

◀ Into the Light ▶

Volume 18 Issue 2 *Autism Society, Central Virginia* February 2010



AS-CV Mission & Philosophy

The mission of the Autism Society of America is to promote lifelong access and opportunities for persons within the autism spectrum and their families, to be fully included, participating members of their communities through advocacy, public awareness, education and research related to autism.

Recognizing and respecting the diverse range of opinions, needs and desires of this group, ASA embraces an overall philosophy which chooses to empower individuals with autism, their parents or caregivers, to make choices best suited to the needs of the person with autism. At the very core of the parent choice philosophy is the belief that no single program or treatment will benefit all individuals with autism. Furthermore, the recommendation of what is "best" or "most effective" for a person with autism should be determined by those people directly involved - the individual with autism, to the extent possible, and the parents or family members. Providing information and education to help in decision-making are more highly regarded at ASA than is advocating for one particular theory or philosophy.

IEPS FOR CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

The Autism Society, Central VA receives many calls every year from parents whose children with autism are often punished or suspended for challenging behavioral issues. The article below, reprinted with permission of Wrightslaw.com, highlights the rights of children in such situations and the responsibilities of IEP teams in such matters. Visit www.Wrightslaw.com for more helpful information regarding your child's rights and IEPs.

The IDEA 2004 regulations and commentary to the regulations were published in August 2006. The law, federal regulations and commentary describe what IEP teams must do when a child's behavior "impedes the child's learning or the learning of other children."

Do not assume that your child's IEP team is knowledgeable about these requirements.

The questions and answers about the requirements for meeting the needs of children with behavior problems (below) are taken from IDEA 2004, the special education regulations, and the Commentary.

If a child's behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others, must IEP Teams base positive behavioral interventions and support on a functional behavioral assessment?

Yes. Conducting functional behavioral assessments typically precedes developing positive behavioral intervention strategies.

Does "consideration of special factors" address the behavioral needs of children with disabilities in the IEP process?

Yes. The IEP Team determines whether a child needs positive behavioral interventions and supports. If the behavior of a child impedes the child's learning or the learning of other children, the IEP Team must consider the use of positive behavioral supports, supports, and other strategies to address that behavior. (20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(3)(B)(i), 34 C.F.R. § 300.324(a)(2)(i))

(Continued on page 3)

2009–2010 Officers and Board

President:	Holly Jenkins
Vice-Presidents:	Tiffany Robertson Holly Aldridge
Treasurer:	Todd Domaleski
Meeting Secretary:	Katherine O'Connell
Corresponding Secretary	Cheryl Fisher
Board members:	Jannie Ashburne Chris Cieslarczyk Linda Cunningham Sandi Wiley

Advisory Board

Pasquale Accardo, M.D.
Alan Kirshner
Darrell Tillar Mason, Esq.
Donald Oswald, Ph.D.
Angela Sadler
Carol Schall, Ph.D.
John A. Toscano

February 12 Chapter Meeting:

Building Community and Friendships for Children and Youth with Disabilities

Join us at 7 p.m. on Friday, February 12 as our own Bradford Hulcher, Information and Referral Specialist, will share strategies for building community and friendships for our kids on the spectrum. Bradford will share information about person centered thinking and how we as parents can impact our children's lives simply by the way we speak about them. Using stories and interactive exercises, Bradford will provide us with tools to encourage others to see our children in a different, more welcoming light, creating opportunities for community and friendship.

Bradford is a 1996 graduate of Partners in Policymaking where she initially learned about person centered planning and the impact it could have on the lives of those with disabilities. Bradford went on to become a trainer and facilitator in person centered planning and worked for several years for the Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU. Currently, Bradford works for the Autism Society, serves on the Virginia Autism Council, and is a Medicaid Waiver Mentor. Bradford presents at local and state conferences on person centered planning, Medicaid Waivers, and developing community for kids with disabilities. Bradford has a 19 year old son with an autism spectrum disorder.

Autism Society meetings take place at River Road United Methodist Church, 8800 River Road in Richmond. Our meetings are free and open to the public. The library opens at 6:30 p.m. and meetings begin at 7 p.m. Free supervision for children and youth is available although space is limited; reservations are taken through February 5 by e-mailing the chapter at asacv@aol.com with the names and ages/grades of your child(ren).

