



ROD Autism Team Newsletter



New Horizons is offering a free Job Exploration Summer

The job exploration summer program is one week, with a choice of AM or PM sessions. During the week we will tour local businesses, practice work skills, build an effective resume, have an opportunity to practice job interview skills, and explore career interests! We can assist in accessing public transportation to get to and from the program location, if needed. Our program is open to any middle or high school student, ages 14-22, with a disability indicated by an IEP or 504, located in the counties: Franklin, Ripley, Dearborn, Ohio, Union, or Fayette.

SIGN UP ONLINE at tinyurl.com/nhrsummer2018

Or fill out the application below and return to your student's special education teacher before May 30th.

Student Name: _____ Student's School: _____

Student Address: _____

Parent Name: _____ Parent Phone: _____

Please find the location closest or most convenient for you, and choose either session 1 or 2.

JUNE SESSIONS

June 4-8 Batesville Library

☐ Session 1: 9:00am-1:00pm

☐ Session 2: 1:00pm-5:00pm

June 11-15 Milan Library

☐ Session 1: 10:00am-2:00pm

☐ Session 2: 2:00pm-6:00pm

June 18-22 Lawrenceburg Library

☐ Session 1: 9:00am-1:00pm

☐ Session 2: 1:00pm-5:00pm

June 25-29 Brookville Library

☐ Session 1: 10:00am-2:00pm

☐ Session 2: 2:00pm-6:00pm

JULY SESSIONS

July 2-6* Batesville Library

☐ Session 1: 9:00am-1:00pm

☐ Session 2: 1:00pm-5:00pm

July 9-13 Union County Public Library

☐ Session 1: 10:00am-2:00pm

☐ Session 2: 2:00pm-6:00pm

July 16-20 Lawrenceburg Library

☐ Session 1: 10:00am-2:00pm

☐ Session 2: 2:00pm-6:00pm

July 23-27 North Dearborn Library

☐ Session 1: 10:00am-2:00pm

☐ Session 2: 2:00pm-6:00pm

All About New Horizons Job Exploration Summer Program

ELIGIBILITY Any student in middle or high school, ages 14-22 can sign up. The program is designed for and is free to any student with a disability indicated by having either an IEP or 504 plan with their current school. Filling out the application does not lock you in, you can cancel at any time if your summer plans change. You are welcome to sign up even if you can't attend every day that week.

SIGNING UP Teachers will need to fill out an intake packet with parent signature before the student can attend the summer program. We will also contact the student's current school to get their IEP or 504 for our state records. Once we receive an [online](#) or paper application from the parent, we can begin this process. If the student already receives Pre-ETS services during the school year, then we already have their intake packet & IEP so they are good to go without any additional paperwork!

TRANSPORTATION All students will need to arrange for transportation to and from the library. If a parent or student contacts us, we will help them arrange transportation through a public service like [Catch-a-Ride](#), [Franklin County Public Transportation](#), etc. In some cases we may be able to waive or cover the transport fee, typically between \$2.50-\$5.00 one way, making the transportation free as well. Any field trips or transportation we do during the camp will be free.

FOOD/DRINK No food or drink will be provided, so the parent and student must plan to bring a water bottle, lunch and/or snack if they would like to eat during their session time.

SPECIAL FRIDAY SCHEDULE On Fridays both the AM and PM sessions join to take a field trip to the Erskine Green Training Institute. We will meet at 9:00am in the library lot or just inside the library doors. Our program will end that day sometime between 2:00pm and 4:00pm depending on location, but students will have transportation back to their homes provided by New Horizons on this day only. Learn more about Erskine Green at erskingreeninstitute.org

WEEK'S SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES The weekly schedule of events will look as follows and may vary by location. Students will receive a more detailed agenda the first day of the program.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Getting to know you	Community Job Shadows	Landing the Job	Work Based Learning	Erskine Green Field Trip
-	-	-	Experiences	-
We will learning about career pathways and job types, interests, and create a resume.	We will tour local businesses and learn more about jobs offered there.	How to fill out job applications, practice interview techniques, the job search, and budgeting.	-	9:00am - 2:00/4:00pm
			Volunteer experiences at local business, learning and practicing work skills.	Students dropped off at home this day only.

