

Volume 2, Issue 2, Winter 2010

# *Creative Perspectives Quarterly*

FEATURE TOPIC OF THIS NEWSLETTER

## HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH THE HOLIDAY SEASON



Creative Perspectives, Inc.  
AUTISM CENTERS OF COLORADO



*Where it all comes together.*



# In This Issue

▶ LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.....	2
▶ DIRECTORS' CONTEMPLATIVE QUIP.....	2
▶ <b>HELPING YOUR CHILD UNDERSTAND THE HOLIDAY SEASON SCHEDULE.....</b> BY DENISE NICHOLAS, M.A., CCC	3
▶ <b>PROBLEM PROOFING YOUR HOME FOR THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.....</b> BY MIKE FOSTER, M.A., LPC	4
▶ <b>BUILDING SOCIAL SKILLS OVER THE HOLIDAYS.....</b> BY JUSTIN MALE, M.A.	4
▶ <b>LEARNING STYLES.....</b> BY SETH MATTERN, M.ED.	5
▶ <b>HOLIDAY TRIGGERS FOR CHILDREN ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM.....</b> BY KIM MOHRBACHER, M.S., OTR & SANDY CURNOW, OTR	7
▶ <b>USING HOLIDAY TIME TO INCREASE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS.....</b> BY DAVID COX, M.S.B.	7
▶ COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS.....	10

## Letter from the Editor:

Dear Readership:

I am pleased to provide the winter edition of *Creative Perspectives Quarterly*. This issue focuses on tips and strategies on helping your child with one of the crazier and exciting times of the year with respect to the six domains comprising the Interdisciplinary Intervention Model utilized at Creative Perspectives Inc., Autism Centers of Colorado. I wish everyone a very happy holiday season.

David J. Cox, M.S.B.  
Assistant Clinical Director



## Directors' Contemplative Quip:

It was a couple of weeks ago that one of our Therapalooza clients came buzzing by me down the hallway after school chatting with his therapist and happened to catch my eye. I had to ask him if he'd back up and stand near me so I could compare my height to his. If I were seeing things correctly (which didn't seem possible), he was taller than I. How could that be? The little boy that Gina and I have worked with for so long...I stepped away from him and looked down toward my knees to where he used to stand, as he hopped away giggling because he IS taller than me, and wondered where time had gone. In looking around the hallways, classrooms, and homes at both Centers, we have the pleasure of seeing many kids that we started out working with - some before we even opened the doors of CPI - and others that have been with us the seven years that we've been open.

I was speaking at a parent support group last week and was asked to provide some information about our services. In an effort to support Team Brevity, I gave a general overview of the Interdisciplinary Intervention Model and several of the programs. I received a fair amount of questions that followed which seemed to cover nearly every aspect of programming available: (Age: 18 months to adult), (Location: home, center, community, school), (Discipline: Speech, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Family Counselor, Educational Consultant) and so on and so forth. These, plus a few more are all services available at CPI, so I may have appeared a bit short of breath by the time I was done answering questions. Finally, a lady in the back raised her hand and said: "May I ask what prompted you guys to start an organization like THIS?" I smiled fondly as I thought back to August of 2003 as Gina and I began to dream about what might happen if one were to combine the need for the true definition of comprehensive services with the potential that our vision held. "A moment of insanity," I said with a smile.

We celebrated CPI's 7 year anniversary on October 27, 2010. It is amazing to look back over the years and see where we have come from and what we have been able to accomplish as a team and as an organization. If you would have asked us where we thought we might be seven years after we opened, I don't believe either Gina or myself would have told you "here" - although we couldn't be more grateful for the staff and families that are part of the CPI family.

Did you know?

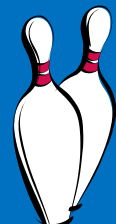
**Eggplants aren't really vegetables, they are fruits.**



**By recycling just one glass bottle, the amount of energy that is being saved is enough to light a 100 watt bulb for four hours.**



**The height of a bowling pin is equal to its circumference.**



As our Executive Director, Gina's days are spent keeping the business on track and moving forward. Much of her time these days is dedicated to building relationships and developing funding partnerships with insurance companies, along with the rest of our Executive Team. As for me, my responsibilities as CPI's Clinical Director allow me to spend quality time in with the kids, families, and our team as we work together on individual progress and program development. It is incredible to see the ways in which the organization has grown and blossomed over the years with the contributions of so many. On behalf of our team, families, and Gina and me - thank you for your support and being part of our organization. We're looking forward to seeing what the New Year brings in. The best to you and yours!

Cheers!



**From All of Us  
at Creative  
Perspectives  
Inc., Autism  
Centers of  
Colorado**

## Helping Your Child Understand the Holiday Season Schedule

*Denise Nicholas, M.A., CCC*

This is a crazy time of the year and can cause confusion and disruption to your child's routine, something I also experience during this time. I know you try and keep your child's routine as close to "normal" as you can and I would encourage you to use picture symbols, visuals or written words to help with this process. Picture symbols/visuals are a great tool to use with your child because they are stable over time, attract and hold attention, reduce anxiety, make concepts more concrete, help isolate the concept that communication is to another person and are a good prompting technique. Some of you have access to pictures and some have made your own. If you don't currently have picture symbols made or access to picture symbols, don't let that be an excuse for not using them. The good ole fashion stick figure is a great technique to use if nothing is available. I have received crazy looks from my kids and had a laugh or two, but it works!

