



## CASD CHAT E-Newsletter

### Finding Summer Fun

Dear CASD friends and family,

Welcome to summer! Different people greet this season with different emotions that range from ecstatic joy to dread, often depending on how much they like structure (or the lack of it), heat (or, depending on who controls your air conditioning, frigid cold), and some of nature's biggest expression (flowers! bugs! storms!).

In this CASD Chat, we're sharing some ideas to make the most of summer. As a plus, you can do all of these things without spending money. Many of the ideas also aren't adding something big to your schedule but, instead, offer a quick strategy to maximize what you already have going on or are planning to do. For those of you on the search for things to do this summer, the last two items give some ideas.

#### **A few activities to consider:**

- **Explore your child's interests!** What is medically described as "restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities" can really be "deep loves" that are fun and rewarding for your child to explore. When your child's intensive focus isn't competing with the structure of a school schedule, the flexibility of summer can allow some of those interests and activities to flourish. ***Watching how your child engages the things that they love now may make it easier to respond when schedules take off again in the fall.*** You may then know, for instance, that they will feel calmer if you wait the few extra seconds for them to get to 11 repetitions, or you'll be better able to ask relevant questions about the details of the ocean floor, trains, Roblox, or another interest as you further build your relationship with your child.
- **Break long-term tasks into small pieces.** Are you trying to get something done this summer? Does your child have required summer reading due in the first weeks of school? Take a few minutes to ***break down the steps of your goal and set a timeline for them.*** Set dates to check your plan, like July 15, August 1, and August 15. You might realize that your initial timeline or plan isn't working well, which is a great time to move to a Plan B! For example, maybe you and your child set a goal to build the Lego set that's been sitting around for months. Plan A was to work on the Lego set on their own every day after camp, but suddenly,

it's August, and the set has gone untouched because your child really needs quiet reading time after the stimulation of camp. On to Plan B—setting a 10-minute timer for time to build together on the weekends when you're more available to join in. Plans that don't work can teach us what does work. It's a great thing to move to a plan that will better help you reach your goal.

- **Bring the best parts of your child's educational supports into the summer.** Some children may be attending an Extended School Year (ESY) program this month that provides ongoing therapy or specialized instruction at school during the summer. (Talk with your child's school team if you think this may be helpful for them next year!) Regardless of whether your child is participating in the formal program, ***try looking at the goals and accommodations of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan for strategies*** that may be helpful to your family in the summer as well. Has your child been practicing an effective way to communicate, self-regulate, learn new information, or demonstrate what they know? If you'd like to continue building those skills over the summer, look at the "Goals" section of the IEP for more information about what your child has been practicing. For ideas about strategies to support your existing plans, see the "Accommodations" on your child's IEP or 504 Plan. Your child may be used to visual schedules, repetition of directions, prompting, or other approaches that help them with completing tasks and routines.
- **Join a library program.** Many local libraries offer a free Summer Reading Program, which can include opportunities to connect with other kids around the same age regarding a topic of interest, try a craft or new activity, watch a show, or learn about something new.
- **Attend sensory-friendly activities.** Try a sensory-friendly show, movie, or concert, or explore the sensory-inclusive options at common summer stops like the zoo or museum. ***XMinds*** offers a helpful list of Maryland- and DC-local options, or you can search online for your county and "sensory friendly Summer 2023" for options.
- Going to an outdoor event? Find ways to ***expect the unexpected***: Ask how seats are determined (many are first come, first served), what time the show or movie will *actually* start, and where the bathrooms are. Consider ways to make space, like sitting on a large blanket that creates a natural boundary, wearing noise-muting headphones, and sitting at the edge of the group.

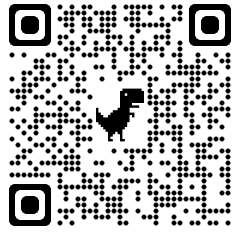
Remember, summer fun isn't made by hitting every point on a checklist. Sometimes the fun is in leaving or stopping early while everyone has still had a good time, or in staying home to do something that makes more sense to your family. There is no "normal" brain, and we're excited to see more of the fun of neurodiverse summers. Wishing you all a wonderful, safe season!