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Published online at iidc.indiana.edu/pages/should-all-nonverbal-young-children-with-autism-immediately-have-aac-taught-to-them

Should All Nonverbal Young Children with Autism Immediately Have AAC Taught To Them?



Contributed by: Kristie Lofland, MS, CCC-A

Lack of speech is often the most obvious symptom of an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and greatest cause of concern for parents of young children. For many families of children with ASD, having their child learn to talk is their primary goal.

Children with ASD who learn to use spoken language as a primary means of communication have better outcomes than those who do not (Howlin, 2005). Children with ASD who are verbal have more opportunities for social interactions with family and peers, as well as a greater chance of participation in mainstream settings in school and

community. Fifteen years ago, experts estimated that approximately 40% of children with ASD did not acquire functional spoken language and these children had the poorest long-term outcomes. However, many experts now estimate that the current proportion of children with ASD who do not speak is between 20-30% (Rogers, 2003).



The question then is how to facilitate the emergence of meaningful spoken language so that the largest possible number of children with ASD will acquire speech at the earliest point in development. Developing speech is only one aspect of communication as there are other important communication goals as well.

Several factors have precluded young children with ASD from developing verbal speech. Unfortunately, research has not yet yielded a best instructional method for enhancing early communication or calculated the time it takes to successfully implement such intervention. Research has revealed a variety of approaches that demonstrate efficacy for both increasing communication and eliciting first words from non-verbal young children. However, no guidelines are given to help determine which methods are more effective, for which children, and at what point in development. So, we know it is possible to teach language but we do not know the best way to do it for all children with ASD. Again, it depends on the individual child. Whatever approach is used, effective language teaching involves ongoing individual interactions with a child using carefully planned and sequenced strategies and clear reinforcement practices in natural environments. Collecting ongoing data and using such data for decision-making is crucial. The bottom line is skill development and skill generalization.

Most young children with ASD only receive a few hours of speech-language therapy a week and therefore, they are not receiving rigorous enough intervention to make the most rapid gains possible. However, communication is not just the responsibility of the SLP, but the responsibility of every person who works with that child since communication occurs in every setting. Therefore, it is necessary that a collaborative process be in place for all team members to know how to implement all communication interventions so the interventions can be delivered throughout the child's day and environments.

A second component of successful implementation includes training parents or other caregivers to provide opportunities for the child to engage in repeated practice of the use of new communicative forms and functions in everyday activities. According to the National Research Council (2001), parent training is a necessary practice for intervention with young children with autism. Parents can learn all the major interventions at a high level of fidelity, deliver them at home, and improve their children's language abilities. Interventions that embed instruction in the natural family routines and child-care practices are especially effective.

Some children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) may benefit from the use of alternative/ augmentative communication, known as AAC. AAC includes any type of communication that is not speech in order to replace or supplement talking. While AAC can sound mysterious, it really boils down to using visual (see) or tactile (touch) means to help communicate. The rapid growth of computerized communicative aides has greatly increased the potential for nonverbal student with ASD. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) intervention methods can be used temporarily or permanently (ASHA, 1991).

According to von Tetzchner and Martinsen (1992), individuals who might benefit from AAC fall into three groups: (a) the expressive language group, in which individuals understand language but have difficulty expressing themselves; (b) the supportive language groups, comprised of two sub-groups that include children who extemporarily use AAC in order to facilitate understanding of spoken language as well to express themselves or children who speak but have difficulty being understood; and (c) the alternative language group, in which AAC is a permanent means of receptive and expressive communication.

While AAC does play a crucial role as a primary communication system for some children with ASD, it does not necessarily assist in developing useful, communicative speech. Currently, there is no empirical evidence that the use of AAC will accelerate the development of spoken language. A recent research review concluded that although there was evidence of improvement in children with phonological and expressive problems, the effect on those with more severe communication difficulties was limited. There is no evidence that any one program is superior to others in terms of producing a higher rate of spontaneous and generative communication or with greater generalization (Howlin, 2008). There was some evidence that an augmentative system may encourage a previously nonverbal child to speak. However, remember, that time spent on AAC training is not time spent on learning to use and understand speech and it takes considerable time to learn an AAC system.