This newsletter is a publication of: Autism Society, Central VA □ P.O. Box 29364 □ Richmond, Virginia 23242-0364
(804) 257-0192

We accept for consideration any comments, personal vignettes, book reviews, information, announcements or advertisements for publication in our chapter newsletter. The deadline for submission for the March newsletter is February 15. You may send your contributions to the Chapter at the above address or email contributions to SELKO1@aol.com.

The Autism Society, Central Virginia does not endorse nor promote any program or service provider. The information contained in this newsletter is provided for informational purposes only. The Chapter is a volunteer organization providing information, support and encouragement to parents, family members and professionals in the Central VA area.

This edition was edited by Elizabeth Selko and Bradford Hulcher.

IEPS FOR CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

(Continued from page 1)

If the child's behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others, must the IEP Team develop a plan to address these problem behaviors?

Yes. If the child's behavior impedes his learning or the learning of others, the IEP team must include strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, supports, and other strategies to address that behavior. If the child's behavior that impedes learning is not addressed in the IEP, the IEP Team must review and revise the IEP to ensure that the child receives appropriate positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies. (34 C.F.R. § 300.324(a)(2)(i) and 34 C.F.R. § 300.324(a)(3)(i).

Must school districts train teachers regarding the use of positive behavioral interventions and support?

Yes. School districts must provide teachers with high-quality professional development, including the use of scientifically based instructional practices. School districts must ensure that personnel have the skills and knowledge necessary to improve the academic achievement and functional performance of children with disabilities. Each district must ensure that all personnel necessary are appropriately and adequately prepared. (20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(14), 34 C.F.R. § 300.156)

Each State must establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, and have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities. (20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(14), 34 C.F.R. § 300.156(a))

Must school districts use research-based positive behavioral supports and systematic and individual research-based interventions when addressing the behavioral needs of children with disabilities in their IEPs?

Yes. School districts must ensure that scientifically based research drives their professional development activities and services. (34 C.F.R. § 300.226(b)(1))

The implementation of early intervening services specifically focuses on professional development for teachers and other school staff to enable such personnel to deliver scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions, and providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports. (20 U.S.C. § 1413(f)(2), 34 C.F.R. § 300.226(b)(1))

The definition of "scientifically based research" is included in the regulations (34 C.F.R. § 300.35). Scientifically based research is referenced in IDEA 2004 (20 U.S.C. § 1411(e)(2)(C)(xi)). The full definition of the term "scientifically based research" includes that a peer-reviewed journal published the research, or that a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review approved it.

Must public agencies provide positive behavioral interventions and supports for all children identified as having an emotional disturbance?

No. IEP Teams make decisions on an individual basis for each child. IEP Teams need not consider such interventions, supports, and strategies for a particular group of children, or for all children with a particular disability. IEP Teams **must** consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies to address the behavior of a child whose behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others. (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(3)(B)(i)), 34 C.F.R. § 300.324(a)(2)(i))



NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

One of the benefits of Chapter membership is being able to check books out of the library. The library is accessible at each month's Chapter meeting and at Special Interest Group meetings throughout the month. If you have books on autism spectrum disorders, special education, disability issues, etc., please consider donating them to the Chapter's library so that other families and professionals may learn from them. If you have materials you would like to donate, please contact the Chapter at 257-0192 or asacv@aol.com. The following materials are additions to the library:

My Child Has Autism: What Parents Need to Know (2009)

Clarissa Willis, Ph.D.

