

The Sun

Newsletter

October–December 2014

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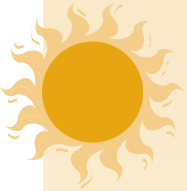
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Our mission

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



Seven ideas for handling holiday “hiccups”

The holiday season is stressful for many of us. And it’s even more challenging for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) because they don’t know how to handle changes in the everyday routine. Plus, the season starts at Thanksgiving and continues through the beginning of January, so the disruption goes on and on. It’s like a case of hiccups you can’t get rid of. The longer it goes on, the more uncomfortable it gets. And holding your breath doesn’t work!

To help you and your child or sibling “breathe easier” through the holiday season, Autism Delaware clinical director Susan Peterson, PhD, BCBA-D, offers seven ideas here:

#1, create a holiday schedule

If the child with ASD does not have a working schedule already in place, develop a schedule or calendar for him or her to use just for the holidays. Consider a daily picture schedule, a weekly written schedule, or even a calendar that covers multiple events across the holiday season. The finished product should be a visual display that makes sense to the child with ASD and that can be referred to whenever he or she wants.

Be sure to create the holiday schedule



Autism Delaware throws a holiday party in both New Castle and Sussex County every December specifically for children with ASD and their families.

before Thanksgiving. *Why?* Because you need time not only to practice the new routine but also to prepare the child for the very real possibility that the holiday plans will not go according to plan. And introducing this concept takes time.

For those with picture schedules, the change can be indicated by a card that says “Change” or “Surprise”—and

the first changes you introduce should be positive ones that your child will accept. For example, “Your dentist appointment was canceled, and you now have extra computer time.”

Once the child understands this concept, change can be inserted into the schedule periodically. Make it something neutral. For example, “We’re having spaghetti for dinner instead of mac and cheese.”

Only after introducing positive and neutral changes do you introduce a change that won’t be as easily accepted. And add a small reward for handling the change well.

After you’ve introduced unpopular changes into the schedule, mix the changes. By adding positive and neutral changes with the negative, the “Change” picture will not come to be known as only

Continued on page 10

The Sun

A publication of Autism Delaware™

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The only constant is change.

Change can definitely be scary. But let's face it: Sometimes, it's absolutely necessary and, with work and guidance, can turn out for the better.

Take, for instance, paratransit in Delaware. The system we have now doesn't work. People are often picked up early or dropped off late—sometimes both in the same day. Or the bus doesn't show up at all. In short, it's tough to rely on paratransit to get people where they need to be, when they need to be there.

The Delaware Department of Transportation is working to make changes to paratransit. The road towards those changes may be bumpy, but it's critical that advocates continue working closely with DelDOT to create a plan that best meets the needs of Delawareans with disabilities. The system can't remain the same, but by hashing out the details together, we have the best chance of crafting services that may be better than what we have today.

Another area where change is coming is in education for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Delaware. Our state has long had the pioneering Delaware Autism Program (DAP). But with 754 percent more students today than in 1991, the DAP needs an increase in resources and some alterations to fit the realities of 2014.

During this year's legislative session, senate concurrent resolution 65 (SCR65) established a task force to look closely at the recommendations for education technical assistance (ETA) teams and a statewide ASD-resource

collaborative that are part of the *Blueprint for Collective Action*. This task force is charged with researching and reporting on potential funding streams and other resources that may help make these efforts a reality.

We don't yet know what the process will look like for changes in transportation and education. What we do know is that we have to work together to get our needs met. As testament to the power of community, a number of well-worn quotes could be rattled off, including Margaret Mead's "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." And Mead's words still ring true!

But "a small group" requires a lot of individual effort. Each of us needs to lend our energy and talents to this effort—now more than ever.

If you're interested in getting more involved in advocacy surrounding transportation, education, or other key issues, please don't hesitate to contact our policy and community outreach director, Alex Eldreth, at (302) 224-6020, ext. 204, or email him at alex.eldreth@delautism.org.



Teresa Avery
Executive Director

A service of Autism Delaware



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Legislative update

Here, Autism Delaware's new policy & community outreach director, Alex Eldreth, reviews the autism issues addressed by Delaware's general assembly.

