



OCTOBER 2016

PARENT NEWSLETTER

From the Autism Spectrum Disorder Department at Easterseals Joliet Region

Visit our [website](#) or find us on [Facebook](#)

What's Going On At Easterseals.....

Chat with a Therapist

Each month Easter Seals features a topic of interest on our [Facebook page](#). This is a great opportunity for parents and community members to log on and get information, ask questions and connect with Easter Seals' staff and clients. The therapist is available for a scheduled hour where they will provide some basic information, but will mostly focus on answering questions. You can leave questions ahead of time if you aren't able to log on during the scheduled chat session, or go back and read what was said after the chat session is over.

This month in recognition of Physical Therapy Appreciation Month we are featuring Lisa Meyer, one for our physical therapists. Lisa has several years of experience working in the school setting, outpatient clinic and early intervention program. She will be chatting about Fun Fall Motor Activities that you can do at home with your child on Wednesday October 19th from 11:00 – 12:00. Remember to log on and get your questions answered!

Parents Raising Children with ASDs

Our parent support group continues to meet the **second Wednesday of every month from 6:00 – 7:30**. This program is a wonderful way to meet other parents, get information and get connected to resources in your community. This month we will meet on **Wednesday, October 12th** and as always, childcare will be provided for those who sign up ahead of time by Easter Seals staff. Both the group and childcare are free of charge. Please call Laura with any questions or to register for childcare at 815-927-5466.

Winter Social Skills Groups

For our winter social skills group session we will be offering two groups:

- K and 1st graders on Wednesdays 4:00 – 5:00 starting 1/18/17 to 3/8/17
- 2nd and 3rd graders on Thursdays 4:00 – 5:00 starting 1/19/17 to 3/9/17

Stay tuned for more information in November's newsletter!



Family Center for Autism Resources

Don't forget about our amazing lending library which is full of books, articles, games and therapy tools. We have recently refreshed our resources with some new release books and we have titles on topics ranging from understanding ASD, biographies, sensory processing disorders, comparing treatment approaches, parenting strategies, anxiety, sibling support, social skills and more. We also have books on many other special needs and typical development. The library is free to use and open to the public. Please call us today to set up a time to explore our library and consult with one of our staff! Call Valerie Lentz at 815-927-5465.



Free Developmental Screenings

Easterseals offers multiple ways for parents to complete a developmental screening for their child. Parents and caregivers can complete a free online screening tool on the Easterseals website which you can find here: <http://www.easterseals.com/mtffc/> If you would prefer for your child to be screened in person by an Easterseals' staff member, drop by to our Barney location on the second Friday of every month from 9:00 to noon, no appointment required! We will have several staff on hand to complete developmental screenings for children age birth to 5 years old, and Autism screenings for children age 18 months to 18 years old. They will be able to recommend to you whether your child is in need of a full evaluation, and explain how you can set up that process through either Easterseals or other community programs that are available. Contact Karrie if you have any questions about our screenings at 815-927-5471.

Affy Tapple Sale to Benefit Developmental Therapy

You know fall has arrived when it is time for the annual Affy Tapple sale! These delicious treats are for sale at the front desk and include \$1.05 for plain caramel, \$1.25 for nut covered or sprinkle covered apples, \$1.00 for caramel dipped pretzel rods, \$2.00 for a bag of caramel corn and \$2.25 for gourmet sized caramel covered apples. All profits go directly to our developmental therapy department to support therapy supplies and services. Contact Keri Jaworski at 815-725-2194 to find out what is available.



Election Hub at Easterseals

Now that fall is upon us the election is in full swing. With disability issues coming into focus during this election season, we are happy to share that National Easterseals has created its first online election resource. The election hub is a one-stop shop to keep tabs on disability issues and resources. Get the latest updates and prepare to make sure our voice is heard at the polls. The election hub will be updated frequently as new news stories and data become available. Check out the election hub at www.easterseals.com/election.