Before your holiday activities start, think about what the day(s) might look like and put together a visual schedule for your child. It might be as simple as: first we wait for everyone in the family to wake up, then we open our presents, next we eat breakfast, then we take a bath, brush our teeth, and last we play. Or, it might

be: wake up and go to grandmas, open presents, eat lunch, play, etc. Whatever is your tentative holiday routine, use a visual schedule to help decrease anxiety and to have it available for your child throughout the day(s) of the activities as well as leading up if possible.

Last newsletter I focused on your child's receptive language. This time I would like to focus helping your child understand you and also develop his/her own expressive language. This information comes from the Communication Skill Builders and TEACCH program. These are suggestions I share on a regular basis.

- 1) Limit your own language to words he/she knows, and try to use the same words each time in the same situation.
- 2) Use short, simple sentences or phrases.
- 3) Speak slowly and clearly, and WAIT.
- 4) Exaggerate you tone of voice and facial expression.
- 5) Use gestures or other visuals (pictures, objects, print words) paired with your verbal language.
- 6) When the child is stressed or upset, reduce your verbal language and increase use of

visual supports.

- 7) Imitate what your child says and expand on it slightly.
- 8) Give your child enough time to respond. Your child may take a long time to organize thoughts and feelings and put them into words. Avoid the tendency to interrupt your child.
- 9) Avoid placing too much pressure on your child to talk. Your child may not want to 'perform' verbally in front of others.

Many times, when our children have time off from their regular routine, they get more one on one time with parents or siblings, are exposed to other people (friends, relatives), go to new places, etc. These opportunities, although they can be anxiety provoking, allow for language skills to get a boost and for parents to notice an improvement in their child's attention, language, or joint attention skills. Have a wonderful season and let me know if you need help in getting ready for the holiday season.

Denise Nicholas, M.A., CCC  
Speech Language Pathologist

# Problem Proofing Your Home for The Holiday Season

*Mike Foster, LPC*

Ok, let's be honest, there is no magical solution for making sure that the holidays are problem free. As all of us know, whether it be relatives, in-laws, preparing the house for the chaos that comes with the holidays, or simply dealing with the change in routine that comes with the kids being out of school, the holidays can be a stressful time. However, although it is impossible for us to eliminate all of the stress, we can take appropriate steps to ensure we minimize it. Let us take a look at some easy steps your family can take to ensure you have the smoothest holiday season yet.

1. Create a visual schedule to assist your child – While this may be more work up front, it will more than pay off in stress relief down the road. Often times, many of our kids have become accustomed to a routine within their day. Most kids across all lines become accustomed to an established routine that comes with any school environment. For individuals with an Autism Spectrum diagnosis, the need for stability and consistency is all that much more important. A lack of predictability often makes many ASD kiddos anxious and easily agitated. Therefore, one way in which this can be avoided is for the caretakers of such individuals to explore what the daily schedule looks like for the child and some common areas in which the individual engages within different environments. The next step is to re-create some of this dynamic within the home. This is not to say that the entire day needs to be devoted to acting out a school like atmosphere, but some key moments and similarities in structure should be mimicked. Therefore, if the child regularly works on a writing activity in the morning, create some type of way in which he or she can write something out during that time of the day. While the school may engage this for a longer time before a positive reinforcement is

presented, the requirement over the break may be considerably less, but the key is consistency in style of structure. Each activity should be no more than a few minutes, after all, this is a vacation for the child as well. The schedule for the entire day should be created with visuals to assist. Therefore, even though the structure may be looser over the break, the child is still able to identify what is next for the day.

2. Explore new ways to get the family out of the house. One of the most common reasons that holidays tend to become stressful is due to weather changes and being stuck indoors for long amounts of time. Because of this, it is especially important for you and your family to make sure that you get out of the house and engage in some activities. This can be as simple as going out to the yard to play in the snow or walking. The key to this is quite simple; when we use up some of our physical energy for activities and outings, we are less likely to use it up on stress. It is common knowledge that physical exertion leads to healthier thinking and behaviors, the same applies for you and especially for a child on the Autism Spectrum.

3. Remember the “Spirit of the Holidays.” – Often times, the major difference for individuals with regards to positive and negative mental health is the way in which they choose to think about their circumstances. It often sounds cliché to think about the holidays as a time to be thankful, but in truth, it is important to have times in which we choose to do just this. Please keep in mind, this does not mean that one should minimize the impact of negative circumstances, but rather, in the same process of accepting those negatives, find aspects of life in which one is also thankful for. As opposed to focusing on frustration around a particular

behavior, instead some families may choose to reflect on the amount of progress they have seen and that perhaps even 6 months prior, they would have welcomed this behavior as opposed to what they may be dealing with now. Instead of focusing on frustrating times, reflect on different instances in which different people have brought you joy. Often times, individuals become overwhelmed with the belief that their circumstances impact the way in which he or she views the world. Challenge yourself to find out if it is possible that in some areas, your view of the world can impact your circumstances.