As a Parent: What Can I Do to Improve My Child's Feeding Skills and Speech Clarity (DVD, 2007)

Sara Rosenfield-Johnson, M.S., CCC-SLP

Recovered: Journeys through Autism Spectrum and Back (DVD, 2008)

Doreen Greenpeesheh, Ph.D., BCBA

Community Events Meetings of Interest

Feb 1. **Hanover County Special Education Advisory Committee** at Hanover County School Board Office at 7 p.m. for further info: 365-4596

Feb 8 **Richmond City Special Education Advisory Committee** 6-8 p.m.; location TBA; contact: 780-6084

Feb. 10 **Chesterfield County Special Education Advisory Committee** Thomas Fulghum Center, 4003 Cogbill Road; 4:30- 6:30 p.m.; open to the public

Feb. 11 **Richmond Asperger's Meetup** face-to-face meeting will be on the second Thursday of each month from 7-9pm at the River City Diner on Parham Rd (at Brook and I95); a place where older children (age 11-17) can meet other Aspergers Children and siblings/adults with Aspergers can meet together and/or share information with parents of kids with AS; to RSVP for the face-to-face meetings, sign up at <http://aspergers.meetup.com/397/> The Yahooogroup is at <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/richmondaspergersgroup/>

Feb. 16 **Living with Autism** Chickahominy Middle School library at 6:30 pm. RSVP to Kelly at 365-4596 or hano-verpre@hcps.us

Feb. 18 **A Journey of Rest and Restoration**; a monthly Christian-based support group designed for couples/caregivers of children with any special needs; meets the third Thursday of each month from 7 to 8:30 p.m.; Mechanicsville Christian Center; free childcare and sign language interpreter; pre-registration required; contact Joanna Frank @ 746-4303 ext 360 or bfrank096@yahoo.com

Feb. 20 **Buddy Break** a free respite care program for children with special needs ages 3-21 and their siblings ages 3-11; 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.; sponsored by Southside Church of The Nazarene; see website for additional information at www.nathanielshope.org; questions? contact Amy Morgan @ 804-778-7800 ext. 247 or Buddy-Break@SouthsideChurchVA.org; parents required to attend an hour orientation the first time they attend Buddy Break

Feb. 21 **Extraordinary Families** support group for families who are caring for children with special needs; offering educational, social, emotional and spiritual support; normally meets 2nd Sunday from 4:30 - 6 p.m.; for details, contact Jennifer at

bittners4@gmail.com

Feb. 21 **Eagle's Nest Parents** a faith based support group that connects parents and caregivers of special needs children and provides nourishment for the soul of those involved; from 5-6 pm and are held at Woolridge Road Church; contact Tammy Burns for info at www.theridgeonline.cc

Feb. 23 **Henrico County Special Education Advisory Committee** at Brookland Middle School library; 6:30 p.m.

Feb. 26 **Dinner at Boychik's** ; 5 - 7 p.m. for individuals w/ disabilities and their families; for info: Heather at HKE-LIAS@AOL.com



Celebrations!

When you share your child's successes, no matter how large or small, you offer hope to other families. To share your child's success with others in the newsletter, e-mail us at asacv@aol.com.

On my birthday in January, I got a call from my grandson, Lewis, age 10. He very confidently spoke into the phone "Happy Birthday, Noni! I love you." How wonderful to hear his voice and know that he "gets" what it is to have a birthday. He really got a special birthday this year, and he knew it was just for him. Since attending a school dedicated to reaching kids with autism for a year, Lewis has become much less anxious, much more communicative, much less likely to meltdown, and able to learn. Over the holidays, he came to us to play with him, on the big balls, baking cookies, playing with clay, watching a video; he sat through the entire reading of "The Night Before Christmas" and "Stone Soup" with his grandparents. Before, because of his anxiety, he could not sit still or pay attention for that long. We are very pleased with the progress Lewis has made in wanting to be with people, play with friends. We feel that he is beginning to genuinely appreciate the people in his life. He is very lovable and loving.

Submitted by Henry and Virginia Woodhead (grandparents)

5K Run for Autism Preparations Heat Up!

The May 29 Run will be here before you know it and there is much to be done! Online registration for the 5K Run/Walk for Autism begins March 1 at www.asacv5K.org.