Passed by Delaware's general assembly during the 2014 session and enacted into law on July 15, senate bill 229 (SB229) established an option for assessing students with intellectual disabilities. Until SB229, standardized testing was used to assess the educational progress of all students. Now, the student with disabilities can be evaluated in a manner that is appropriate and individualized for the child—as long as he or she

has a measured intelligence quotient (IQ) of 50 or lower and falls into one of the following three categories:

- autism
- multiple disabilities
- an intellectual disability

To set up the alternative testing, the child's parent or guardian must notify the school formally. Once the school acknowledges receipt of the formal request, the parent or guardian meets with the child's IEP (individualized education program) team and the school leadership to determine the best method of testing.

If the parent or guardian wishes the child to continue taking the state's standardized test, this option remains open.

To read the entire text of SB229, go to legis.delaware.gov, and choose Bill Tracking.

Also passed by the general assembly last session, senate concurrent resolution 65 (SCR65) established an autism educational task force to research and identify potential funding streams for two statewide initiatives. If funded, these initiatives could benefit people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD):

1. A new resource center could provide training, technical assistance, information, and resources to families, schools, service providers, and others needing information and support regarding people with ASD.

2. Education technical assistance (ETA) teams—in collaboration with the Delaware Department of Education as well as the potential new resource center—could provide ASD expertise to school districts, principals, supervisors in special education, agencies, and service providers. Each ETA team would work to ensure that seamless services are provided across the state.



Legislative Hall in Dover

Both initiatives were proposed in the Delaware Strategic Plan ("the blueprint"), which was created as part of a collaborative effort by the Center for Disabilities Studies at UD, 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.

For more information about SCR65, go to legis.delaware.gov, and click on Bill Tracking.

Signed into law by Governor Jack Markell on June 26, 2013, senate bill 100 (SB100) was designed to regulate and restrict the use of seclusion and restraint in Delaware's schools. Until SB100, regulations varied by school district.

During the open comment period provided by the state, Autism Delaware made specific suggestions. As enacted July 1, 2014, SB100 was supported by Autism Delaware.

According to this new law,

- any physical restraints must meet more than 15 criteria before use is permitted,
- seclusion and mechanical restraint are allowed only if the secretary of education signs a waiver, and
- parents must be notified every time a child is restrained or secluded.

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.

One voice can make a difference.

We at Autism Delaware know that advocacy succeeds when those who are most affected participate, so we are in the process of identifying all who are interested in advocating for autism. To be included in our statewide grassroots effort, contact Autism Delaware's new policy & community outreach director, Alex Eldreth, at alex.eldreth@delautism.org.

PARENT PARENT

Written by parents
for parents

How-to guide

Enjoy the holiday season!

The 2014 holiday season is looming—and so is my old fear around how my son will react to the chaos and excitement. Like all parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), I have honed my “holiday skills” through the years. Based on 16 years of practice and an impromptu survey of other parents, I’ve compiled the following list of suggestions as a possible guide for enjoying the upcoming holiday season:

- Our kids love routine, so keep your routine as best you can. Mealtime, bedtime, bath time, all should be kept as familiar as possible—even if you go to grandma’s or an aunt’s house for the holiday.
- Most of the kids with ASD who I know like a quiet space. So in advance of your stay, ask your host for a private space for your child. Make sure you have a visitor-free zone at home, too. My son likes to join the party in his own time and leave whenever he feels like it. We encourage him to do this so that he feels more comfortable with guests in the house.
- Make sure your host family understands your child’s limitations, such as the need to find a quiet space away from yelling during a sports event; otherwise, the result could be bad. Just ask a friend of mine: Her son with ASD spit in his uncle’s face when he refused to quiet down during a Thanksgiving Day football game. Her son made his point, and the uncle learned something about autism.
- Prepare a copy of your child’s schedule for your host family so no one is surprised when you head off to the tub with your son or daughter.
- And don’t forget your child’s favorite blanket, pillow, or sleep toy.

- “Divide and conquer” is a strategy that my husband and I use from time to time for holiday visits. My husband drives in one car with our neurotypical son, and our son with ASD and I travel in the other. This two-car approach lets one of us leave early with Jake, if needed. Sometimes, though, no matter how hard we try, our plans don’t work out: Make sure your getaway car isn’t blocked so you can take off if the visit goes wrong.