Consider that by 18 months, babies have heard 4,380 hours of spoken language and we don't expect them to be fluent speakers. Yet, if AAC learners only see symbols modeled for communication twice weekly for 20-30 minutes, it will take 84 YEARS for them to have the same exposure to aided language as an 18 month old has to spoken language. (Jane Korsten- QIAT Listerv 2011).

Who are the best candidates for immediate consideration for AAC?

1. Nonverbal children who do not progress into vocal imitation even after they have learned to imitate body movements, and who may have sight word vocabulary and other nonverbal cognitive skills. These would be young children who cannot learn to imitate speech phonemes and have a true underlying speech dyspraxia. They desperately need AAC to develop symbolic communication. Some will develop verbal speech as they use signs, PECS, etc., or a combination of strategies.

2. Preschoolers whose nonverbal performance skills are well below 12-month level. They will not have the necessary cognitive skills to support language development. This will be a small group of children. They will need to use gestural and simple, low tech AAC.

Because functional spoken language predicts better outcomes for preschoolers with autism, and because the large majority of young children with autism apparently can master speech, should teaching children to understand and use speech be a main priority of every early intervention program for children with an autism spectrum disorder? Yes!

“The gap is immense between the language treatments most children with autism receive and what connotes the state of the science in language intervention for children with autism.” – Sally J. Rogers

Resources

1. American Speech-Language Hearing Association. (1991). Report: Augmentative and alternative communication. ASHA, 33, 9-12. [Google Scholar]
2. Howlin, P. (2005). Outcomes in autism spectrum disorders. In Volkmar, F., Paul R., Klin, A., & Cohen, D. (Eds.), Handbook of autism and pervasive developmental disorders, (Vol. 1, pp. 201–222). New York, N.Y.: Wiley.
3. Howlin, P. (2008). Augmentative and alternative communication systems for children with autism. In Charman, T. & Stone, W. (Eds.). (pp. 236-266). Social & communication development in autism spectrum disorders. New York: The Guilford Press.
4. Von Tetzchner, S., & Martinsen, H. (1992). Introduction to symbolic and augmentative communication. San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group, Inc. [Google Scholar]

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Published online at <https://themighty.com/2016/09/songs-that-have-helped-autistic-people-during-meltdowns/>

21 Songs That Have Helped People on the Autism Spectrum Cope With Sensory Overload

[Sensory overload](#) happens when too much sensory stimulus is occurring at once — it can be triggered by a crowded room, a TV turned up too loud, strong aromas, fluorescent lighting and much more. It's often associated with certain diagnoses like autism, [sensory processing disorder](#), [chronic fatigue syndrome](#), [fibromyalgia](#) and [post-traumatic stress disorder](#), although anyone can experience it.



Music is not always a reliever to sensory overload — in fact, sometimes it can make it worse, so you should ask your loved one on the spectrum if playing a song helps or hurts. But for a lot of people with autism, [music works wonders](#) when they are trying to calm themselves down. We asked our readers on the spectrum who use music as a tool to share what songs they play if they're experiencing sensory overload or melting down. We've dropped a Spotify playlist at the bottom of this post if you'd like these songs in one place.

Click link below to enjoy the music!

<https://themighty.com/2016/09/songs-that-have-helped-autistic-people-during-meltdowns/>

Published online at <http://www.noodlenook.net/elopement-and-autism/>

Elopement and Autism

When I used to hear the word 'Elopement' I thought of two lovers running off to get hitched... but having been in Autism Units and LIFE Skills classrooms for so long 'Elopement' means something different. It means something that's downright scary.

We've Got A
RUNNER!

Dealing With Elopement



www.NoodleNook.Net

And it is downright scary when you look up and realize one of your students has wandered away or "eloped" the sense of panic that engulfs you is petrifying. Just downright scary.

It is also exhausting when you have to constantly stand in front of a door or always block a student from running (like out the door and into traffic). Just downright exhausting.

So what do you do? How do you get some control back when studies suggest nearly half of student with Autism wander or elope? Well, here are a few helpful tips and strategies...

