

CENTER FOR Autism Spectrum Disorders

www.childrensnational.org/CASD



Children's National.

CASD CHAT E-Newsletter

Summer Safety

Dear CASD family and friends,

Summertime provides great opportunities to get outside and be active, which is great for the whole family! As summer begins, the change in usual routines can also lead to increased safety challenges and risky behaviors for some children. Increased access to water activities increases the

risks. While sensory sensitivities present a challenge for some autistic children to engage in swimming, many individuals with autism enjoy the benefits of swimming which extend beyond physical development to improve self-esteem, social skills, reduce sensory sensitivity... Fortunately, there are many resources and strategies families can use to help keep their children safe.



- 1. Use simple safety measures.** If your child is prone to wandering at home, considering installing interior locks high on doors leading outside, so that your child cannot open the door. If you have an alarm system, see if you can set it to sound when a door is opened from the inside.
- 2. Have a plan for walks and bike rides outside of the home** Be sure to use child locks on car doors so they can't open them while the car is moving. If your child tends to wander in public, teach rules about holding hands but engage everyone in your group to help monitor. It's also a good idea to dress your child in bright colors, so you can easily spot them outdoors or in crowded places.
- 3. Identification bracelets are also a helpful tool.** Soft, rubber bracelets can be purchased easily online and customized with your child's name, key medical information, and contact information. This is a particularly useful tool for children on the spectrum, who may struggle to communicate in stressful situations, even if they often show good language skills in daily circumstances.
- 4. If you are joining family and/or friends, communicate your child's risks to them and engage them in keeping the activity safe for your child.** Assign adults or mature adolescents to supervise group members who need extra support. The individual who is supervising must communicate clearly when they are handing over the responsibility to someone else.

5. **Spot the patterns.** If your child is prone to persistent wandering or elopement, try to take note of the patterns in your child's behavior to be better prepared for problems. If your child works with a behavioral therapist or psychologist, consult their provider for help understanding their behavior patterns and designing a plan to keep them safe using strategies that have been helpful in other settings, such as the school.
6. **Build your safety net.** Alert neighbors to be on the lookout for children who persistently manage to wander off, providing your contact information and simple directions for how to approach and speak with your child and keep them safe until you arrive. Contact your local police department and ask if you can register your child with them. Introduce your child to local police officers and teach them how to safely approach an officer to ask for help, either by speaking or by showing an identification bracelet.
7. **Teach water safety.** The most common way that children are seriously injured or killed due to wandering is by drowning. It is critical for all children to learn water safety skills. Create and reinforce rules about staying away from water unless an adult is present. Even individuals who know how to swim or are using flotation devices are at risk for drowning.
8. **WebMD has an important videoclip to teach others to recognize drowning:** <https://youtu.be/beNheoRRdKk> [youtu.be] Most people expect someone who is drowning to be screaming and waving their hands. The reality is that a drowning person often cannot do either and they may be missed.
9. **Ensure gates to pools are locked and working properly**(but recognize that this is not sufficient to deter a kid) and that toys are removed from the pool.
10. **Risks are present even when adults are present to supervise** Assign adults to supervise the pool, trading off every 15-30 minutes to help unsure focused supervision. Don't assume safety in shallow water or because a child has a life jacket on. Adults who are supervising children who are not strong swimmers should ensure the child remains within "arm's length."
11. **Swim lessons are an important step to water safety.** Contact your local recreation department to ask about adapted swimming classes, including programs designed to address the needs of individuals with ASD. There are also private agencies and swimming instructors in many areas who specialize in swimming instruction for children with disabilities.
12. These and additional safety tips can be found in this NPR article:[You Could Save A Child From Drowning This Summer. Here's How.](#)

(This month's CHAT was developed by Angela Bollich, PhD with the support of research assistant Jessica Smith, BS.) [Additional CHATS can be found on the Children's National CASD website.](#)

Profiles Celebrating Neurodiversity

This month we want to highlight the stars of the 2017 documentary "Swim Team" about a diverse swim team of autistic teens named the Jersey Hammerheads. The documentary was developed by director/producer Lara Stolman as an outcome of her search for swim instruction for her child

SWIM TEAM



with autism, triggered by an episode when he eloped from the home. The family had a swimming pool and his elopement highlighted his risk and the need for instruction. The story focuses on 3 very different individuals who come together to lead the Jersey Hammerheads team, including Robert Justine, Kelvin Truong, and Mikey McQuay.

2022 Calendar of Events

Free Parent Support Group

Where: Virtual

When: every Monday at 1 PM EST

Dr. Dan Shapiro, friend of CASD, will be offering a free parent support group, every Monday at 1 PM EST. To register, [click here](#).