4. Take time for yourself – The holidays are a time in which we often see commercials of perfect families within perfect homes and under perfect holiday lights. As most know, rarely do the holidays look like the commercials would have us believe. With all the havoc that can come with holidays, it is important to remember that nobody can adequately take care of their family until they have taken care of themselves first. Make sure to remember the things in life that bring you calmness and engage in them when you have time; if you don't have time, MAKE IT. Focusing too much attention on everyone else is the fastest route to resentment and unhappiness. Take time for you...the people in your life will thank you for it.

Make sure to take time to explore more steps in which you can take care of yourself. Every individual is unique, as is their situation. There may be several other ways which will work specifically for your home. Remember that we can approach the holidays in the same way in which we approach the work we do with our kids; it may never be perfect, but if each year we can see improvement, then we have plenty to be thankful for.

## Building Social Skills Over the Holidays

*Justin Male, M.A.*

The holidays offer numerous opportunities to engage your child in a variety of unique social activities that only come around once a year. Here are a few fun activities to occupy your child's time

and build positive social skills while they are away from school:

### **Holiday Wish-List / Shopping Activity**

A significant challenge that individual's

on the autism spectrum experience is perspective sharing, or understanding and acknowledging that other people have thoughts, ideas, perceptions, feelings that are unique to them. A great activity to

encourage perspective sharing is to make a holiday wish list with your child for the friends and family that you're going to buy presents for. You can start by brainstorming ideas about what these individuals like to do for fun, what they might need, etc. Once you have compiled a list head to a store like Wal-Mart where there are numerous options for presents. Walk around the store with your list and dialogue with your child about what kinds of presents you could pick out based on what they know about the people on their list. For example, if Dad likes football maybe he would like a jersey of his favorite player or a movie about football. Maybe grandma loves animals so she might like a calendar about animals.

Encourage your child to come up with unique ideas based on what they know.

### Ginger Bread House

Another great social activity to do with your child is building a ginger bread house. Step by step directions with visuals are easily accessible online and some allow you to design and print your house prior to actual assembly. Put your child in charge of the process and give them as many responsibilities as possible including getting the necessary building and decorating materials and following the step by step directions. Make the activity social and interactive addressing applicable skills including conversational skills, sharing, turn-taking,

symbolic/imaginary thinking and perspective sharing. Encourage your child to get creative in the process and don't be afraid to have fun and get messy.

### Other Social Activities

- Cooking Activities
- Make holiday crafts
  - Ornaments
  - Stockings
- Decorate the Christmas tree
- Build a snowman
- Go for a drive and look at Christmas lights
- Wrap presents together
- Go sledding

## Learning With Style

*Seth Mattem, M.A.Ed.*

I often find that while I am walking with a friend, I see things that they might not. I might notice a Chihuahua hanging out of a lady's purse, or a see a guy almost trip and fall only to recover at the last minute. Then, I turn to see if who I was walking with saw what I saw.

"Did you see that?"  
"See what?"  
"That guy just almost fell."  
"Oh, yeah... so?"

Or, at times I find myself walking in patterns, only stepping on the blue bricks, or dragging my hand along a wall. I pace while I talk on the phone. I snack on food while working or studying.

Think of your own quirks. Much of our thought and behavior may be normal to us, yet seem strange to others. Everyone's brains are unique and we all process information differently. But maybe these are not quirks at all. Maybe it's just our brain's style. I thought everyone dragged his or her hand across the wall. I think and talk better when I am pacing. I stay focused if I am eating; sunflower seeds get me through all my chores. These are all signs of a kinesthetic learner.

One umbrella explanation for these "quirks" is the theory of multiple intelligences and similarly, learning styles. The theory is, just like some people excel at math and others excel in science, people also have strengths in how they

process information. More and more, schools are encouraging teachers to create lessons to appeal to visual and kinesthetic learners, instead of just auditory. For example, if a student has trouble paying attention to a lecture, the instructor will have slides (visual) and actual objects (kinesthetic) to supplement the lecture (auditory). This allows the instructor to tackle multiple learning styles during the class. Most of us know what type of learner we are. I know I learn from doing things; I can be shown how to do something a thousand times but won't get it until I physically do it.

Beyond the idea of learning styles is the theory of multiple intelligences (MI). The name most associated with the theory of multiple intelligences is Howard Gardener, professor of education at Harvard Graduate School of Education. While IQ tests focus on logical and linguistic intelligence, Gardener argues that there actually are eight categories of intelligences. These categories are ways in which he concludes that people process and learn information. They are: 1) linguistic, 2) logic-mathematical, 3) musical, 4) spatial, 5) bodily/ kinesthetic, 6) naturalist, 7) interpersonal, and 8) intrapersonal. All these categories are areas in which a person can display intelligence. A person with interpersonal intelligence excels in social skills by reading and understanding people. The table below *from Wikipedia* provides a good breakdown of the different

categories.