Wandering and Elopement

With such a high incidence of wandering, and sometimes that is into water or into traffic, it becomes a major safety concern when students elope. So, as a teacher, what do you do? How can you stop it from happening?

First, why are students eloping?

When it comes to specific reasons, Autism Speaks did a survey and they found it is often because a child:

- Enjoys exploring
- Wants to go to a favorite place
- Wants to escape from a situation or environment
- Sensory reasons

When you read through this list, you can see a pattern. We cover this a lot in our post about the [Function of Behavior](#), but almost all behavior is because someone wants to get something, wants to get away from something, or for sensory reasons.

It is no different in the classroom... if a student is running from your classroom or from you it is likely to get something, to get away from something, or for sensory reasons. There are some clear plans you need to put in place using an FBA and BIP, but it is also important to think about some meaningful ways to deal with the behavior in your plan.



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Got A RUNNER?

Strategies, Tips & Tricks

For Elopement

Stopping Elopement with Prevention

Anything you can do to stop wandering and elopement BEFORE a student has a chance to leave is the best plan... but it doesn't always work out that way. Regardless, it is important to put these strategies into place to get ahead of the behavior.

1. Physical Barriers

I am sure when you got a job teaching, you didn't realize you were signing up to be a fancy door lock, spending your days preventing a door from opening. There is a better way. When you are thinking about the physical arrangement of your classroom, how can you make natural barriers to the door? Bookcases, desks, tables can all make it harder to run... and that gives you the extra split-second you need to stop a student before they head out.

This is important for a couple of reasons... if you are constantly standing in front of the door without making an attempt to change a student's behavior eventually they see you as the door. That means when you are not there, right in front of the door, it is an open invitation to get up and go. Essentially you become the trigger to the behavior you are trying to stop.

The second reason this is important is because you have a million other things you need to do with all your students that cannot possibly allow you to be a door stop. That is the real reason you're there, right? So let's focus on using Physical Barriers to support us so we can support students. If you feel like you really struggle with setting up your Autism Classroom or Self-Contained class, you must get the [ULTIMATE Guide & Checklist to Setup a Self-Contained Classroom or Autism Unit. What a lifesaver!](#)

2. Teaching Replacement Behavior

Running and wandering serves a purpose. The student is trying to get something, get away from something, or change the sensory input they're getting. The reason they run is because they don't have a better set of coping mechanisms to deal with their desire to change the current situation. That's what we have to teach.

So how do we do that?

Some great tools to use as a means to teach target behavior to students with Autism are social stories and using behavior tools like token economies. With a social story we are outlining the appropriate way a student can access the things they want and the places they want to go. By repeatedly reviewing the procedures to do those two things, we can equip a student with the appropriate behavior as opposed to the running or wandering we are trying to eliminate.

Using [token economies](#), [break cards](#) or first-then charts also make a huge difference. If a student clearly understands the expectation in the classroom and that they are working towards the things they want, you can start to eliminate running and wandering. A student will start to learn this way new and effective way to get what they want. Are you looking for more information on replacement behavior? Read more here: [Autism Behavior Management](#).

3. Giving Voice

I had a student with Autism who was also Echolalic and had a hard time communicating with others. After years of working with him without a problem (as in he went to lunch with minimal supervision, used the public bathroom unsupervised, and was able to move between classes independently) he started to wander off. My team started finding him all over campus and we couldn't figure out what was triggering the behavior.

I was on a mission to determine what had changed and find out the function of this new behavior. One day on our way to the cafeteria I saw him start to wander off and I followed him. He went to a classroom on the opposite side of the building far away from our normal area... And then I found the function of his behavior. It was a very cute girl with bright eyes and a kind smile. She saw him, said hello, and walked on by. Bingo.

I stalked this girl down later and she let me know that my sudden eloper was appearing outside most of her classes throughout the day. He was wandering to see her. Unfortunately he struggled so much with communication that he really wasn't able to engage with her in any other way. We had to work on giving him a voice so he could interact with her the way he really wanted to without displaying inappropriate behavior, like stalking.

Giving a student a voice can go beyond providing someone with the opportunity to communicate. Giving a student a voice can also include providing a way to share their name or contact information in case of an emergency. You can do that with an emergency contact card or social narrative of what to say to people we encounter when we are lost. I am a true believer in Core Vocabulary, and you can read more about that here: [Getting Started with Core Vocabulary](#).