Additionally, as part of our overall communication efforts about disability-related election issues, we teamed up with AAPD and RevUp to create an essential online resource for voters with disabilities to help ensure everyone's voice is heard this election season. Find our three-step checklist to make sure your voice is heard at the polls here: <http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/living-with-disability/people-with-disabilities-voting-checklist-at-polls.html>

Be part of this celebratory event!

★ American Girl Fashion Show ★

★ We are looking for girls with poise, confidence and a smile ★
that would enjoy walking down a runway in front of an audience.

The entire show is performed by local children to help raise money and awareness for services for children with disabilities. There is a model fee and requirements for each girl who wishes to participate.

November 19 & 20, 2016

Jacob Henry Mansion

Visit www.joliet.easterseals.com
to download model commitment form.

Questions, call 815-730-2052 ext. 2



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Guest model spots still available!



Styles of Yesterday & Today

The American Girl Fashion Show is a fun-filled event for girls and their families, friends, and favorite dolls! Celebrate the experience of being a girl, whether yesterday or today, through a colorful presentation of historical and contemporary fashions. Enjoy elegant refreshments, enter to win door prizes, and learn how clothing has changed over the years to reflect history, culture, and girls' individual styles.

Hosted by

Easter Seals Joliet Region

To benefit

Children with Disabilities

Friday, November 18, 6:00 p.m. ~ Gala

Saturday, November 19, 1:00 p.m. ~ Lunch

Sunday, November 20, 11:00 a.m. ~ Lunch

Sunday, November 20, 3:30 p.m. ~ Gala

**The Jacob Henry Mansion ~
Victorian Ballroom**

15 S. Richards Street, Joliet, IL 60433

Directions go to: www.jacobhenrymansion.com

Tickets: \$38 (*\$25 is tax-deductible*)

For more information, call (815) 730-2052,
or visit www.joliet.easterseals.com

Recommended for children 6 and up

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What's Going On In Your Community...

Workshops & Resource Fairs

Autism Conference featuring Temple Grandin

On **October 25th, 2016 from 8:00am-4:00pm**, The Autism Society of Illinois is offering a conference featuring Temple Grandin in Champaign, IL. Cost for the conference is \$30 for family members, \$35 for students, and \$75 for professionals. Additional speakers include Eustacia Cutler, Sarah Curtiss, Joan Storey Gorsuch, Dr. Morten and Adam Slagell. Please call 800-491-6126 or visit the [Autism Society of Illinois](#) website for more information.



AUTISM, it's not black and white (like cows),
It's a spectrum of sharing, caring, and understanding.

October 25, 2016
8:00am-4:00pm

HOTEL
and conference center

Doors open at 7:30am, Lunch will be provided.

Featured Speakers: Eustacia Cutler, Sarah Curtiss,
Joan Storey Gorsuch, Dr. Morton and Adam Slagell

REGISTRATION FEES

By September 25th
Professional \$65
College Student \$25
Family Member \$20

After September 25th
Professional \$75
College Student \$35
Family Member \$30

Registration opening soon!



Contact iHotel and Conference Center to reserve a hotel room by September 24th. The rate for a Deluxe King room or a Double room is \$99. Make reservations at 217-819-5000 or on the iHotel website at <http://stayatthei.com>

Autism and Related Disorders Course FREE

Yale University has a seminar on Autism and Related Disorders on iTunes FREE to listen to. The course covers diagnosis and assessment, etiology and treatment of children, adolescents and adults with autism and related disorders of socialization. Don't have time to take a course on Autism? Listen

to lectures on your daily commute or while getting ready! Once again, these are FREE to download on iTunes! For more information, go to <https://itunes.apple.com/us/course/autism-and-related-disorders/id495056283?enh=7&mt=10&ls=1>

Plainfield Parent Community Network Presentation and Resource Fair

On **October 13th from 6:30pm-8:30pm**, Plainfield Parent Community Network is offering a free Presentation and Resource fair. Presenters will be giving highly focused brief TED-style talks from 6:30-7:30 and the Resource Fair and Q&A with presenters is to follow. Speakers this month include Adam Russo presenting “Should I let my child fail?” and Todd Fink presenting “Mindfulness Education for Parents.” You can find more information at <http://ww2.psd202.org/VBackpack/files/1475001452.pdf> or contact the following individuals: Cathy Bertrand at 815-436-6128 or Tim Albores at 815-577-4000 Corey Worden at corey@plainfieldcounselingcenter.com