- We all know that hunger combined with seeing the “wrong” foods can spark our kids, and meltdowns aren’t fun for anyone. So, take all your child’s favorite foods. If your son likes a certain brand of peanut butter, bring it from home. It may take more time to pack, but the effort will go a long way toward a peaceful holiday.
- The holiday season is not the time to fight over what your child wears. If your child wants to wear his favorite comfy pajamas to the holiday dinner table, let him! Fighting over clothes will only increase your child’s anxiety and discomfort.
- The biggest lesson I’ve learned in the last 16 years is knowing when to say no. If an invitation sounds like something your child cannot handle, stay home. As the parent, you need to act in your child’s best interest. And there is no shame in keeping your sanity.

—Jen Nardo



Jake Nardo emerging from a quiet space created for him for the holidays last year

Adjust your expectations



Like all expectant parents, Deanna Principe dreamed of her life with children. But when both of her children were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), she realized that she had to adjust her expectations—even at holiday time. “If your child is unable to go to grandma’s for Christmas,” says Principe, who is Autism Delaware’s events manager as well as a parent, “then, don’t go. Whatever the reason! And this applies to any situation your child cannot handle. Adjust your expectations.”

“Don’t put your child in over his or her head,” agrees Eileen Riley-Hall, who was interviewed by Julie A. Rosenberg for an article on how to handle challenging autism behaviors. Riley-Hall is a high school teacher as well as a parent with two teenagers on the spectrum. “I have parents I talk to who say ‘Well, everyone is going to Six Flags for the day,’ and I’m, like, ‘Well, you might not be able to do that.’ If you know it’s a situation where it’s going to be really long or really difficult, you’re just sort of setting [the child] up. You have to accept that there are limitations that come with having a child with autism” (<http://www.care.com/special-needs-how-to-handle-the-4-most-challenging-autism-behaviors-p1017-q14202645.html>).

More support for the family gathering

Sometimes, attending a family gathering feels mandatory, especially during the holidays. "If this is the case in your family, start by preparing your child for the activity," suggests Dafne Carnright, who is Autism Delaware's family service coordinator in Kent and Sussex counties as well as the parent of a son with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). "I would start teaching new skills for whatever my son would need at the family gathering, including things like waiting or passing food around the table. Preparing can be done months beforehand, the day before, and hours before. Most of our kids benefit from multiple methods of preparation and practice."



"Prepare! Prepare! Prepare!" agrees Heidi Mizell, Autism Delaware's resource coordinator in New Castle County and also a parent. "How? Use pictures to explain what you'll be doing. And use social stories with details specific to the event: Will presents be unwrapped? Will you have to wait for food? Will a quiet place be available?"

"If you have a home movie of last year's dinner," continues Carnright, "watch it with your child, and point out the details of what occurred, kind of like you would in a written social story."

"If you are the host," adds Mizell, "invite someone to the gathering to support your child. This strategy will allow you to make sure your child is cared for while you are

busy being a good host—and help you enjoy the day."

"If you are not the host," says Carnright, "you could call the host and brainstorm about ways to work together to address any special needs your child has."

Both Mizell and Carnright believe a quiet space is essential for your child during the family gathering. But if this is not possible, give your child headphones to listen to music or a video to watch. "These options should be used only for regrouping," emphasizes Mizell, "not as a babysitter."

Behavioral supports are essential, too. "Build in the opportunity for positive reinforcement," says Carnright. "Let your child have some choice in what he will work toward. Make it clear how he will earn the reward."

Note: The more difficult the activity, the more frequent the possible rewards. They need to motivate your child, but you also need to consider what you'll be doing out. And be sure to follow up at the family gathering. "If it gets too loud and your child asks to go to the quiet place, tell him 'Good job asking!' And give him the previously agreed upon reward," states Carnright.

Most importantly, say both Carnright and Mizell, recognize the difficulty level for your child. If he acts out, it does not reflect poorly on you or your parenting skills; it is only your child's reaction to a situation that is difficult for him.