4. Teaching 'Help' and 'Danger'

Although this is another communication strategy, it warrants its own header so the strategy doesn't get overlooked.

It is important to teach the word 'help' to students who are minimally verbal and also teach the idea of danger.

When students wanders out into moving traffic or in and around standing water it can be very dangerous. Understanding that danger and learning to avoid it can help a student be less vulnerable when they do elope and, let's face it, you won't be able to stop a student from eloping 100% of the time.

Some of our older students in middle and high school look quite 'regular' and also because of their size can seem dangerous to those who don't know them. Often they do not respond to questions and interactions with others in a socially appropriate manner. Being able to ask for help goes a long way to disarm others and get them to offer aid instead of being combative. Sometimes that is especially important in keeping our students safe. We have help signs and other visual tools in the NoodleNook [Behavior Toolkit](#), so check it out.

5. Sensory Stimulation

Sometimes the reason for running has nothing to do with getting or getting away from something- it is sensory. The function of the running is because running feels great. I personally am not a runner. To me running is a fate worse than death. My sister loves to run though. She tells me running is like air to her. I guess it's the same way I feel about Coca-Cola... it is my bliss.

Anyway, a student can just love the sensation of running. In this case, you have to build in a safe place and an appropriate time to let a student run. You also need to outline how a student earns running, how long it lasts, and how many times a day they can do it. When it comes to sensory motivation, ignoring the problem will not make it stop... Once I get the idea of a Coke in my head, you better believe I'm gonna get it. Once a student decides they love to run, you gotta to believe they'll get it some how- so be sure you can control the situation? Want to read more about the function of behavior to see if it is sensory and maybe why they are running in the first place? Check out our post here: [What the F \(That's Function\)!](#)

6. GPS Tracking

About 6 months ago, I was called out in the middle of a Saturday to help search for a student who had wandered out of their house and was missing since early that morning. It was terrifying to be out looking for someone's baby out lost in the world. I live in a major city and with so many hours having passed since he went missing, anything could have happened.

Just after 4 that afternoon, nearly 9 hours after his parents noticed he was missing, we found him wandering in the middle of the highway almost 6 miles from his house. 6 miles! And with cars blowing past him at highway speeds. He was in the median, which means he crossed a highway. Thankfully someone pulled over, called the police, and was able to help him get home.

The thought of losing a child for that long was horrible for me- just a year before we'd had a student in a neighboring district run away from their group home, get hit by a pickup truck, and die. I was horrified and I can only imagine what the parents were feeling. I never, ever want a parent, teacher, or community have to experience that. So, GPS tracking is an amazing way to use technology to ensure you can always find your child.

Technology is that missing piece, and modern technology lets parents have that lifeline to always know where their child is. If you have a student who is prone to wandering, send their parents here so they can hear my story and find out more about some options. If you are parent, I suggest you check out [Angel Sense](#) as an option or call in to your cell phone provider to see what services they provide. Believe me, you never want to risk the safety of your child if there is a better option.

Stopping Elopement in Your Autism Classroom

So, just to recap, these strategies will make a huge difference if you are working with a runner or eloper:

1. Establish **Physical Barriers**
2. Teach **Replacement Behavior** with Social Stories or Token Economies
3. Give the **Student Voice** with Communication Systems or an Emergency Card
4. **Teach 'Help' and 'Danger'**
5. Support Sensory Stimulation by Offering the **Chance to Run**
6. **GPS Tracking** because as a parent, technology can help

Doing these 6 things will help you as you work with elopers and (hopefully) take you from a doorstep to a teacher once again!



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50 FAMILY ACTIVITIES THAT DON'T INVOLVE SCREENS

Published: September 13, 2017

For many of us, back to school means back to the after-school rush—getting off work, making sure homework is done, running around to after school activities. Many parents are often rushing off to another job or a late shift. Somewhere in the middle of it all you try to fit in dinner. When you actually get some down time, you just want to curl up on the couch with Netflix or YouTube, and everyone else in the family has their own screens to curl up with. Does this sound like a familiar evening at home?