VVSD and Plainfield 202 Community Resource Fair

Valley View and Plainfield 202 School Districts are presenting their annual Community Resource Fair on **Tuesday November 8th from 8:30 a.m. to noon**. The resource fair features over one hundred booths including mental health agencies, employment assistance, disability services, family recreation, colleges, financial assistance programs, libraries and more. The fair is held at Plainfield East High School at 12001 S. Naperville Road in Plainfield. If you would like any more information you can contact 815-886-2700, ext 6800 for English and 6801 for Spanish.

Recreational & Social Opportunities

Family Fun Saturdays at Brookfield Zoo

Every Saturday from October 1 to October 29 from 9:00am-10:00am, Brookfield Zoo is hosting Family Fun Saturdays for children with Autism. Admission and Parking is free, and families are welcome to stay after the program ends to enjoy the zoo. Weekly sessions include animal yoga, craft activities, and live animal interactions, all with support from Brookfield Zoo staff and volunteers, as well as therapists from Easterseals Joliet Region. Help your child experience the zoo while fostering social interaction with peers! Email Kristin Kappel at kkappel@joliet.easterseals.com for more information.

Merchant Street Art Gallery of Artists with Autism – Art Happenings Workshops

Merchant Street Art Gallery of Artists with Autism will kick off 2016 with a series of monthly Art Happenings Workshops for families having member with Autism. The workshops will have an art focus and all family members are encouraged to participate. This is a causal way for the families of people with Autism to explore the expressive arts while getting to know each other. These workshops

will be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month from 4:30pm to 6:00pm at the art gallery at 356 E. Merchant Street, Kankakee, IL

Upcoming Dates

- September 27th, 2016 - Jazzy Art
- October 25th, 2016 - Print with Art
- November 22nd, 2016 - Wrap with Art
- December 27th, 2016 - Numbers with Art

Play For All at Chicago's Children Museum

On the second Saturday of every month at 9:00am, the Chicago Children's Museum will open and host Play For All: For Families with Children with Disabilities. The museum invites children and families with disabilities to come and experience CCM's playful, multisensory exhibits for a special private hour inside the museum. Play For All Families are welcome to stay and continue exploring the museum all day. The first 250 visitors to register receive FREE admission. Pre-registration is required. This is held every second Saturday of the month. For more information and to register, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/october-2016-play-for-all-for-families-with-children-with-disabilities-tickets-27158625179?aff=erelexpmlt>

Fall Festival at Ready Set Ride

Ready Set Ride is a therapeutic horseback riding facility that provides sessions for children with special needs and chronic illnesses. They are having a Fall Festival on Saturday October 29th from 11am to 7:00 pm at their barn. The festival is open to everyone and is free of charge! There will be a Haunted Woods, Games, Pumpkin Pie Baking Contest, Craft Market, Costume Contest, Food and Drinks and More! Ready Set Ride is at 13056 Essington Road in Plainfield. You can call them at 815-439-3659 for more information.

Recurring Monthly Events

These events are going on every month out in your community. Please contact them directly for more information!

Exploration Station Special Needs Nights

Exploration Station is a wonderful children's museum in Bourbonnais. They host a special needs night on the **First Sunday of every month from 11am-12:30pm**. The staff at Exploration Station has taken special care to adapt the environment and provide an opportunity for children with special needs to explore their exhibits so they can learn through hands on interaction. The museum is only open to families with special needs children during this time, which provides a safe and accepting environment. The fee is \$2.50 for residents and \$3.50 for non-residents. Exploration Station is located at Perry Farm Park on 459 N Kennedy Drive in Bourbonnais. Pre-registration is required. Call 815-933-9905 ext. 3 for more information or visit them online at www.exploration-station.org.