Dish: Holiday goodie

Recipe

Serves: 2

Holiday apple nog

Ingredients

- 2 fresh organic green apples or the autumn apple of your choice
- 1/4 cup, So Delicious Coconut Milk Nog
- 1 1/2 cup, filtered water
- 1 tbsp, ground cinnamon
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- few dashes of nutmeg

Directions

Place the apples, coconut milk nog, water, and ground cinnamon into a blender. Blend on high for one minute. Pour into two medium-sized glasses, and sprinkle a little more cinnamon and the nutmeg on top. Add the cinnamon sticks to stir. Serve chilled or heated.

More diet-appropriate recipes

- bettycrocker.com/recipes/gluten-free-russian-tea-cakes/bfdc5af7-2538-40d1-a7d4-2477cd9452ec
- pinterest.com/americanautism/kid-friendly-gfcr-recipes/
- glutenfreegoddess.blogspot.com/2008/11/thanksgiving-recipes-tips-for-gluten.html

Holiday apple nog recipe comes from the So Delicious Dairy Free website (<http://sodeliciousdairyfree.com/recipes/smoothies/holiday-apple-nog>)

Autism Delaware makes this material available with the understanding that you will exercise skill, care, and good judgment when choosing ingredients for yourself and your family.

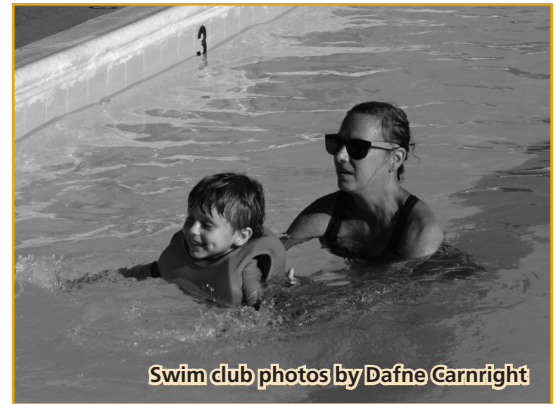
INSIDE Autism™ Delaware

Swim club makes a splash!

Twelve children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) enjoyed quality time with loved ones this summer at the Autism Delaware Summer Swim Club.



Eight hour-long sessions between June 17 and August 5 included water and pool acclimation, lessons in pool conduct as well as how to swim—and lots of fun.

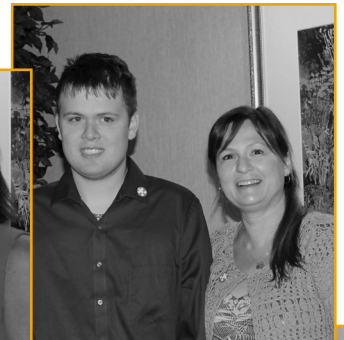
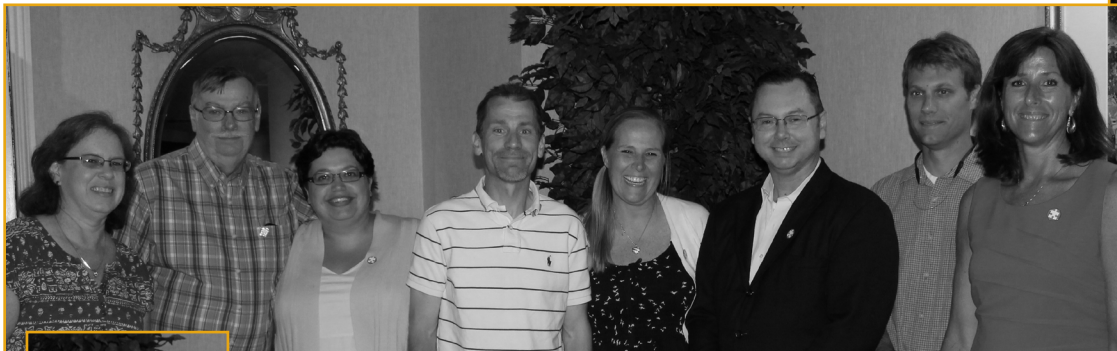


Swim club photos by Dafne Carnright

Designed for youth aged 4–21, the annual program took place in the pool at The North Rookery Golf Course in Milford.