There's nothing wrong with enjoying some free time on your screens, but it doesn't exactly encourage family bonding. One way to overcome the screen habit is to set aside family time without screens, at least once a week, like Sunday afternoons.

We've put together this list of 50 family activities that don't involve screens to get you inspired!

1. Throw a family dance party
2. [Make a piñata](#) and fill it with candy and prizes
3. Take a family bike ride (or rollerblade, scooters, skate boards, etc)
4. Walk the dog
5. Plan a family garden
6. Invite friends for a dress-up dinner party
7. Board game night
8. Volunteer at a soup kitchen
9. Craft & DIY night
10. [Make \(and fly\) a kite](#) on a windy day
11. Pack a picnic to [take to the park](#)
12. Sunday drive to watch a sunset
13. Visit a museum (look for free days)
14. Cooking class in the kitchen! Teach kids how to make their favorite dish
15. Make a bunch of [friendship bracelets](#) for gifts
16. Take the whole family to play mini golf
17. Plan a dream vacation, even if you don't think you could afford it
18. Make a family budget for the dream vacation

19. Check out graphic novels from the library to read together
20. Stage a backyard play with neighborhood kids
21. Host a children's storytime for your neighborhood, bust open the pinata at the end
22. [Make different kinds of Slime!](#)
23. Volunteer at the animal shelter to walk or pet dogs
24. Listen to an audiobook together as part of bedtime
25. Try a new restaurant in town
26. Make Christmas gifts or cards
27. Create your Family Tree or a family photo album
28. Bake cookies or a fancy cake
29. Play a card game or [make your own Memory game](#)
30. Make sidewalk chalk portraits of the family
31. Get friends together to play kickball or frisbee at the park
32. Budget class! Teach kids how to grocery shop on a budget
33. Make your own personal pizza night
34. Make your own [fidget spinners](#) out of paper
35. Visit a nearby attraction that you've never been to before
36. Clean out your closets and donate clothes/toys
37. Ask a photographer friend to do a silly family photo shoot
38. Have a water balloon fight on a hot day
39. Make a fancy breakfast on the weekend
40. Visit one of Indianapolis' best [farmer's markets](#)
41. [Make rock candy](#) and package them as gifts for friends
42. Create a [nature scavenger hunt](#) in your backyard
43. Get your favorite book/magazine to read together in the same room
44. Cook ahead for the week! Everyone gets a job and meals are ready for the week
45. Have a family meeting: update family rules, chores, allowance, and responsibilities
46. Play 20 questions or one of [these silly group games](#)
47. Redecorate or rearrange a room in the house
48. Music night: play instruments, write songs, use noisemakers, play your favorite songs
49. [Duckpin bowling night!](#)
50. Organize a family game of basketball at the park or gym

We hope these ideas inspire you to try something new and enjoy the moments you have with your children! Making new, healthy habits can be difficult as a parent. If you feel like you could use extra support, let us know! We have [parenting education classes](#) to help.



Published online at: <http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/06/20/82-summer-activities-for-families-with-special-needs>

82 Summer Activities for Families with Special Needs

Between June and September my kids have 82 days of summer vacation, and I've promised them something fun every single day. That means I need 82 fun summer activities for one child with a developmental disability and one child who refuses to participate in most activities. It'll be a piece of cake, right?

Borrowing the weekday "Summer Schedule For Kids" at someswhatsimple.com, scouring the internet for more ideas and adding some of my own activities, here are 82 days of summer fun and learning:

Safety Sunday

1. Teach your child his or her full name.
2. Teach your child your full name.
3. Have your child memorize your home address – show where the house number is located outside and show where the street name.
4. Have your child memorize your phone number. Practice reciting key information.
5. Learn how to cross the street safely.
6. Practice an escape route in case of fire.
7. Practice saying "no:" make it a game in which you take turns asking each other to do increasingly absurd things.
8. Play hide-and-go-seek to teach your child how to remain calm while looking for you.
9. Teach your child the buddy system.
10. Teach your child what an emergency is and how to call 911.
11. Practice asking for help with things that are hot, sharp, dangerous or too high to reach.
12. Start swimming lessons.