More and more research is being done on the concepts of learning styles and multiple intelligences (MI). Many people are searching for trends of learning styles and MI in different populations. For example, boys and girls learn differently (shocking, I know!). Also, some research suggests typical learning styles in autism. While many articles suggest people with autism struggle interpersonally, many excel visually and spatially (think of the use of PECS, or visuals, to learn basic skills.) This holiday season, watch your child play. What kind of toys does he or she like? Are they textured, do they make noise, do they light up? Does their behavior change while they listen to music? Watch your child while you read them a book. Do they follow the words or pictures while you read, do they try and feel the textures on the page, do they watch you read it? These are all clues to how a child learns and areas in which they can excel. It can also help us understand how these children are processing all the information around them. If music helps a child process information it may give us a different approach from just *asking* them to put their dirty dishes away.

*"...clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere..."*

The theory of multiple intelligences is not without argument. It is almost entirely subjective and lacks empirical data. Critics

argue that the term “intelligence” unsuitably encompasses “talents” and “abilities.” These statements may be true, however it is clear that people do learn and process information differently. If we learned that Mozart was terrible at physics or chemistry, it would not make his work

any less brilliant. Moreover, the definition of the word intelligence is not important. Whether it is a talent, ability or intellect, being aware of them helps us see the world through another’s points of view. Even as the IQ test is mired in controversy, it is an effective tool. Just the same, being

aware of how a child learns or his or her abilities allows for more options in instruction, comprehension and, maybe most importantly, an understanding how they see the world around them.

Intelligence Area	Strengths	Preferences	Learns best through	Needs
<b>Verbal / Linguistic</b>	Writing, reading, memorizing dates, thinking in words, telling stories	Write, read, tell stories, talk, memorize, work at solving puzzles	Hearing and seeing words, speaking, reading, writing, discussing and debating	Books, tapes, paper diaries, writing tools, dialogue, discussion, debated, stories, etc.
<b>Mathematical/ Logical</b>	Math, logic, problem-solving, reasoning, patterns	Question, work with numbers, experiment, solve problems	Working with relationships and patterns, classifying, categorizing, working with the abstract	Things to think about and explore, science materials, manipulative, trips to the planetarium and science museum, etc.
<b>Visual / Spatial</b>	Maps, reading charts, drawing, mazes, puzzles, imagining things, visualization	Draw, build, design, create, daydream, look at pictures	Working with pictures and colors, visualizing, using the mind's eye, drawing	LEGOs, video, movies, slides, art, imagination games, mazes, puzzles, illustrated book, trips to art museums, etc.
<b>Bodily / Kinesthetic</b>	Athletics, dancing, crafts, using tools, acting	Move around, touch and talk, body language	Touching, moving, knowledge through bodily sensations, processing	Role-play, drama, things to build, movement, sports and physical games, tactile experience4s, hands-on learning, etc.
<b>Musical</b>	Picking up sounds, remembering melodies, rhythms, singing	Sing, play an instrument, listen to music, hum	Rhythm, singing, melody, listening to music and melodies	Sing-along time, trips to concerts, music playing at home and school, musical instruments, etc.
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Leading, organizing, understanding people, communicating, resolving conflicts, selling	Talk to people, have friends, join groups	Comparing, relating, sharing, interviewing, cooperating	Friends, group games, social gatherings, community events, clubs, mentors/ apprenticeships, etc.
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	Recognizing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals, understanding self	Work alone, reflect pursue interests	Working alone, having space, reflecting, doing self-paced projects	Secret places, time alone, self-paced projects, choices, etc.
<b>Naturalistic</b>	Understanding nature, making distinctions, identifying flora and fauna	Be involved with nature, make distinctions	Working in nature, exploring living things, learning about plants and natural events	Order, same/different, connections to real life and science issues, patterns

**References:**

- 1 Adam, Smith. “The Empathy Imbalance Hypothesis of Autism: A Theoretical Approach to Cognitive and Emotional Empathy in Autistic Development.” *The Psychological Record* 59, no. 3 (n.d.): 489.
- 2 Berube, C. (2007). *Autism and the Artistic Imagination: The Link Between Visual Thinking and Intelligence*. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, 3(5), 1. Retrieved from Education Research Complete database.
- 3 Traub, James. 1998. “Multiple Intelligence Disorder”. *New Republic* 219, no. 17: 20.

# Holiday Triggers for Children on the Autism Spectrum

*Kim Mohrbacher, M.S., OTR & Sandy Curnow OTR*

Holidays for children on the autism spectrum can be very challenging for both the child and their parents and siblings. Being aware of certain triggers specific to your child will make holiday transitions go more smoothly. The most important strategy to remember is to be proactive. Below is a list of possible triggers to look out for this holiday season when moving about in the community with your child or adolescent with an autism spectrum disorder.