*This article was developed by Marissa Miller, Ph.D, NCSP and with the assistance of Andrea Lopez, B.S., CASD research assistant and Laura Campos, B.A., CASD research assistant.*

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*Scroll down for a list of resources (including tools you can download), announcements of community programs, and research opportunities. **Our goal***

is to help families and providers so please use this QR code or click [here](#) to give us feedback.



If you have feedback or suggestions, please scan the QR code and complete the survey! Thank you!

## Profiles Celebrating Neurodiversity



### Morgan Harper Nichols

Morgan Harper Nichols introduces herself on her website as an “autistic artist, poet, and musician.” She makes art prints that you may have seen on social media or various stores. They often feature the wisdom of her own poetry, such as “I do not know what lies ahead, but I will find my joy, anyway” and “As you learn to fly, may you also learn to rest... for both will prepare you for the journey ahead.”

She shares about her journey (including her experience of sensory processing, executive functioning, and masking) to autism diagnosis at 31 years old on her [YouTube Channel](#) and [her blog](#). She also discusses friendship [on an episode of her podcast](#), the Morgan Harper Nichols show, which covers a wide variety of topics from her poetic and thoughtful perspective.

Source: <https://morganharpnichols.com/bio>

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## LGBTQ+ and Disability Pride 2023

Pride can come in many shapes and forms. June is known as LGBTQ+ Pride month, but the celebration and call to action doesn't stop there with July being Disability Pride Month. See below for some articles about commemorating Pride.

- Click [Here](#) to learn more about Neurodiversity Pride Day!
- Click [Here](#) to learn more about Autistic Pride Day!
- Click [Here](#) to learn more about Disability Pride Month!
- Click [Here](#) to learn more about the intersection of neurodiversity and the LGBTQ+ community from Dr. John Strang, the director of the Gender Development Program and the Gender and Autism Program at Children's National Hospital!

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## 2023 Calendar of Events

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### **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](#).

Dr. Shapiro is offering new courses for parents of different age groups on a wide range of topics. Choose the topics that interest you. Real-life challenges. Real-life solutions.. To learn more about these courses, visit [parent-child excursions](#): More information on various programs can be found on his website: <http://www.parentchildjourney.com/>

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### **Summer Programs for Neurodivergent Youth & Adults**

**Where:** DMV area

**When:** Summer 2023

[DC Peers](#) is a community organization that offers social meetups, learning workshops, and a welcoming community to neurodiverse groups of teens and adults. Our neurodiverse staff have a lot of personal and lived experience with autism, ADHD, and other neurological differences, and we understand and embrace neurodivergent ways of being in the world. In our groups, folks can be themselves and connect – outside of clinics and therapeutic settings.

Here's the lineup:

### **Teen Programs** (mid-June through July)

- [Teen Creek Weeks \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | weeklong half-day camps in Rock Creek Park for youth ages 11-15 | July 10-14, July 17-21, July 24-28 | \$300
- [Art Meetups \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | ages 14+ | Sundays at our office | 2-3:30 | \$200 or \$30 drop-in
- [Game Time \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | ages 14+ | Sundays at our office | 4-5:30 | \$200 or \$30 drop-in
- [Dungeons & Dragons Meetup \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | ages 14+ | Tuesdays at our office | 5:30-8p | \$250
- [Virtual Movie Nights \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | ages 11+ | Thursdays online | 6:30p | \$100 or \$15 drop in
- Teen Summer Meetups (ages 11+)
  - [July 8: Folklife Festival \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | 10-12 | \$20
  - [July 22: Escape Room \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | 1-3 | \$40

### **Adult Programs** (mid-June through mid-August)

- [Not-So-Typical Happy Hour \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | virtual | 1st & 3rd Saturday | 5:30-6:30 | free
- [Neurodiversity Support Group \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | hybrid | 2nd & 4th Thursday | 6:30-8 | free
- [Women and Non-Binary Persons' Neurodiversity Support Circle \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | virtual | biweekly on Wednesdays | 6:30-7:30 | free
- Registration coming soon for:
  - Adult Meetups around town
  - Camping Trip (!!)