To download the 2015 application, visit autismdelaware.org next spring.

All smiles at the 2014 awards banquet



One of the Autism Delaware staff's favorite fun things to do is to honor the many volunteers who donate their time, resources, and expertise to help people and families affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD). On Friday, June 6, the volunteers "who went above and beyond" were feted at Dover Downs Hotel.

teers—Rob and Robin Delaney, John Schelich, and Ed Martin—plus Marcy Kempner, Autism



Delaware's board president; and the recipient of the Autism Delaware Adult with Autism Scholarship, David Cook, with his mother Tamara.

Among those who enjoyed the evening's festivities were (clockwise, starting above left)

- Brian Redding of Christiana Care Health System who won the prestigious Noel Perry Smith Award for Outstanding Employers.
- Autism Delaware volunteer coordinator Melanie Matusheski, Outstanding Autism Delaware Volunteer award recipient Sam Johnson, Autism Delaware executive director Teresa Avery, and more outstanding volun-

- Above right are Autism Delaware Daniel and Lois Gray Memorial Scholarship recipients Veronica D'Amico (on the left) and Taylor Soave (on the right) with John Fisher Gray, Autism Delaware's board secretary and co-creator of the scholarship.

An evidence-based treatment for challenging behaviors



As a doctoral-level board-certified behavior analyst, Susan Peterson, PhD, BCBA-D, has 30 years' experience working with people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)—from young children to adults. With children, Peterson has breadth of experience plus a deep understanding that result in a unique view into the needs of the whole child.

As Autism Delaware clinical director, Peterson offers an evidence-based treatment called parent-child interaction therapy (or PCIT, for short). This treatment is appropriate for children aged 2–7 who exhibit challenging and disruptive behavior. Because of Peterson's expertise, she is able

to tailor PCIT to the unique needs of the child with ASD. Peterson coaches parents in real time by observing the interaction between the parent and child in a play environment. To provide the best environment, Autism Delaware's Newark office has been designed to handle all 12 to 16 sessions.

To talk about the appropriateness of this treatment for your child, call Susan Peterson at (302) 224-6020, ext. 221.

Expanding advocacy



Alex Eldreth

In April, Autism Delaware welcomed Alex Eldreth to the staff to help expand the advocacy effort in Delaware on behalf of individuals and families affected by ASD. Eldreth comes to us with lauded success at the Delaware Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Delaware HIV Consortium, and Hogares, Inc., a mental health center in New Mexico.

As the new policy and community outreach director, Eldreth serves as Autism Delaware's key contact person on all advocacy issues affecting the Delaware autism community and will identify potential legislative issues at the national, state, and local levels. He is also working with Autism Delaware's communications coordinator to help promote our mission statewide.

In the short time that Eldreth has been employed by Autism Delaware, he helped draft a legislative resolution establishing the autism educational task force, joined forces with other advocates to assist in the Department of Transportation's plans to change the state's paratransit system, and began expanding the grassroots group of autism advocates statewide.

If you are interested in joining the autism advocates, send an email to alex.eldreth@delautism.org. Or call (302) 224-6020, ext. 204.

Fun and eats at the beach

Where else can a family living with autism relax and enjoy a festive day at the beach but at Autism Delaware's annual beach picnic! Taking place at Cape Henlopen State Park again this year, the festivities began at 11:00 AM

on Sunday, August 17, and included the ever-popular train ride and moon bounce as well as lots of good food—all at one of the most popular parks in the nation according to a survey taken by the National Association of State Park Directors!



INSIDE Autism[™] Delaware

Fall auction gala

The bee's knees!

The 2014 fall auction gala promises to be just the thing for a couple of swells, assures the event's manager, Deanna Principe: "Even if you come stag, this event is the bee's knees!"

Taking place at the World Café Live at The Queen, the gala is puttin' on the Ritz with good food and extensive live and silent auctions to benefit Autism Delaware programs and services across the state.

But to get into the juice joint, you'll need the password. Every guy and doll gets the password when they get a ticket at autismdelaware.org.