- Changes in school schedules
  - Strategy: If you have a school calendar or information on your child's individual schedule, verbally prepare them the night before. Talk about what the change will be (holiday musicals, classroom parties, early release days, half days, etc.) and when it will occur during their school day (after recess, before math, skip specials, etc.). By preparing your child ahead of time they're less likely to have a meltdown or become anxious due to unpredictable changes in their schedule.
- Sibling holiday program
  - Strategy: Many holiday programs may occur in the evening or after school when your child is likely to be more tired and engaged in a preferred activity. Again, by preparing your child ahead of
- time as to what the changes are going to look like they will be more able to regulate their sensory system to make that accommodation. If it's something that your child can't handle and will be staying at home with a babysitter, they also need advance preparation. Visual schedules and token timers may be an effective strategy to use during the holiday program.
- Shopping mall
  - Strategy: Because shopping malls tend to be more crowded and noisy around holiday time you as a parent will need to evaluate an optimal time to visit the mall. Depending on your child's sensory needs you need to determine what time of day is going to be less stimulating or uncomfortable. In general avoid weekends and evenings because those are times that are likely to be more heavily populated and therefore noisier. For the tactically defensive child who may have meltdowns surrounding unexpected touch, this time of day will foster more bumping and pushing from people moving in their immediate environment. What could have been a pleasant experience, for example visiting Santa, can turn into a hasty exit from the mall.
- Change in pace
  - Strategy: Around holiday times life tends to get more hectic and possibly more stressful which affects not only your child with autism but the entire family. Children on the spectrum seem to be hypersensitive to family member's moods and stress levels. You might see an increase in their anxiety levels, a desire to stay at home and general uneasiness. For many families because of activities at school or in the community it can become another stress producer. If you notice your child is more agitated and less able to handle daily routines, you might need to reevaluate their schedule and ability to cope with these additional changes to his/her typical routine.
- Visits to Santa
  - Strategy: For families that will be visiting Santa, be sure your child is adequately prepared. Be proactive! If you know it's going to be noisy bring ear plugs, headphones or an iPod to help reduce auditory input. If your child doesn't want to sit on Santa's lap be respectful of their wishes and perhaps let them stand beside Santa.

## Using Holiday Time to Increase Appropriate Behaviors

*David Cox, M.S.B.*

When most parents of children and adolescents with an Autism Spectrum Disorder hear the words "holiday season", a certain amount of dread and anxiety presents itself. In a time that is supposed to be filled with joy, celebration and togetherness, the changes in routine, unfamiliar stimuli of lights and decorations, and the anticipation of the actual holiday that is built up throughout the month by everyone can lead to a host of maladaptive and inappropriate behaviors in everyone including individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The preceding articles already have

done a great job of outlining many strategies that will help you to avoid the potential inappropriate behaviors that are bound to have a high probability of occurring throughout the craziness that is the holiday season. These include the use of visual schedules, social stories, sensory triggers to avoid, finding fun activities outside of the house, using opportunities to work on social skills, recognizing your child's learning style to best approach learning opportunities with them and, most importantly, finding time for yourself. The final conceptual addition I would like to add to the milieu would be a shift in

frame of mind regarding the holiday season. Having a break from the routine that is present the rest of the year not only is a good thing for you and your family, it is a *great* thing! Rather than viewing the holiday season with its irregularity and overstimulation as a nightmare, I challenge you to see the holiday season as the perfect opportunity to utilize the extra time you have with your child to work on the many areas of your child's development that you haven't quite had the time to get to throughout the fall with everyone's busy school and work schedules.

Many are familiar with the saying that ‘practice makes perfect’ and the general underlying concept that the more opportunities an individual has to practice a particular skill the better they will become at it. This holiday season I would recommend talking with your child’s teachers or their Program Coordinator at Creative Perspectives and see if there is something manageable that you might be able to tackle in the extra hours you will be spending with your child this holiday break. Remember that behavior is everything that we do in our day to day life. Seek out not necessarily maladaptive or inappropriate behaviors that you want to “deal” with, but rather choose an adaptive behavior that you will enjoy working on with your child. Once a good target behavior has been identified decide how you are going to target that skill and what strategies you might employ. Below is a list of basic behavioral strategies for increasing whatever adaptive behavior it is you choose. I hope everyone enjoys their holiday season and remember, the extra time this holiday season is a great opportunity, not something to dread.

1) Functional Communication Training: intervention in which the individual is taught appropriate ways to communicate to replace inappropriate means of communication they may be currently engaging in.

- Example: teaching the use of a “break” card or signing break to temporarily delay engagement in a task/activity rather than using aggression or elopement.
- Example: instead of grabbing objects from the hands of another person when one wants an object, the individual is taught to ask for the object verbally, with picture symbols, or with sign language.
- Example: instead of engaging in aggressive behavior or inappropriate language to gain the attention of another, the individual is taught to say “look at me”, or tap the individual’s shoulder to gain others’ attention appropriately.

2) High-Frequency Request Sequence: intervention in which two to five easy

tasks with a known history of learner compliance are presented in quick succession immediately before requesting the target task, which has a low-probability of compliance. The effects of this procedure are often referred to as “behavioral momentum”.

- Example: Johnny dislikes playing with the train set because he is not quite sure how to play with it and creativity and flexibility within play is not one of his fortes. Johnny dislikes it so much that when it is time to play with the train set in his schedule, he becomes noticeably anxious and refuses engage with the train set materials regardless of the fact that he will sit right next to the train set on the floor. He does, however, really enjoy stacking blocks and flying toy airplanes. Knowing this, his therapist decides to setup a sequence of play during which she has Johnny stack up three blocks, then fly a toy airplane (both high-probability behaviors) through the stacked blocks onto the train on a track. Then drive the train around the track (low-probability behavior) to reset the sequence spatially.