Make Something Monday

13. Arrange 5 or 6 photos to make a poster or scrapbook page.
14. Sweetened condensed milk makes a beautiful, edible fingerpaint.
15. Plant a seedling outdoors.
16. Dig for worms – it's a great exercise for fine motor skills and tactile defensiveness. Re-home the worms next to that seedling you planted.
17. [Bubble snakes](#).
18. Make a leaf scrapbook.

19. Color the sidewalk with chalk. Wash it all away with water.
20. Paint using different types of paintbrushes: a fly swatter, a flower, a cotton swab, a sponge, a leaf, etc.
21. Build an obstacle course with hula hoops, lawn furniture and empty boxes.
22. Tie-dye some t-shirts.
23. Make a magic wand using all available materials.
24. Build a “fairy house” outdoors with sticks, pebbles, pine cones, bark, leaves and other natural materials found outdoors.

Time to Read Tuesday

25. Sign up for your local library’s summer reading program.
26. Read a book under a tree.
27. Read all but the last page of a storybook and ask your children to suggest an ending.
28. Have your child dictate and illustrate a story, and read it together. It’s OK if the story is 1 or 2 sentences long.
29. Make a home video of your child reading a story aloud, or of you reading aloud to your child.
30. After you finish reading a book such as *The Lorax*, go see the movie.
31. Read some books on a specific topic, such as insects, then do a related activity such as a bug hunt or catching fireflies.
32. Have your child create a summer schedule for the family and read off the schedule every morning.
33. Check out a book of simple science experiments and try some of them at home.
34. Check out a book about a historical figure and play dress-up at home.
35. Have your child write out a checklist for a scavenger hunt, and find everything on the list together.
36. Swap favorite books with your friends.

What’s Cooking? Wednesday

37. Fruit smoothies in the blender.
38. No-bake oatmeal cookies on the stove.
39. Pizza.
40. Spinach-artichoke dip in the blender.
41. Banana muffins.
42. Roll-up sandwiches.
43. Fruit kebabs.

44. Chicken soup in the crock-pot (plug it in on the porch so that it doesn't heat up the house).
45. Roasted marshmallows.
46. Scrambled eggs and pancakes for dinner.
47. Lemonade from scratch.
48. Guacamole.

Thoughtful Thursday

49. Wash the car together. No driveway and no car? Then wash the toy cars.
50. Call someone just to say hello.
51. Pick some flowers (dandelions and clovers are OK) and give the bouquet to someone who isn't expecting them.
52. Write a top ten list of a person's best attributes and give the list as a gift to that person.
53. Write a thank-you letter to someone and mail it.
54. Donate clothing, books and toys to charity.
55. Teach your child to do one chore.
56. Give someone a homemade art project.
57. Volunteer at a food bank.
58. Collect bottles and cans, and donate the money to charity.
59. Pray for someone who needs a prayer.
60. Hug someone who needs a hug.

Somewhere Fun Friday

61. Petting farm or petting zoo.
62. A playground in a different neighborhood.
63. An art museum – check first to see when general admission is free!
64. The beach.
65. Pick fresh fruit at a local farm or visit the farmer's market.
66. Ride a train.
67. Find a carnival or a street fair.
68. Ice cream shop.
69. Waterpark or sprayground.
70. Visit a friend.
71. Nature trail or botanical garden.
72. A skyscraper or another high place with a grand view of the world.

Social Skills Saturday

73. Tell a story from your own childhood. Have your child tell a related story from his or her life experience – yes, even if your child is nonverbal.
74. Lie in the grass and take turns looking for shapes or pictures in the clouds.
75. Go around and ask every family member at home the same silly question, and share the answers.
76. Look at some old family photos and name all the people in them.
77. Practice making emotional facial expressions on cue with your child: neutral, happy, sad, fearful, angry, disgusted, surprised. Take turns and make it fun.
78. Practice listening skills by responding only with nonverbal communication for 1 to 5 minutes – then switch roles.
79. Be someone's mirror: imitate a person's actions as if you are that person's reflection in a mirror for 1 minute. Then switch roles.
80. Play Follow the Leader. Match the leader's pace for as long as possible, then let a new leader take over.
81. Play the statue game: one person freezes like a statue and the other person has to make the statue laugh. Take turns.
82. Develop family traditions: sing a song together, recite a poem, say a prayer that has special meaning to your family.