Sensory Friendly Films at AMC

AMC has EXPANDED their Sensory Friendly Film program to include some evening hours with films geared towards an older crowd! The auditoriums dedicated to the



program have their lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout or sing! They will now be on the **second and fourth Tuesday at 7pm AND second and fourth Saturday at 10 am every month**. Go to <http://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films> for more information and to find a nearby theater that is participating in this great program!

DuPage Children's Museum Special Needs Nights

Did you know that the DuPage Children's Museum has a dedicated night for families of children with special needs? They do! It is the **third Thursday of every month from 5pm-7pm**. It is a time designated for the families of children with special needs to enjoy the museum in an inclusive, typically quieter, less crowded atmosphere. They have a creativity drop-in studio that implements sensory-based activities with a different theme every week along with purposeful play with peers, adaptive equipment, and guides to help parents use the exhibits for therapeutic benefit. Admission is \$11 per person, ages 1-59, and \$10 for anyone over 60. For more information go to their website at <http://dupagechildrens.org/>

Sensory Story Times

The Plainfield Public Library is hosting a **FREE** drop-in Sensory Story time on the fourth Saturday of every month. After free play, socializing, and tactile activities, gather for a story time designed for children of all abilities. Friends and siblings are welcome. Children ages 3 to 9 must be accompanied by an adult. Drop in event, no registration is required. Find out more information at <http://il.evanced.info/plainfield/evanced/eventcalendar.asp>

Fountaindale Public Library (in Bolingbrook on Briarcliff) offers a **FREE** drop-in Sensory Story time on the second Saturday of every month from 10:30 to 11:15 for children from 2 to 6 years old with a caregiver. This story time is geared "especially for children with sensory integration issues". Visit their calendar at <http://host7.evanced.info/fountaindale/evanced/eventcalendar.asp>

ASD Life Transition Group

Alexian Brothers Health System presents the ASD Life Transitions Group. This **FREE** group will be held on the 4th Tuesday (Tuesday, October 25th) of every month from 7pm until 9pm at the Alexian Brothers Women and Children's Hospital, in the Lower Level meeting rooms 3 & 4 (1555 Barrington Road, Hoffman Estates). Each month they invite a different speaker to present to the group and address a variety of issues specific to this population, including college transition and accommodations, job skills, independent living, volunteer opportunities, government benefits, driving, exercise and more topics of interest. Additionally, our young adults will break out for the second hour where they will be able to enjoy game nights, time to socialize, and more! This group is for young adults 16 and up and parents. To register please email Ana.Garcia-Maldonado@alexian.net or call 847-755-8536.

Do you have an event coming up that would be of interest to families that have children with special needs?

We help to spread the word about events that are reasonably priced and promote awareness, inclusion, learning opportunities and fun for the special needs community! Please submit your events to

vlentz@joliet.easterseals.com to be considered for our next newsletter.

Articles of the Month

HAVING A HAPPY HALLOWEEN

By Valerie Lentz, LCSW

As with everything else, Halloween for a child with Autism can be a completely unique experience. Here are some tips to having a Happy Halloween. Not every tip will be right for every child, but pick the ones that make the most sense for you!



Preparation

- **Picking out a costume**
 - If your child has sensory differences, try to avoid anything that might cause sensory overload, like itchy material, a sweaty face mask, itchy face paint, tight or loose clothing, strange smells. Have them try the costume on several times so you can make adjustments to make the costume more comfortable.
 - If your child has significant sensory differences consider making a costume out of clothes they already have and are comfortable in (this is also a great way to save money)! Google homemade costumes for tons of ideas. Some of our favorites: a marathon runner (he can wear his favorite sweat shirt and pants!), a sleepy superhero (comfy pajamas and a cape), or a sports fan (favorite team t-shirt and pants).
 - For kids with fixated interests or strong attention to detail, talk to them ahead of time about costume choices. Imagine if they have their heart set on their favorite character and then you get to the store and it's sold out. Or they may be upset that the costume doesn't look EXACTLY "right". Prepare them to make other choices.
- **Write social stories for your child** to discuss the major events, including a classroom party and going trick or treating. Remember, social stories should be short, easy for your child to understand and they should include information about what will happen and how your child is expected to behave. Read these stories several times in the days leading up to the event. If you want help writing a social story, make an appointment with our staff at our Family Center for Autism Resources!
- **Use a picture schedule** to help your child prepare for what activities will occur that day and so they can know what to expect. But remember, if you make a schedule you have to stick to it!
- **If you are going to a party, call ahead of time** so you can find out all of the details you need to know to prepare your child. Also, consider talking to the parent or organization that is hosting the party and let them know that your child has some special needs and may need accommodations. Have a plan with a quiet area for your child, make sure there will be food they can eat and find out what the schedule will be so you can plan for the best time to be there.