Run Committee Chair Holly Aldridge is currently recruiting for Team Leaders who will be in charge of the volunteers on run day. Team Leaders will need to have one or two orientation meetings prior to race day to go over their duties. Contact asacv@aol.com if you are able to volunteer. Team Leaders are needed for the following areas of responsibility:

- Children's Fun Area
- Course Marshals
- Water
- Volunteer Check in
- Packet Pick up Tables
- Clean Up
- Set Up
- Team Spirit Display
- Vendor/Exhibitor area



If you know of a company or business that would be willing to sponsor the Run, please contact Holly at asacv@aol.com for information on sponsorship

ASACV FEBRUARY CALENDAR

The Autism Society, Central VA will sponsor the following meetings in February. All meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. Meetings take place at River Road United Methodist Church, 8800 River Road unless otherwise noted. For information: 257-0192 or asacv@aol.com

Feb. 3	10:00 a.m.	Parents of Children (Preschool/School Age) w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group
Feb. 8	7:00 p.m.	Parents of Children (Preschool/School Age) w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group
Feb. 9	7:00 p.m.	Board Meeting
Feb. 12	7:00 p.m.	Chapter Meeting: Building Community and Friendships for Children and Youth with Disabilities
Feb. 18	10:00 a.m.	Biomedical Interest Group
Feb. 18	all day	Pizza Fusion donates 10% of dine-in sales to Autism Society
Feb. 22	7:00 p.m.	Adults w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group (<i>open only to adults w/ AS/HFA</i>)
Feb. 22	7:00 p.m.	Family Members of Adults with ASDs Interest Group

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Feb. 2 **Technology Tuesday: Making Books Come to Life** sponsored by VCU TTAC; open to parents and educators; 4-6 p.m.; learn and share low to high tech strategies for making books come to life with young children. Make a digital book and an animated song! FREE; to register, contact: cebishop@vcu.edu or (804) 827-9989

Feb 3 **Managing Challenging Behaviors** sponsored by Richmond City Public Schools Parent Resource Center; for information, contact the PRC at 780-4052

Feb. 16 **Technology Tuesday: Supporting Transition Outcomes through Assistive Technology** sponsored by VCU TTAC; open to parents and educators; 4-6 p.m.; the use of AT with middle and high school students transitioning to post secondary placements in educational or community based settings; FREE; to register, contact: cebishop@vcu.edu or (804) 827-9989

Feb. 17 **Henrico County Public Schools Transition Fair** transition fair and information sessions regarding transition for secondary school age students; FREE; 4-7 p.m.; Hermitage High School

Feb. 18 **Understanding Special Education** sponsored by the Chesterfield County Parent/Teacher Resource Center; 9:30 to noon or 6:30 to 9:00 pm; free and open to the public; rsvp to: Dana_Gatto@ccpsnet.net or 279-7311

Feb. 24 **Ministering to Those w/ Disabilities** 6:30 – 8 p.m. Parlor at Third Presbyterian Church, 600 Forest Ave.; Ben and Melissa Conner will speak on ministering to those with disabilities; Benjamin Conner, PhD is director of Young Life's *Capernaum* in Williamsburg, a ministry that provides Christian community and social opportunities for adolescents with special needs. Melissa Conner, his spouse, is the Program Director at Dream Catchers Therapeutic Riding Center in Norge.

Feb. 24 **Henrico County Public Schools Transition Fair** transition fair and information sessions regarding transition for secondary school age students; FREE; 4-7 p.m.; Godwin High School

Feb. 24 **Avoiding Power Struggles and Changing the Dynamic in the Classroom** sponsored by VCU TTAC; open to parents and educators; 4-6 p.m.; all teachers need to recognize

power struggles and understand how to avoid them. This session will also help participants understand the conflict cycle and will allow for practice and role playing; FREE; to register, contact: ammoorehead@vcu.edu or (804) 828-6947

Feb. 27 **IEP Basics: Before, After, and In Between**; sponsored by The Ridge and Chesterfield Support Services, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.; \$10 before Feb. 20; tammy@theridgeonline.cc or 639-4777

Mar.2 **Technology Tuesday: AAC - Supporting Communication with AT (Part 1)** sponsored by VCU TTAC; open to parents and educators; 4-6 p.m.; learn the basic elements of communication; how to assess the form and function of your students' communication; and how to design low tech AAC tools; FREE; to register, contact: cebishop@vcu.edu or (804) 827-9989

March 10-11 **Commonwealth Autism Service Annual Conference**; Day 1: "The Role of Hidden Curriculum and Communication Skills in Developing Social Relationships" Brenda Smith Myles; Ph.D.; Day 2: Breakout Sessions; Richmond; register before 2/18: \$169, after 2/18: \$219; for info: www.autismva.org