Don't be a wet blanket! Get a wiggle on to the Speakeasy For Autism on Saturday, November 8, starting at 6:00 PM. Bring plenty of bubble gum, and be ready to Lindy Hop and Charleston with your favorite flapper. Your dogs will be yappin'!



Did you know?

Autism Delaware offers financial assistance to attend autism-related conferences.

For more info, visit autismdelaware.org.

For up-to-date info on Autism Delaware's programs and services, visit autismdelaware.org.

Programs and services

October

- 1, 8, 15, 22, 29**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. *Register:* Karen Tuohy at (302) 633-3316.
- 1**—Parent coffee hour. Hampton Inn (lobby). 117 Sandhill Dr. Middletown. 9:30 AM.
- 10**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 PM. *Register:* Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 10, 17, 24**—Lego Club. \$10 per session. Autism Delaware Newark office. 5:00–6:00 PM. *Register:* Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 11**—Sensory friendly movie: *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. Carmike 14 Theatre. 1365 N. Dupont Hwy. Dover. 10:00 AM.
- 14**—Speaker series: *Exercise for children with special health-care needs*. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:00 PM. *Register:* Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 14**—Parent coffee hour. Panera Bread. 3650 Kirkwood Hwy. Wilmington. 6:30 PM.
- 15**—Parent coffee hour. Holiday Inn Express. 1780 N. Dupont Hwy. Dover. 9:00 AM.
- 20**—Grandparents support group. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:00 PM. *Register:* Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 24**—Haunted (but not scary) train ride. Wilmington & Western Railroad. 2201 Newport Gap Pike. Wilmington. 6:00 PM. *Register:* Kris Grant at (302) 224-6020.
- 24**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Lewes office. 6:00–7:45 PM. *Register by October 22:* Dafne Carrnight at (302) 644-3410.
- 25**—Southern Delaware Fall Festival. Killens State Park. Pavilion 1. Felton. 1:00–3:00 PM. *Register:* Gail Hecky at (302) 644-3410.

November

- 5, 12, 19**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. *Register:* Karen Tuohy at (302) 633-3316.
- 5**—Parent coffee hour. Hampton Inn (lobby). 117 Sandhill Dr. Middletown. 9:30 AM.
- 7, 14, 21**—Lego Club. \$10 per session. Autism Delaware Newark office. 5:00–6:00 PM. *Register:* Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 11**—Parent coffee hour. Panera Bread. 3650 Kirkwood Hwy. Wilmington. 7:00 PM.
- 13**—Parent coffee hour. Surf Bagel. 17382 Coastal Hwy. Lewes. 9:00 AM.
- 14**—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 November 12:* Dafne Carrnight at (302) 644-3410.
- 15**—Sensory friendly movie: *Big Hero 6*. Carmike 14 Theatre. 1365 N. Dupont Hwy. Dover. 10:00 AM.
- 17**—Dads support group. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30 PM. *Register:* Brian Hall at (302) 224-6020.

December

- 3, 10**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 PM. *Register:* Karen Tuohy at (302) 633-3316.
- 3**—Parent coffee hour. Hampton Inn (lobby). 117 Sandhill Dr. Middletown. 9:30 AM.
- 5**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Lewes office. 6:00–7:45 PM. *Register by December 3:* Dafne Carrnight at (302) 644-3410.
- 11**—Parent coffee hour. Georgia House Restaurant. 18 S. Walnut St. Milford. 9:00 AM.
- 12**—Teen/Tween game night. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 PM. *Register:* Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.
- 15**—Grandparents support group. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30 PM. *Register:* Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

Southern Delaware Fall Festival

October 25
1:00–3:00 PM

Killens State Park
Pavilion 1, Felton

Reserve your tickets today:
(302) 644-3410



Parent coffee hour

Hampton Inn (lobby)

117 Sandhill Dr.
Middletown
9:30 AM
October 1
November 5
December 3

Panera Bread

3650 Kirkwood Hwy.
Wilmington
October 14 @ 6:30 PM
November 11 @ 7:00 PM

Holiday Inn Express

1780 N. Dupont Hwy.
Dover
October 15 @ 9:00 AM

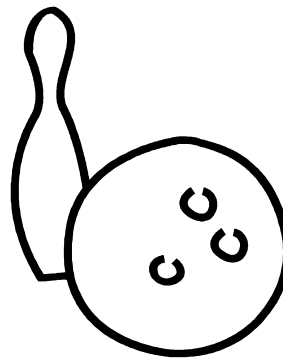
Surf Bagel

17382 Coastal Hwy.
Lewes
November 13 @ 9:00 AM

Georgia House Restaurant

18 S. Walnut St.
Milford
December 11 @ 9:00 AM

The coffee is on us!