- **Check out your local SRA.** Special Recreation Associations (SRA) are run through your local park district and are set up to offer recreational opportunities to children and adults with special needs. They typically have holiday themed parties and events around each holiday. These events may be a great alternative to larger community parties.
- **Plan an easy trick or treating route.** Scout out your neighborhood ahead of time and try to avoid routes that have houses with too many decorations that might over stimulate or frighten your child. Make sure there is always a quick path to get back home in case your child suddenly needs to return home. Try to incorporate homes with neighbors that know your child and are understanding of their Autism. You may even call ahead to certain neighbors or friends to see if they are going to be home and then only go to those houses.
- **Set up a system for eating their treats.** If your child is on a special diet, stock up on their favorite treats before you go trick or treating. Let them know that once they get home, they can exchange all of the treats they collect for the special treats you bought them. Once you get home immediately trade. Each treat they collected gets traded for one treat you bought. For all children, set up a system ahead of time that shows them how many treats they can have and when. Use a poster board that shows they get to pick one treat a day, or that they get one treat after lunch or one after dinner. They can check off on the board when they get their treat. Consider making little bags with their “ration” of treats for the day. Any idea that works to help visually show them this is how many treats they get for the day and after that it’s all done. This helps avoid constant arguments and whining for candy.
- **A day or two before, do a dry run.** Have your child try on their costume and wear it for awhile so they can get used to it. If they are up to it, walk around the neighborhood about the same time of day as trick or treating so they can see the route you will take and get used to the sites. Have them practice at home. They can knock on the front door and have a family member answer so they can practice saying “Trick or Treat” and answering common questions (i.e. What is your costume?)
- **If you have other children, consider going out together but eventually splitting up.** Your other children may become frustrated at the slow pace, or that all of your attention is focused on your child with Autism. If you’re a single parent, talk to neighbors or friends to see if your other children can go along with them for part of the night.

Halloween Day

- **Keep your schedule as normal as possible that day.** Don’t skip naps, meals or other daily rituals that are important to your child.
- **Stick to the plan.** If you read a social story, prepared a schedule or practiced a route, try not to deviate from what you prepared them for. Remember, all of that effort was to help alleviate their anxiety, so they could feel in control and open to having fun. Even the smallest change can cause them to feel like the plan is unraveling into chaos.

- **Bring along whatever supports your child might need.** A sensory vest, headphones/ear plugs, their regular clothes, a comforting item. If you notice your child starting to become frustrated or anxious, take a break – use the support – let them tell you when they are ready to go back.
- **Stay Positive!** This Halloween might not look exactly as you had imagined. Having a child with Autism has a way of changing everything. But I guarantee the day will be just as unique and special as your child is! If you are concerned about judgmental stares from other parents, consider wearing a shirt that says “Proud Parent of a Trick Or Treater with Autism”

Other

- **Your child may struggle with the concept of costumes.** Children with Autism tend to be very literal and concrete, so dressing up and pretending may seem strange or even scary. Talk about it as much as they need to, and emphasize that costumes are for pretend. This may alleviate some of their fear around scary costumes. If they don’t want to wear a costume, that’s okay.
- **Don’t give in to the pressure to do everything!** If Halloween is too overwhelming for your child, it’s okay to skip some stuff this year. Maybe instead of going trick or treating they help you pass out candy at home. They might not wear a costume or go to the local Halloween party. It’s okay. This year they will do whatever they can. Who knows what they will be able to accomplish next year?!
- **Prepare for the end of Halloween.** Once the big day is over, it may be difficult for your child to transition away from Halloween themes, activities etc. Again, a social story is great for talking about how Halloween comes once a year and then it’s over. Have your child help you put all of the decorations and costumes into a box for storage to help show them that Halloween is “All Done”.