3) Contingency: in its most basic conceptual outline, contingency refers to the concept that something occurs only after the occurrence of something else. With respect to reinforcement, this is seen as the individual providing reinforcement only after the occurrence of the target behavior.

- Example: Johnny’s goal is to increase his eye contact with others so the therapist decides to give Johnny tickles (a known reinforcer) only after every time the child makes eye contact with you during social interactions.

4) Differential Reinforcement: Reinforcing only those responses that meet a certain criterion along some dimension(s) (i.e. frequency, topography, duration, latency, or magnitude) and placing all other responses on extinction.

- Example: Johnny engages in

aggressive behavior to escape demands that are placed upon him. As such, his therapist decides to use differential negative reinforcement (DNR) during which he is negatively reinforced for appropriate requesting of a break (i.e. he is allowed to avoid the demand temporarily), and is not allowed to escape or avoid the demand if he engages in aggressive behavior (i.e., aggression is placed on extinction by not allowing it to work for him to avoid or escape the demand).

5) Extinction: a given response that has elicited reinforcement in the past no longer produces reinforcement.

- Example: Johnny likes to throw chairs as he receives a lot of attention from others when he does so. Knowing that this is the function maintaining Johnny’s chair throwing, his therapist decides to ignore all instances of Johnny’s chair throwing behavior.

6) Premack Principle: principle that states that making the opportunity to engage in a high-probability behavior contingent on the occurrence of a low-probability behavior will function as reinforcement for the low-probability behavior.

- Example: The use of the “First...then...” boards within therapy sessions where “First” is a non-preferred task and “then” is a highly preferred task.

7) Reinforcement: Occurs when a stimulus change immediately follows a response and increases the future frequency of that type of behavior in similar conditions.

- Positive Reinforcement: the addition of a stimulus following a response that increases the future frequency of that type of behavior in similar conditions.
  - Example: the provision of social praise following a correct response to a “why” question.

- Negative Reinforcement: the

removal of a stimulus following a response that increases the future frequency of that type of behavior in similar conditions.

- Example: The stopping of the 'dinging' noise that goes on in your car when you put on your seatbelt.

8) Task analysis: The process of breaking a complex skill or series of behaviors into smaller, teachable units; used for teaching behavioral chains.

- Example: Breaking toothbrushing into the following steps: (1) Get toothbrush and toothpaste. (2) Open toothpaste. (3) Put

toothpaste on toothbrush. (4) Put cap back on toothpaste. (5) Brush upper right teeth. (6) Brush upper middle teeth. (7) Brush upper left teeth. (8) Brush lower left teeth. (9) Brush lower middle teeth. (10) Brush lower right teeth. (11) Rinse toothbrush. (12) Rinse mouth with water and spit into sink. (13). Put away toothbrush and toothpaste.

9) Teaching Loosely: Randomly varying functionally irrelevant stimuli within and across teaching sessions; promotes setting/situation generalization by reducing the likelihood that (1) a single

or small group of noncritical stimuli will acquire exclusive control over the target behavior and (2) the learner's performance of the target behavior will be impeded or "thrown off" should he encounter any of the "loose" stimuli in the generalization setting.

- Example: Johnny is learning how to identify colors. As to improve the likelihood of generalization, his therapists make sure to teach him colors loosely by varying the materials, the environment, and the person asking him questions throughout his daily session.

Creative Perspectives, Inc.

AUTISM CENTERS OF COLORADO

# Multidisciplinary Diagnostic Testing & Assessment Center

Now Open!

Lafayette, Colorado



Where It All  
Comes  
Together.

## Services Available Include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder Screening
- Full Multidisciplinary Diagnostic Evaluation, with clinicians including Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist & Speech Pathologist
- Single Discipline Assessments, including:
  - Functional Behavior Assessment
  - IQ Testing
  - Speech Evaluation
  - Sensory / Motor Evaluation
- Available to Individuals ages 18 months to adult.
- Call 303.935.5200 to Schedule an Appointment

## Community Activities and Events

### Extreme Sports Camp

an athletic experience for autism

## Join us for Winter Day Camp at Snowmass!

Learn to ski/snowboard \* Beginner to advanced \* All across the autism spectrum are welcome

### Greetings!

We at Extreme Sports Camp are excited to announce the opening of registration for our 5 weeks of winter ski/snowboard camp during the 2010-11 winter season! Please note there are ONLY 6 spots available for each camp. We believe in keeping our camps small so we can provide the ideal learning experience to each camper who joins us; one that will be memorable as well as safe. At Extreme Sports Camp, we are deeply committed to serving the autism community so we accept people anywhere on the autism spectrum as well as any skill level.

### Session weeks:

Martin Luther King holiday  
January 16 - 22

President's Day holiday  
February 20 - 26

Spring skiing:  
March 6 - 12  
March 20 - 26  
April 3 - 9

### Register at:

[http://www.extremesportscamp.org/register\\_now\\_5.html](http://www.extremesportscamp.org/register_now_5.html)



Second Saturday of each month  
through May

## Easter Seals Discovery Club: Fun For Everyone of All Abilities



*The Discovery Club is a day for children to explore and learn in a friendly social setting. Kids discover arts and crafts, sports and games, drama and singing and group activities. Parents discover time to meet with their friends, time with their spouses, and the luxury of time for themselves and with other children.*

**Who:** Kids of all abilities ages 6—18.

**What:** Meet new friends and enjoy recreational activities in a friendly social setting. A day for all children and youth to explore and learn.

