



News and Happenings From Marcus Autism Center

To continue to help families with children who have autism and related disorders, this Marcus Autism Center e-newsletter has several reminders and useful information. Also, visit the Marcus Autism Center [Web site](#) for additional information.

DeKalb Autism Support Group Noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2010

The DeKalb Autism Support Group will welcome Melody Stevens, who is a public health analyst for the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). She will give a presentation about the "CDC's Commitment to Understanding Autism."

The CDC has been tracking developmental disabilities in Atlanta through its Metropolitan Atlanta Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program (MADDSP) since the early 1980s, adding autism to the study in 1996. Stevens will discuss the growth of this program from metro Atlanta into a national network called the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network. She will highlight the role of tracking in the public health model and provide an overview of the CDC's autism research and awareness programs.

Spread the word. No reservations needed. The group will meet at:

1920 Briarcliff Road
Third floor conference room
Atlanta, GA 30329-4010

Contact [Moshe Manheim](#), L.C.S.W., 404-785-9491 for more information.

Sensory Day at BounceU 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010

BounceU reached out to the Autism Society of America because of the growing number of children with autism visiting their facility. They recognized how much these children enjoy this sensory experience. BounceU has blocked off time just for children with autism and their families. The children can run, jump, play and most of all--just have fun.

The cost is \$5 a child, and adults are allowed on the inflatables as well. So mark your calendar and bring your socks.

1630 Pleasant Hill Road, #110

Duluth, GA 30096-5826

SPECTRUM Offering New Family Support Groups

SPECTRUM Autism Support Group is forming new groups on the first Saturday of each month for higher-functioning children with moderate autism--in addition to the high-functioning autism/Asperger's disorder children's groups. We are excited to have grant funds from CarMax to make this possible. Those who enjoy the current third Saturday program will now have a second opportunity each month to participate.

Those needing a smaller group with more attention also will now have an opportunity to participate. The small group will be limited to only six children; so sign up now to reserve your spot.

Additionally, the new SPECTRUM Saturday Social on the first Saturday of the month now includes a small group for children with moderate autism, who simply require a little more adult assistance in a structured setting. It is not intended to be a respite program, but rather a social skills-building program. It is intended to help these children with:

- Shorter attention spans
- Turn-taking
- Friendship-building
- Sharing
- Following rules

Participants should have emerging skills in the area of social communication and be able to take group direction with prompting.

Sign up for these groups on the [SPECTRUM Web site](#). Spaces are limited.

Free Workshops for Parents Beginning Feb. 10, 2010

The DeKalb County Parent Mentors for Special Education group is offering free workshops for parents, including:

- **Feb. 10**--Developing Communication Skills in Your Preschool Child
- **Feb. 16**--Unlock Legislative Day at the Capitol
- **Feb. 25**--All About Testing for Students With Disabilities
- **Mar. 10**--10 Steps to a Happy Preschooler: Positive Discipline Techniques

View the [flier](#) for additional details.

Georgia State University Offering Social Skills Training

The Psychology Clinic for Assessment, Therapy and Research at Georgia State University is currently offering low-cost social skills training programs for children, ages 8 to 11. This group is appropriate for children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), high-functioning autism spectrum disorders (ASD) or are otherwise struggling with social interactions. Social skills groups are for children who need help with:

- Making friends
- Negotiating conflict
- Communicating with peers and adults
- Asking for or offering help
- Expressing feelings
- Controlling anger or excitement
- Reading emotional or social cues from others
- Taking responsibility or accepting blame
- Dealing with peer pressure

Groups are forming now for the next session, and space is limited. The cost for the eight-week session is \$100 plus \$48 for parking, if needed. The clinic is easily accessible by MARTA, and is located at:

Georgia State University
 Urban Life building
 140 Decatur St., 10th floor, Suite 1053
 Atlanta, GA 30303

The Urban Life building is at the corner of Decatur Street and Piedmont Avenue, across from the Georgia State University Sports Arena.

Call 404-413-6229 or view the [flier](#) to learn more about the group or to enroll your child.

University of North Dakota Survey for Families

Researchers at the University of North Dakota are asking for caregivers of a child with an ASD to complete an online survey to better understand several topics related to having a child with an ASD.

More specifically, the survey asks about:

- Current treatment
- Treatment history
- Reasons for stopping or starting a treatment
- Decision-making process that goes into selecting a treatment
- Various questions about the child's diagnosis
- Impact of the child's diagnosis on the family
- Services utilized by other members of the family

All participants' information will be kept private. This study is completely voluntary, and respondents can exit the survey at any time. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Dakota. Access the survey [here](#).

Research Opportunity for Families

The Autism Research Program in the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities (CIDD) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is offering an exciting research opportunity to the families of a child with autism. This study, which is funded by the National Institutes of Health with the direction of Joseph Piven, M.D., is being conducted by some of the world's leading

researchers in the field of autism at four different sites throughout the U.S.

Currently, CIDD is searching for 100 participants in the Southeastern U.S. who meet the following criteria:

- Are between ages birth to 12 months (mothers who are expecting also may be eligible).
- Have an older sibling diagnosed with an ASD.

Once a family is enrolled in this study, they will travel to Chapel Hill, N.C., for a comprehensive series of developmental, noninvasive assessments on the infant sibling at ages 6, 12 and 24 months.

View the [brochure](#) for more information. Call 800-793-5715 to apply.

AMC and ASA Team Up to Screen Family Films

AMC Entertainment and Autism Society of America have teamed up to bring families affected by autism and related disorders a special opportunity to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment on a monthly basis. Upcoming films include:

- **The Tooth Fairy**--10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 6
- **How to Train Your Dragon**--10 a.m. Saturday, March 27

Visit the Autism Society of America [Web site](#) for more information, including participating theater locations.

E-mail Moshe Manheim, L.C.S.W., at moshe.manheim@choa.org to share news and happenings for an upcoming edition of this e-newsletter.

©2010 Marcus Autism Center. All rights reserved.