### **Family Meetups**

- [July 15: Smithsonian National Zoo \[dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com\]](https://dcpeers.us4.list-manage.com) | 11-1
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### **Disability Pride Month Events**

**Where:** Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library

**When:** July 2023

Disability Pride Month is an annual event celebrated in recognition of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 1990.

The Center for Accessibility at the Martin Luther King Memorial Jr. Library is hosting a variety of signature events to celebrate the anniversary of this landmark legislation throughout the month of July 2023. Explore the events below to help us celebrate Disability Pride at DCPL!

**\*For reasonable accommodations to participate in these or any DCPL programs, please contact [DCPLaccess@dc.gov](mailto:DCPLaccess@dc.gov) or 202-727-2142.**

Here's the lineup:

### **Smart Home Exhibit**

**Where:** Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (1st Floor, New Books)

**When:** Saturday, July 8 2023 at 11am-3pm

Try out Smart technology for the home! In conjunction with the DC Assistive Technology Program, we'll showcase the latest smart tech designed to bring ease to everyday home activities, from some well-known tech like the Alexa and the Apple iPad, to some less so well-known (but just as reliable) tech like the Hero Medication dispenser and Kasa Smart light bulbs. Get a hands-on feel for what might work for your home!

*\*ASL Interpretation will be provided*

### **ASL Story Time**

**Where:** Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (2nd Floor, Children's Room)

**When:** Tuesday, July 11 2023 at 11:30am

Join us for stories and songs in American Sign Language (ASL)! We'll both voice and sign our stories; no prior knowledge of ASL is required.

Best for ages 2-5.

### **Know Your Rights with Disability Rights DC**

**Where:** Virtual Program

**When:** Thursday, July 13 2023 at 6:30pm

This program will help people with disabilities know their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Peter Stephan from Disability Rights DC will deliver a general Know Your Rights presentation, including Assistive Technology rights, voter registration and the accessible remote ballot system, and rights regarding ADA accommodations in the community. The program will be over Zoom. **Please contact DCPL for the Zoom link at [DCPLaccess@dc.gov](mailto:DCPLaccess@dc.gov) or 202-727-2142.**

*\*ASL Interpretation and CART captioning will be provided*

### **Disability Pride Comedy & Storytelling Night**

**Where:** Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (5th Floor, Event Space)

**When:** Thursday, July 20 2023 at 7:00pm

Join us in celebration of Disability Pride Month for an evening of comedy and stories from performers with disabilities!

#### **Featured performers:**

Martin Phillips (DC Improv)

Sheri Denkensohn (Story District, The Moth)

Adrian Villalobos (Story District)

\*This program may contain mature language and is for Adults.

*\*ASL Interpretation and CART captioning will be provided*

### **Deaf Plays with Willy Conley**

**Where:** Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (1st Floor, New Books)

**When:** Saturday, July 22 2023 at 11:00am

DCPL will be joined in conversation with award-winning photographer, writer,



and theatre artist Willy Conley, who will share plays by Deaf and hard of hearing writers.

Willy Conley is an award-winning photographer, writer, and theatre artist. He is the editor of [Plays of Our Own: An Anthology of Scripts by Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Writers](#)

*\*ASL Interpretation and CART captioning will be provided*

## Participate in Research

### Unstuck & On Target High School Project

There is an exciting new research project from Children's National Hospital and we are looking to partner with local high schools in the DC Metro area!