**When:** Second Saturday of each month from October through May, 10 AM to 4 PM.

**Dates:** Jan. 8, Feb. 12, Mar. 12, April 9, May 14

**Where:** Boulder Valley Christian Church, 7100 S. Boulder Road, Boulder, CO 80303

**Rates:** Annual \$25 registration fee. Fee for each Saturday is \$25 per person per day or \$20 per person per day for 2 or more from the same family

Call Nancy to reserve your child's space, for information, or to volunteer:  
(303) 233-1666 x 237

# Community Activities and Events

## School and Social Strategies for the Student/Child with Autism

January 20-21, 2011

Denver, CO

Holiday Inn, Denver East – Stapleton

\*\*\*\*\*

### Practical Solutions for Increasing Independent Functioning Using Visual Support Strategies

Susan L. Stokes, M.A., CCC-SLP, Educational  
Autism Consultant

Are you struggling with teaching your students (and adults who support them!) *independent* functioning skills? If so, this workshop is for you! A primary goal when teaching students with ASD is decreasing dependence on adults. However, this can be quite challenging in school-based settings where the education climate fosters adult support. For our students with ASD, who can become quite “prompt dependent”, this instructional style can be extremely detrimental, resulting in life-long ramifications. This training will address how to appropriately use adult support to *teach* independent functioning skills. Numerous, practical evidence-based techniques using various modes of technology as visual support strategies, will be shared, as well as a unique educational planning guide, designed to assist teams in identifying contexts and situations that require adult support, necessitating the need for instruction and development of independent skills. The training will also highlight applications galore! Come discover how the most popular form of technology, the **iPhone/iTouch/iPad** can make a difference in supporting a person with ASD. Numerous, innovative applications that will revolutionize your intervention strategies for people with ASD will be demonstrated with “in your pocket” technology, for communication, social relations, planning/organization, academics, and relaxation/self-regulation, will be shown.

#### **Learner Outcomes**

- 1) Develop an understanding of the importance of increasing independent functioning skills in students with ASD.
- 2) Learn strategies for utilizing 1:1 adult support to teach independent functioning skills to students with ASD.
- 3) Learn numerous uses of technology to teach independent functioning skills to students with ASD.
- 4) Learn a strategy for assessing independent

functioning needs, and subsequent development of strategies to teach independent functioning.

- 5) Discover the ease of use of the **iPhone/iTouch/iPad** and the need to use up dated modes of technology for supporting persons with ASD.
- 6) Learn numerous applications that can provide support in various skill areas for persons with ASD.

\*\*\*\*\*

### When My Autism Gets Too Big!

Kari Dunn Buron, M.S.

This presentation gives an interesting overview of current thinking in the area of Social Cognition and learning theories as they relate to autism spectrum conditions. The speaker will connect learning style and problems of social understanding to symptoms of social anxiety, relationship building and challenging behavior. Strategies to address such learning difficulties will be discussed as they relate to individuals across the autism spectrum and of all ages. Kari is the co-author of **The Incredible 5-Point Scale**, and the author of **When My Worries Get Too Big, A 5 Could Make Me Lose Control and A 5 is Against the Law!** (2008 ASA literary award winner). Kari is also the co-editor of a textbook for educators titled *Learners on the Autism Spectrum: Preparing Highly Qualified Educators* (2009 ASA literary award winner) and is the creator of a new social skills magazine designed for students with Asperger Syndrome called *The Social Times*.

#### **Learner Outcomes**

- 1) Define Social Cognition as it is explained by current research and explain how it relates to how students with ASD learn.
- 2) Define systematic learning as it applies to teaching social information to people with autism
- 3) Describe how you might use special interests to build meaningful relationships
- 4) Describe 5 systematic ways of teaching information to individuals with ASD.
- 5) Describe the Anxiety Curve Model of Functional Behavior Assessment and name 3 ways of proactively teaching relaxation to highly anxious students with ASD.

\*\*\*\*\*

ASHA CEUs for Speech & Language  
Professionals

# Community Activities and Events

## Exceptional Student Leadership Unit and Early Childhood Initiatives Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference

January 20-22

This Conference is a family centered conference designed to offer support, information, and education to parents and professionals. PEP promotes the partnerships that are essential in supporting and including children with disabilities and their families in all aspects of the school and community.

These conferences are available to persons residing in Colorado who have a child with a disability - ages birth to twenty-one. Administrators, principals, teachers, medical and other service providers interested in the family-professional partnership are invited to participate in a PEP Conference.

The purpose of this conference is to bring parents and other professionals together, allowing them an opportunity to share ideas, discuss concerns, celebrate successes, and obtain information relating to parenting, educating and supporting a child with a disability.