Is Disability Finally Having its Moment?

Published by Huffington Post on 09/26/2016 05:39 pm ET

By [Randy Rutta](#) President and CEO of Easter Seals

The pulse and pace of disability is being featured more prominently in the public discourse, and more than ever before. Could this be the moment people in the disability community have fought for?

Last year, you’d be pressed to find an accurate portrayal of children and adults with a disability in scripted television. Today, the sitcom [Speechless](#), about a “new” kind of family and starring an actor who really has a disability, is one of the most promising shows in the Fall TV lineup. And A&E’s [Born This Way](#), that chronicle’s

the lives of young adults with Down syndrome, received the Emmy for best unscripted reality television series.

During the 2012 election cycle, disability was largely absent from the political dialogue. This year, Anastasia Somoza, a woman living with a disability, headlined the Democratic convention.

Traditional media has also taken note, with *The New York Times* opening [a weekly series](#) and *Parents Magazine* dedicating its [October issue](#) to showcasing helpful lessons that parents of kids with special needs can teach all parents about raising great kids.

Corporate sponsors for the Rio Olympics included people with disabilities in their range of marketing, separate from the Paralympics and inclusive of the overall games - from BMW and Nike, to Subway and Citi. Other companies like Comcast/NBC Universal, Microsoft, and Tommy Hilfiger are proactively designing their products specifically for people with disabilities, but know that because their offerings are truly accessible we all benefit from a better product and experience.

How can we ensure this moment in the limelight is more than just a blip in the news cycle—and becomes the societal norm?

We value a diverse society—in our communities, workplaces and among our friends. We support brands that promote diversity. But all too often our definitions of diversity overlook people with disabilities—a diverse group in itself that makes up 57 million Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Ford Foundation President Darren Walker used his [annual letter](#) to address the neglect of people with disabilities in a recent initiative to “disrupt inequality.”

Of course, excluding people with disabilities was far from Walker’s intent. In Walker’s words, “I am a black, gay man, so some might assume that I’m especially sensitive to these issues and dynamics. But during the past year I have had to confront my own ignorance and power, and come to terms with the ways I was inadvertently fueling injustice.”

Better yet, rather than take defense, Walker opened a dialogue and listened to the advocates of the community. As a result, Ford is taking immediate action across its entire network: renovating their headquarters to meet the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act, addressing hiring practices and asking potential vendors and grantees to disclose their commitments to people with disabilities in the context of their efforts on diversity and inclusion.

Ford, one of the nation's most groundbreaking and influential brands, put a crucial stake in the ground to make the disability moment more than just a moment. The impact of this move will have lasting effects on the disability community and diversity as a whole.

As one of my peer organization leaders, [Carol Glazer](#) noted, "In a country where most foundations don't consider disability among their focus areas, for the leader of the nation's second-largest philanthropy to acknowledge this gross oversight and to appreciate the need to be inclusive of people with disabilities, is a game-changing move."

The truth is, embracing people with disabilities—as employees, consumers, and through philanthropic efforts—is not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. People with disabilities are a remarkable resource and talent pool for companies, make up 20 percent of the marketplace, and account for more than \$200 billion in discretionary spending (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

At Easterseals, we pride ourselves on being the indispensable resource for people facing today's disabilities, the visible and invisible. We want to change the way the world defines and views disabilities so that every person with a disability can lead the life of his or her choosing. I'm hopeful that tipping point is upon us, that real change is finally happening. Our role is to ensure this heightened level of attention and awareness lasts, is amplified, and results in greater access to services, opportunity, and independence for all people living with disabilities.

But we can't do it alone. Join us as we take on the stigma. Take on the inequality. Take on the challenges that the community faces across myriad issues - from early intervention to accessibility. Join us as we take on disability together.

This article was originally published at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andy-rutta/is-disability-finally-hav_b_12126154.html?