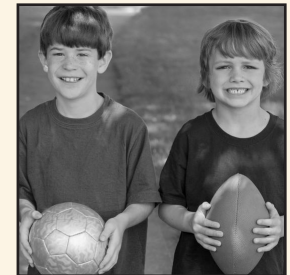
Bowling night

Every Wednesday
5:30–7:00 PM

Bowlerama
3031 New Castle Av.
New Castle

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

Speaker series
*Exercise for
children with
special health-
care needs*



October 14, 2014

6:30–8:00 PM

Autism Delaware
Newark office

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: Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12

Time: 6:30–8:30 PM

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

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

Autumn 2014 season

Place: Autism Delaware™ Lewes office

Dates: Oct. 24, Nov. 14, Dec. 5

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

Seven ideas for handling holiday "hiccups" Continued from p. 1

something bad happening.

If the child has a working schedule already in place, your job is easier. Nonetheless, you, too, must plan on practicing the new routine in advance of the holidays.

#2, prep with a story

Consider prepping your child for new locations and experiences. A good option is a social story™. The Gray Center for Social Learning and Understanding website defines a social story as "a situation, skill, or concept [that is described] in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format. The goal of a social story is to share accurate social information in a patient and reassuring manner that is easily understood by its audience. Half of all social stories™ developed should affirm something that an individual does well. Although the goal of a story should never be to change the individual's behavior, that individual's improved understanding of events and expectations may lead to more effective responses" (www.thegraycenter.org/social-stories/what-are-social-stories).

But even a story made up on the spur of the moment can help

the child with ASD predict what is to come—and the story can be rehearsed in the car.

#3, record a video of the location

Record a video of the new location ahead of time on your smartphone. If your child tends to be concerned about new bathrooms, also record some footage of the facilities. Whoever is recording the footage can add words of explanation during the process. Then,

let your child review the video several times. If possible, do a walk-through.

#4, maintain a sense of normalcy

Set aside time for some typical non-holiday-related family routines so the child won't feel that everything has changed.

#5, create a "new" tradition

Start a holiday activity that the family can repeat every year. With this strategy, not only the child but the whole family can look forward to a known holiday activity.

#6, resist over-decorating

Restrain your urge to decorate every single room of the house. The sparkle, shine, and scents of the holidays can be overwhelming for people with sensory sensitivities.

If you must decorate, consider keeping one area free of holiday decorations, such as the TV room or family room.

#7, arrive for success

Instead of struggling to get to a holiday event on time—and through a possible case of "hiccups"—consider arriving late and leaving when everyone else does. This strategy helps promote a feeling of success around your participation, and everyone will "breathe easier."

Did you know?

A tax-deductible donation can be made to Autism Delaware through the United Way of Delaware. Simply enter the code on the United Way form.

For the United Way in	the code is
Delaware	9234
SE Pennsylvania	12598



Holiday party

You are cordially invited to the event of the season, the Autism Delaware holiday party. Held in both New Castle and Sussex County, the holiday party is free for families living with ASD.

New Castle County

*December 21
12:00–2:00 PM*

*Aetna Banquet Hall
400 Ogletown Rd.
Newark DE 19711*

*For details & reservations,
call (302) 224-6020.*

Sussex County

*December 6
10:00 AM–1:00 PM*

*Old Paths Church of Christ
18246 Redden Rd.
Georgetown DE 19947*

*For details & reservations,
call (302) 644-3410.*

Do-it-yourself toys for the holidays

Sun contributor Heidi Mizell parents two children, one with autism spectrum disorder, and supports Autism Delaware as New Castle County resource coordinator.