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Karen Wang

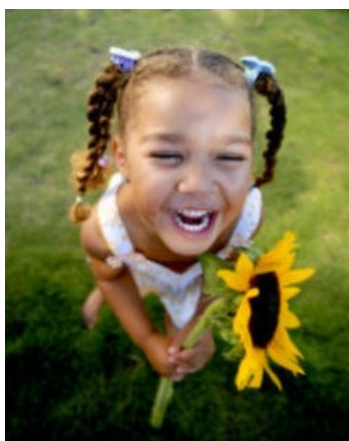
Karen Wang is a Friendship Circle parent. You may have seen her sneaking into the volunteer lounge for ice cream or being pushed into the cheese pit by laughing children. She is a contributing author to the anthology "**My Baby Rides the Short Bus**: The Unabashedly Human Experience of Raising Kids With Disabilities"

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TOP 10 SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Date: June 9, 2016



By: Kelly Taylor, BCaBA, Director of Charleston Clinic

School is out and summer is here! This is an exciting time for children but can be a stressful few months for parents who have to create new ways to fill the long days. This time off from school and daily routines can be especially challenging for a parent who has a child on the autism spectrum because lack of structure can sometimes trigger changes in behavior.

There are several ways you can fill your days with fun to help keep your child engaged, entertained and content.

1. Plan a disco party. Turn on some music and encourage children to dance away. This is a great way to teach children how to imitate others, learn the latest dance craze or how to request their favorite tune. To add extra fun, buy some glow sticks and turn out the lights.

2. Host a character day. Ask your child to dress like their favorite movie, book or television character. Pop some popcorn and let them watch their character on television or through the pages of a book. If your child doesn't have a favorite character, I recommend watching the movie *Inside Out*.

3. Create water games. The summer days are often hot, and children enjoy cooling off with water balloons and squirt guns. This is a fun activity with friends so host a playdate, provide all the children with water-filled toys and let them play. Don't forget sunscreen.

4. Go to a movie. In the summer many cities offer movie tickets at a discounted rate. A real movie theatre experience is not only an adventure but you can use it as an opportunity for your child to practice skills in a different setting. Waiting in line to get tickets, saying "hello" to a worker, ordering food and staying seated are all great skills to work on in this setting. Make sure to check your local theaters to see if they are offering sensory friendly movies. This is a perfect activity for a rainy summer day.

5. Learn yoga. All children can benefit from exercise, but not all children enjoy sports and traditional gross motor activities. Yoga can be a great alternative way to increase activity during the summer. Check out this [book](#) specifically about yoga for children on the autism spectrum.

6. Make homemade ice cream. Ice cream is always a summer favorite, but did you know you can make it in a bag? I didn't until I read this [article](#).

7. Set up an arts and craft station. Don't be too concerned about the end product. Instead work with your child to use paint, glue, glitter, pom poms, etc., to create whatever they want. If your child does not like arts and crafts, include reinforcers to encourage participation. If your child does like arts and crafts ask he/she for suggestions on activities.

8. Go on a scavenger hunt. This is the perfect game when you need to fill a lot of time. You can plan a nature themed hunt that's outside or have your child search for common household items if it's a rainy day. If your child needs practice with features, functions, or classes this is also a great activity. You can add instructions like, "find something round", "find something you brush with", or "find something that's an art supply" to ensure they are utilizing the skills they've learned in therapy or school.

9. Go on an "impossible mission." Use red yarn to create "laser beams" in between furniture and walls. Play the theme song to *Mission Impossible* and teach your child how to bend and stretch to avoid the lasers. This game encourages activity and will help teach your child how to follow directions.

10. Create a sensory game. Purchase some plastic bins at the dollar store and fill them with various sensory friendly textures. You can fill these with rice, shaving cream, cereal, pom poms, beads, noodles, etc. and add small toys and foam shapes or letters to find.

The summers go by fast so try to relax and enjoy the time. A little planning and some creativity will help ensure a fun-filled summer with your children!