twu.edu/inspire/least-restrictive.asp>).

Rights & strategies Continued from page 1

if necessary to meet a unique need and included in the IEP).³ Although public schools must offer PE in each grade K to 12, students are not required to enroll in PE in all grades. Enrollment is mandatory for all students in grades 1–8, and one high school PE credit is required to qualify for a diploma.⁴ A school can waive PE requirements based on “an excuse from a qualified physician.”⁵

The scope of PE

For students with autism, PE can be varied. It includes activities to develop physical and motor fitness and skills, aquatics, dance, individual and group games, sports, and adapted physical education (APE).⁶ APE refers to modifying the curriculum, task, equipment, or environment to allow a student with a disability to participate in all aspects of PE. For example, a distractible student may benefit from throwing instruction in a low noise or small group environment rather than playing dodge ball with 30 students in a gym. State PE standards include learning “personal and social behavior,” which could be a key program feature for students with autism.⁷

Strategies to secure meaningful PE

Parents can consider several strategies to obtain meaningful PE:

- Insist on an assessment.⁸
- Invite the PE instructor to the IEP meeting.
- Prepare for the IEP by reviewing grade-level standards and illustrations.⁹
- Include specifics on present levels of performance, long-term goals, short-term objectives, and a schedule of review in the IEP.¹⁰

- Don’t accept token PE based on the view that it reduces time spent on academics.¹¹
- If participation with the regularly offered PE class is desired, invoke the “least restrictive environment” legal preference.¹²
- Request physical or occupational therapy as part of PE or a supplement to PE.
- Request a secondary classification of “orthopedic impairment,” if the student qualifies, to prompt IEP focus on PE.¹³
- If the school lacks the options appropriate for the student, request the school consider private sector options (for example, dance and Special Olympics).¹⁴

Parent options to resolve disputes

Differences of opinion are best reviewed in an IEP team meeting.

If differences remain, parents can consider mediation, requesting an administrative hearing, or filing a state complaint.¹⁵

Legal advice should be sought in choosing the best option.

Self-advocacy help A short list

Carly Fleischmann

- *Carly’s Café—Experience Autism Through Carly’s Eyes*
carlyscafe.com
- Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/carlyvoice>
- Youtube Q&A
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmDGvqzn2k>

Amythest Schaber

- Facebook page: *NeuroWonderful*
<https://www.facebook.com/amythestschaber>
- Youtube Q&A:
Search for “Ask an Autistic”

Footnotes

- 1 71 Fed. Reg. 46540, 46583 (August 14, 2006); www.wrightslaw.com/info/pe.index.htm, compiling federal guidance.
- 2 14 DE Admin Code 503.5.1.
- 3 OSEP Policy Letter to Garth Tymeson, July 31, 2013, available at www.wrightslaw.com/info/pe.index.htm.
- 4 14 DE Admin Code 503.5.0; 14 Del.C. §152.
- 5 14 DE Admin Code 503.5.4.
- 6 34 C.F.R. 300.39.
- 7 See www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/70, Delaware Physical Education Standards.
- 8 Excellent resources on PE assessments are compiled at www.pecentral.com/adapted/adaptedinstrument.html and www.pecentral.com/adapted/adaptedassessmentchart.html.
- 9 See www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/70; www.pecentral.com/adapted/adaptedactivities.html.
- 10 See www.pecentral.com/adapted/adaptediep.html.
- 11 OSEP Policy Letter to James Irby, Esq., February 12, 2010, available at www.wrightslaw.com/info/pe.index.htm.
- 12 71 Fed. Reg. 46540, 46577 August 14, 2006). Cf. Region V LOF to Akron (OH) City School, 19 IDELR 793 (January 15, 1993).
- 13 14 DE Admin Code 922.3.0; OSEP Policy Letter from R. Davila, 19 IDELR 497 (September 29, 1992).
- 14 14 DE Admin Code 505.8.0
- 15 <http://www.ipa.udel.edu/crp/sparc.html>; 14 DE Admin Code 923.53 and 926.8.0.

Resources for resolving differing viewpoints

Mediation resolves issues before they become disputes

Sun contributor Fran Fletcher is an associate policy scientist with the conflict resolution program within the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration.

If you have tried but just can't agree about your child's needs and services, you have the right to request assistance through mediation.

Mediation is a voluntary and alternative dispute resolution process offered

to parents and schools. At a mediation session, the parents and school personnel sit down at a neutral location and work out the problems through a neutral third party. This mediator is trained not only in special education but also in helping people settle their differences.

If the mediation results in an agreement, the details of the agreement are documented. As a legally binding agreement, this documentation sets forth the steps and time frame for following through with the resolutions.

What others say about mediation

Parents—"I felt confident in the mediation process as a means to resolve the conflict, as a result of how the mediator handled the situation."

School districts—"The mediator was quite supportive and demonstrated a level of understanding of the complex issues presented in the case. The mediation process appears to have us on a good track."

Don't let disagreements grow into disputes. Start the resolution process with a phone call. For information about these services, call Fran Fletcher at (302) 831-6812 or email her at franf@udel.edu.

A free special-education service for families and schools, this program is part of the Special Education Partnership for the Amicable Resolution of Conflict (SPARC), which is sponsored by the conflict resolution program within the Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware in cooperation with the Delaware Department of Education (www.ipa.udel.edu/crp/sparc.html).

If mediation (as described above) has not resolved the issue and you want to file a complaint with the Delaware Department of Education (DOE), it can be done one of two ways:

1. Complete the Special Education State Complaint Form available at <http://www.doe.k12.de.us>. If you would rather have the form mailed to you, call (302) 735-4210.
2. Write a letter of complaint that includes the facts about how and when the school or public agency violated a requirement of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Note: The violation must have taken place within one year of the time the DOE receives your complaint.

If the violation pertains to a specific student, include the student's name and address as well as the school's. Also describe the problem, any resolution that you see as possible at the current time, and any attempt you made to resolve the problem.

Be sure to sign your letter, and note your best contact information.

Note: Enclose a copy of your complaint to the school or public agency.

Mail the letter to Director, Exceptional Children & Early Childhood Group, Delaware Department of Education, John G. Townsend Building, 401 Federal St., Suite 2, Dover DE 19901.

Once the DOE receives your letter, it will be time-stamped. A letter of acknowledgment will be mailed to you, and copies will be sent to the school district superintendent or charter school director and the special education director.

The DOE will also assign an investigator who will reach out to you and the school or public agency. Within 60 days of receiving your letter, the DOE should complete the investigation and issue a decision in writing.

For more information, visit the DOE website at <http://www.doe.k12.de.us>. Or call (302) 735-4210.

Don't forget the Walk for Autism!



April 16
Cape Henlopen State Park
Lewes

April 23
Fox Point State Park
Wilmington

Register today at autismdelaware.org.



924 Old Harmony Rd.
Suite 201
Newark DE 19713

Nonprofit Organization

U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit #317

Newark DE

Return service requested



Helping People and Families Affected by Autism

Save the date!

Friday, Sept. 16
2016 Blue Jean Ball
Nassau Valley
Vineyards in Lewes

Friday, Nov. 4
**18th Annual
Auction for Autism**
World Café Live
at The Queen
in Wilmington



Support people and families affected by autism while

- enjoying good food and drink!
- bidding on one-of-a-kind goods and services!
- dancing to fabulous music—even if your dance partner steps on your toes!

autismdelaware.org