As a young mother of a son diagnosed with sensory integration dysfunction (now known as sensory processing disorder), I had to help Shane play with the toys that other children played with because he struggled with the simplest of fine motor skills. So, I would watch what the occupational therapist did and apply this therapy to Shane's play time. We would make sensory tools, such as rhythm instruments, and create our own letter forms with Wikki Stix and manila folders. We made a weighted blanket by stuffing a few blankets inside a duvet cover.

And I may have been "queen of the goop and bin play," too! Shane and I made toys out of rice, noodles, cotton balls, and, of course, goop.

Making do-it-yourself (DIY) toys is easy with adequate direction. To help you get started, I've listed below the websites with directions for making several DIY toys:

- **No-sew weighted blanket**—<http://jesttupositive.wordpress.com/2012/11/09/diy-weighted-blanket/>
- **Pellets** (This stuffing for weighted DIY toys is carried by Amazon.com)—http://www.amazon.com/Fairfield-Poly-Pellets-Weighted-Stuffing-Beads/dp/B000E3E6GM/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1403889354&sr=81&keywords=Fairfield+Poly-Pellets+Weighted+Stuffing+Beads
- **Light table** (a viewing device that illuminates artwork from beneath)
 - <http://www.andnextcomesl.com/2013/09/diy-light-table-tutorial.html>
 - <http://www.pinterest.com/LightTableGuide/>
- **Cuddle swing**—<http://asensorylife.com/homemade-cuddle-swing.html>
- **Bolster swing**—<http://www.sensoryprocessing.info/toys/bolster-swing.html>
- **Glow-in-the-dark Play Doh**—<http://pagingfunmums.com/2014/03/18/glow-in-the-dark-no-cook-playdough/>
- **Scented play dough**—<http://mamaot.com/2012/04/26/easy-homemade-playdough>—Add Kool-Aid to scent it!
- **Weighted doll**—<http://adayinourshoes.com/diy-make-your-own-weighted-doll/>
- **Glow-in-the-dark silly putty**—<http://pagingfunmums.com/2014/06/27/glow-in-the-dark-silly-putty/>
- **Bath paint**—<http://pagingfunmums.com/2014/02/20/glowing-bath-paint/>
- **Glow-in-the-dark rice recipe**—<http://www.growingajeweledrose.com/2013/01/glowing-rice-sensory-play.html>
- **Colored pasta**—<http://laughingkidslearn.com/2014/05/how-to-colour-pasta-for-play.html/>
- **DIY snow**—<http://mamaot.com/2013/03/24/easy-to-make-instant-snow-using-a-diaper/>
- **Felt tangram, circle builders** (like round versions of Lego® blocks), **and a tinkering kit**—<http://cyndieackerman.blogspot.com/2012/12/three-easy-diy-toys-for-open-ended-play.html?showComment=1355777895362>
- **Ideas for sensory games**—<http://www.pinterest.com/ckiley/sensory-play-ideas/>
- **Sensory games for infants**—http://blog.rightstart.com/5-fun-sensory-games-for-infants/?utm_source=RachelL&utm_medium=Website&utm_content=5FUNSENSORYGAMES&utm_campaign=RSMoms
- **Tips for kids who do not enjoy getting messy**—<http://mamaot.com/2013/03/03/into-to-messy-play-painting-with-shaving-cream/>

Why DIY toys are beneficial

In an article on the PBS Parents website entitled "Developing and cultivating skills through sensory play," PBS Digital Studios staff member Danielle Steinberg notes that "Children (and adults) learn best and retain the most information when they engage their senses. Many of our favorite memories are associated with one or more

of our senses.... By giving children the opportunity to investigate materials with no preconceived knowledge, you're helping them develop and refine their cognitive, social and emotional, physical, creative and linguistic skill sets" (<http://www.pbs.org/parents/child-development/sensory-play/developing-and-cultivating-skills-through-sensory-play/#.U9vwwFsvURA.email>).



To make this doll, visit <http://sarahsdolls.blogspot.com/2010/08/how-to-weighted-doll-tutorial.html>.



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Helping People and Families Affected by Autism

Save the date!

2015 Walk for Autism

April 18—Lewes

April 25—Wilmington



Photos by Andrew Zeltt



Photo by Carol Manion

autismdelaware.org