In partnership with educators, autistic youth, and their families, autism experts from Children's National Hospital have developed an upward extension of the school-based *Unstuck and On Target!* curriculum for **diploma-track, autistic high**

Unstuck & On Target: High School Curriculum
<b>Understanding Your Thinking Style &amp; Getting What You Need</b>
Flexible Thinking, Self-Advocacy, Neurodiversity, Managing Mismatches
<b>Tools to Keep You On Target</b>
Time Management, Handling Stress, Motivation, Reminder Systems
<b>Tools for Working With Others</b>
Relationship Builders, How & When to Compromise
<b>Planning Your Goal and Putting Your Plan Into Action</b>
SMART Goal Setting, Seeing the Big Picture & Important Details, Recognizing Planning Dangers, Making & Trying Out Your Plan A/B/C

**school students needing executive function and socio-emotional support.** This research-based curriculum is designed to be taught at school and targets transition-readiness skills such as self-advocacy, flexible problem-solving, time management, and independent goal-setting and planning skills.

We have received funding from the National Institutes of Mental Health to evaluate the (free) curriculum on a larger scale, and **we are looking for schools to partner with.** Once we receive approval from the school district, we will provide participating schools with free training, materials, and ongoing support for school staff to teach *Unstuck* at local schools.

If you are a teacher or parent and are interested in hearing more about how to bring *Unstuck* to your high school or school district, please contact Julianna McKenna at [jmmckenna@childrensnational.org](mailto:jmmckenna@childrensnational.org).

### Praise from Parents & Teens



### ASD Research Study

George Washington University and George Mason University are studying

brain development in autism. As part of the study, participants play child-friendly computer games while we track their gaze and brain function. Families can earn up to \$90 for participating.



We are recruiting 5-17 year olds with an autism diagnosis.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Chelsea Armour:

- Email: [aarmour@childrensnational.org](mailto:aarmour@childrensnational.org) or [andilab@email.gwu.edu](mailto:andilab@email.gwu.edu)

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### **Daily Living Skills Study**

The purpose of this research study is to gain insight into what daily living skills are important to you, and what is the best way to write questions about daily living skills for a new questionnaire.



We are recruiting 18-30 year olds with an autism diagnosis.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Jamie Kleiner:

- Email: [dailylivingskills@chop.edu](mailto:dailylivingskills@chop.edu)

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### **PUSHED Study**

This study is to validate an existing educational toolkit that could help autistic individuals learn about healthy relationships, sexuality, and reproductive awareness. Families can earn up to \$100 for their time.



We are recruiting 14-18 year olds with an autism diagnosis or self-identify as autistic and have English proficiency in reading and writing.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Jenny Mai Phan:

- Email: [jphan@childrensnational.org](mailto:jphan@childrensnational.org)

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### **ASD Research Study - DSCN Lab**

Dr. Elizabeth Redcay at the University of Maryland, College Park and her team



are studying behavioral and brain responses in children and adolescents on the autism spectrum during social interactions. Participation involves virtual visits, in-person visits, and longitudinal virtual follow ups over the course of about two years. Families can earn up to \$1000 for their time.



We are recruiting 11-14 year olds with an autism diagnosis.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Kayla Pereira:

- Email: [marylandbrainstudy@umd.edu](mailto:marylandbrainstudy@umd.edu)

## Unstuck & On Target Resources



A resource for **TEACHERS!**

- Free, asynchronous, online educator training
- First 600 to finish get 3.5 free CE credits!

Unstuck Elementary is a Tier 2 executive functioning curriculum

- Planning
- Transitioning
- Following directions

[Click here](#)

"One student had three meltdowns per day, and Unstuck reduced her outbursts to two a quarter."



A resource for **PARENTS!**

Free, online supports for preventing overload, compromising and staying motivated

Created by parents, educators, and experts

- 15 3-5 min videos
- 5 also in Spanish
- Tip sheets

[Click here](#)

"The videos made me feel less alone...and hopeful that there are more things I can try to help [my child]."