March 15-17 **Shaping the Future** an intensive three-day workshop designed to provide parents and professionals with training in the theory and application of ABA principles, specifically as they relate to children with autism. Topics covered include the principles of reinforcement, ABA-based teaching techniques, assessing the function of behavior, and data collection and analysis; includes lecture, hands-on activities, and student observation. A 20% discount in the workshop registration fee is offered to parents and home therapists; Charlottesville; for info: <http://www.viaschool.org/>

Mar. 16 **Technology Tuesday: Supporting Reading with Assistive Technology AT** sponsored by VCU TTAC; open to parents and educators; 4-6 p.m.; solutions that support students in building reading skills and scaffold their engagement in reading in the content areas; FREE; to register, contact: cebishop@vcu.edu or (804) 827-9989

March 15-17 **VA Transition Forum** sponsored VDOE; for educators, rehabilitation practitioners, workforce development personnel, community stakeholders, including students, parents, employers, advocates and representatives from adult service agencies invested in the successful transition of youth with disabilities; Roanoke; early bird registration before Feb. 12: \$119; after Feb 12: \$149

Mar. 17 **Using Motivators** sponsored by VCU TTAC; open to parents and educators; 4-6 p.m.; What really motivates

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

(Continued from page 6)

your students? How do you know? This session will focus on engaging instructional strategies, learning styles, and the basics of effectively using acknowledgement; FREE; to register, contact: ammoorehead@vcu.edu or (804) 828-6947

March 24 **Henrico County Public Schools Transition Fair** transition fair and information sessions regarding transition for secondary school age students; FREE; 4-7 p.m.; Highland Springs High School

For additional information on autism conferences and workshops in VA, visit www.autismtrainingva.org

Autism Society Board Changes

Board member Tammy Burns recently rotated off the Board after many years of leadership, including her role as chapter president. Tammy continues to support the chapter with a significant number of volunteer hours contributed each week to the handling of various office and bookkeeping duties. The chapter is indebted to Tammy for the leadership she has provided to the Autism Society for so many years. Tammy, who serves as Pastor of Family Ministries at The Ridge Faith Community, was recently awarded the 2010 Compass Award for Community Building by Northstar Academy.

Board member Chele Brandon has rotated off the board; Cheryl Fisher was elected Corresponding Secretary at the January Autism Society chapter meeting.

Thank you for the following donations:

Janet Markin

Knights of Columbus, Bishop Ireton
Council

Dominion Employee Giving Program

Robert Brooks
in honor of Seth Brooks

Book Review:

What to Do When You: Grumble Too Much A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Negativity

Author: Dawn Huebner, Ph.D.

What to Do When You Grumble Too Much is one book of a series written by this author. In this book, Huebner's goals are to teach children, ages 6 -12, about negativity and to motivate them to think and act differently about it. Through metaphors, stories and examples, she explains what negativity is and how a person can change his or her negative thinking into more positive thoughts.

The book begins with exploring the concept of negativity via concrete examples and situations. She uses nonthreatening situations children typically experience as a reference point to show how they could work on changing their negative responses in their own lives. Simple activities such as listing, drawing, and physical movement are provided to reinforce concepts and behaviors needed to replace negative perspectives and actions. The second half of the book focuses on strategies the child can do to respond more positively to situations that do not go the way he or she would like to go.

The book is written and illustrated in a child friendly format. A child would get the most benefit from it by reading it with a parent, discussing the concepts and doing the activities provided. In doing so, a parent and child would develop a common vocabulary to talk about his or her negative thinking and ways to respond more positively.

I like the way this book is formatted. I think it provides a child with a good explanation and visuals of what the current behavior or thinking (grumpy, worry, or anxiety) is and then supplies a means to address it in a constructive manner. Once the child has an idea of what it is that is he or she is doing, then there are concrete steps that can be taken to approach situations that typically result in upset over and over again. If the book is read together, then the parent can help the child apply the strategies presented in the book. Overall, it is a good resource for assisting children in working through difficult situations more effectively.

This book is available in the ASCV library.

Donna Sabel