We want to highlight *Ivymount School Resource Guide* which provides information on a wide range of resources in the community including **Summer Camps** (since it is that time of year to schedule) www.ivymount.org/resourceguide2022

Dr. Shapiro is offering new courses for parents of different age groups. To learn more about these courses, please visit his website:

<http://www.parentchildjourney.com/>

Dr. Shapiro also offers parent-child excursions: stand-alone courses on common topics in developmental and behavioral pediatrics: ADHD, anxiety, autism, social success, sibling relationships, eating, sleeping, violence, adolescence, gender, sexuality, and more.

These in-depth seminars are for parents of children with challenging temperaments or developmental differences. Each Excursion starts with a review of background concepts then dives deep into specific strategies. As with all Parent Child Journey courses, the emphasis here is on individualizing the approach for each child. Choose the topics that interest you. Real-life challenges. Real-life solutions.

Pathfinders for Autism (<https://pathfindersforautism.org/calendar/>) provides a list of programs for all ages including video group for spouses/partners of adults with Asperger's; Transitioning services and Job skills; Baby and Family Navigator programs, and new this month, Autism from the Autistic Perspective and free Pediatric Occupational Therapy Screening and more!

NEW VIDEOS ADDED!

The *Unstuck* author team has

The videos made me
feel less alone.
-Parent

The strategies
were very well
explained.
-Parent

New Free Videos



UNSTUCK AND ON TARGET

[Playlist of all videos](#)

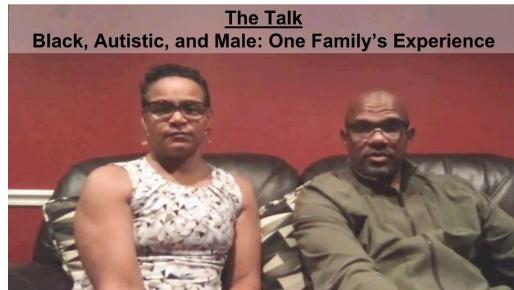
created short videos to help parents of children with executive functioning difficulties. Please click the playlists below to view the videos in both English and Spanish! We have added new videos to address feedback from parents. Please click on our playlist to view our new 3-part video series on "troubleshooting."

[Recursos para padres](#)

The Talk— Black, Autistic, and Male: One Family's Experience

[Click here for the
video](#)

We would like to share an interview with a family of a college-bound autistic young adult and an accompanying reflection by Tawara Goode, Director of the National Center for Cultural Competence and Director of the Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.



Please see below for a flyer regarding a study of brain development and autism. If you're interested, please contact Chelsea Armour, aarmour@childrensnational.org.

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC



GEORGE
MASON
UNIVERSITY



Andi lab
andi.lab@email.gwu.edu

Do you want to help us study brain development and learn about autism?

Earn up to \$90 in our developmental studies at The George Washington University!

Is your child between 5-17 years old and has an autism diagnosis?

Have a fun family day!

We would like to invite you and your child to play child-friendly computer games while we track their gaze and their brain function.



Pediatric Mendelian Genomics Research Center

Study of Undiagnosed and
Diagnosed Genetic Diseases.

Investigators at Children's National Center for Genetic Medicine Research, in collaboration with Invitae Corporation, are researching the genetic causes of human disease. If you or a family member have a known or uncertain genetic diagnosis or suspected genetic diagnosis, you may be eligible to participate in our research program.

If you are interested in learning more about our research program or are interested in participating, please submit a request for information here: <https://is.gd/PMGRCstudy> or email PMGRC@childrensnational.org.



Investigators at Children's National Center for Genetic Medicine Research, in collaboration with Invitae Corporation, are researching the genetic causes of human disease. If you or a family member have a known or uncertain genetic diagnosis or suspected genetic diagnosis, you may be eligible to participate in our research program. Please see the flyer to the left to learn more.



20+ free resources available to view anytime, anywhere!

Enjoy these information-packed free webinars on your own or make them a powerful group learning event with your colleagues, friends, and family members. Topics include:

- Working/learning in groups
- Face-to-face communication
- Social anxiety
- Executive functions
- Children's stress
- Self-regulation
- Individual webinars on 10 core Social Thinking Vocabulary

Hosted by Social Thinking.

Community Resources & Events

Advocacy Resources

[Autistic Self Advocacy Network-Navigating College: A Handbook on Self Advocacy](#)

Resources on Anti-Racism

[Spectrum Support's Social Stories on Racism](#)

[ASAN's What is Police Violence?: A Plain Language Booklet](#)

[@TheMorganCruise Worksheets for Black Children](#)

COVID-19 Safety Resources

[Behavioral Directions LLC's Safety Teaching Protocol](#)

COVID-19 National and Local Government Resources

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

[DC Department of Health](#)

[Maryland Department of Health](#)

[Virginia Department of Health](#)

[U.S Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Part C Dispute Resolution Procedures](#)

[U.S Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Part B Dispute Resolution Procedures](#)

Visit Children's National Hospital's COVID-19 Resources