Activities include:

### Large Group Sessions:

- Parenting a Child with a Disability and Rebuilding Dreams
- The Law and the Education of Children with Disabilities
- Early Childhood - Resources and Supports
- The Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Transition IEP

### Small Group Sessions: Let's Talk About...

- Advocacy
- Friendships
- Men Only
- Questions for Your Doctor
- Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports

To register go to the following site:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEPapplication.asp>

## Beau Jo's Family Pizza Night for Families with Children With Autism



1st Wednesday of Each Month

5:30-7:30 PM

Families are responsible for the cost of their meal

Beau Jo's Pizza  
2710 S Colorado Blvd, Denver

To RSVP contact Tom:  
720-214-0794 ext 13

## DENVER ART MUSEUM

December 18 to Feb 2

Winter Break: Adventures for all ages  
10 am to 4 pm, (12-4 pm, Sun)

Located at 100 W. 14th Ave Parkway.

Make fingerprint crocodiles, help prepare our mummy model for the afterlife, design flower collar, & make gold jewelry. Family backpacks & art tubes available daily during Winter break.

General admission free for kids 17 and under.  
(Separate ticket required for King Tut.)

Call (720) 865-5000 for general information or call Rose Beetem at (720) 913-0000 or please e-mail [info@denverartmuseum.org](mailto:info@denverartmuseum.org) or check out [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org)

# Community Activities and Events Continued



December 3 to January 2  
Blossoms of Light for all ages

5:30 to 9:30 pm

Located at 1007 York Street.

One million colorful lights draped in elegant designs will illuminate the plants and hardscape features throughout the Gardens. Each night, seasonal entertainment will be provided and a captivating array of seasonal plants will be on display.

Call Will Jones at (720) 865-3553 or please e-mail [jonesw@botanicgardens.org](mailto:jonesw@botanicgardens.org) for more information or check out [www.botanicgardens.org](http://www.botanicgardens.org)

## Bogdanova Dance, LLC

December 19

Longmont Bogdanova Dance The Snow Queen, for all ages, at 2 pm, located at Niwot High School.

A wonderful Christmas gift for your family and friends—a dance show based on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale.

Call Anna Bogdanova at (303) 324-2486 or please e-mail [anna@bogdanovadance.com](mailto:anna@bogdanovadance.com) or check out [www.bogdanovadance.com](http://www.bogdanovadance.com)



December 31—Lafayette  
WOW! Children's Museum New Year's Eve Celebration for all ages, at 11 am

Located at 110 N. Harrison Ave. Musical performance, noisemaker crafts, refreshments, and an exciting New Year's Eve countdown at noon! All included with your museum admission!

WOW! will be open on New Year's Eve, from 10 am to 2 pm. Call (303) 604-2424 or check out [www.wowmuseum.com](http://www.wowmuseum.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

WOW! Children's Museum Dine Out for WOW! for all ages,

Located at 2580 Baseline Road. Dine out at Noodles and Company in Boulder (Baseline location) and support WOW! at the same time!

Noodles will be donating 25% of your dinner total to WOW! on Thursday, January 27th.

In order for WOW! to receive this generous donation, you must mention that you are dining on behalf of WOW! when you place your order!

Call (303) 604-2424 or [www.wowmuseum.com](http://www.wowmuseum.com) for more information.



December 17-19

Denver Ballet Nouveau Colorado presents The Nutcracker for all ages, at 2 and 7:30 pm,

Located at 1001 W. 84th Avenue.

BNC is the only Nutcracker in town where all children are invited on stage after the show to learn steps from the performance. They also get a chance to meet the Sugar Plum Fairy, her Cavalier, the Nutcracker and Clara.

Join us for this family-friendly holiday tradition! Ticket prices are \$44, \$30 & \$17 and child & senior ticket prices are \$37, \$26 & \$15. To purchase tickets go to [bncdance.com](http://bncdance.com)

## Community Activities and Events Continued



January 29—Boulder

Pro Musica Colorado Chamber Orchestra Music Declares,  
for ages 10+  
7:30 pm

Located at 1421 Spruce Street

6:30 pm Pre-Concert Talk (Cynthia Katsarelis), 7:30 pm. concert at the First United Methodist

Church. Kellogg Mozart's Hymn, Mozart Piano Concerto K. 467 in C Major, Larry Graham, pianist, Mozart Symphony No. 41, Jupiter Near and Far.

Please bring donations and items for the Carriage House. To purchase tickets by phone, call (303) 776-5355 or please e-mail [info@promusicacolorado.org](mailto:info@promusicacolorado.org) for more information or co check out [www.promusicacolorado.org](http://www.promusicacolorado.org)



## Project: Freedom Respite Program

# Need a Night Out?



Please Contact Missy Perkins for More Information:

[missy.perkins@creativeperspectives.org](mailto:missy.perkins@creativeperspectives.org)

OR

303.935.5200

Project: Freedom is an opportunity for parents to have a night out while the kids have fun too!

This respite program is held at CPI's Englewood Center on the second Saturday of the month from 5pm - 9pm.

The evening is filled with fun activities, games, snacks, and a movie! Each night is themed, so come prepared to have fun!

CPI is an approved respite care provider through CES and SLS. Check with your Resource Coordinator to have CPI added to your plan **PRIOR** to making reservations.