**¡Feliz Mes de la Herencia Hispana!**

Explora nuestros recursos en Español:

- Videos en Español
- Manual para padres en Español

[Haga clic aquí](#)

Unstuck Elementary es un plan de estudios de la función ejecutiva de Tier 2 para estudiantes neurodivergentes

A continuación: Todos los videos traducidos al Español Grabación de seminarios web en Español para implementadores

"Un estudiante tuvo tres crisis por día y Unstuck redujo sus arrebatos a dos por trimestre."



Un recurso para **PADRES**

- Apoyos gratuitos en línea para padres de niños con dificultades para manejar las emociones, concentrarse, hacer planes y más

Creado por padres, educadores y expertos.

- 5 videos de 3-5 minutos en español
- Hojas de consejos

[Haga clic aquí](#)

"Los videos me hicieron sentir menos solo, y con la esperanza de que hay más cosas que puedo intentar para ayudar [a mi hijo]."

The *Unstuck* author team has 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."

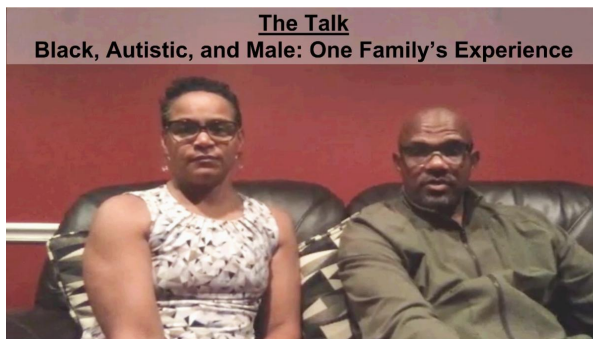
The videos made me feel less alone.  
--Parent

The strategies were very well explained.  
--Parent



Playlist of all videos

Recursos para padres



Click here for the video

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

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.

## Additional Resources



### Social Thinking Free Resources

For over 25 years [Social Thinking](#) has been a guiding resource for schools, clinics, and families around the world, and they're here for you, too! Their Free Stuff Portal is filled to the brim with teaching ideas and resources to foster the development of students' social competencies. Discover free support strategies to use with your students, clients and children.

[Click here](#) to view Hundreds of Free Resources

## Ivymount Outreach Resource Guide

[Ivymount Community Outreach](#) partners with service providers to bring families a helpful one-stop spot for information. The Outreach Resource Guide 2023 is an online tool with information on 70 plus diverse organizations that provide specialized services. The Guide includes provider descriptions and links that help you easily navigate to meaningful supports.

[Click here](#) to view the Ivymount Outreach Resource Guide

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### Arc Maryland, "Together We're Better"

The Arc Maryland, with its statewide partners, provides a school inclusion program called "[Together We're Better](#)" (TWB). The objective of the program is to raise awareness of the value and importance of inclusion of students with disabilities. The program involves a 4-way partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, the Maryland Department of Disabilities, and The Arc Maryland. [Visit the website here](#) to see the different components to the program, broken up for elementary, middle, & high school students.

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### DC Autism Collaborative

The [DC Autism Collaborative](#) (DC-AC) has developed several resources for parents of young children and professionals (including health providers, early childhood educators, and community leaders) on topics related to autism spectrum disorder (ASD). All materials have been, or are in the processes of being, translated into both Spanish and Amharic. These resources can be downloaded as PDFs, though we encourage you to [visit the website here](#) as we plan to update these regularly.

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### Pathfinders for Autism

Pathfinders 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! <https://pathfindersforautism.org/calendar/>

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### 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

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### **Supporting Mental Well-being**

Yetta Myrick, Executive Director/President of [DC Autism Parents \(DCAP\)](#) and CDC's Act Early Ambassador to the District of Columbia has multiple resources to share with families to support mental well-being.

[Tips to Help Parents Keep Calm Every Day](#)

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### **Additional Resources**

#### **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 COVID-19 Resources](#)

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