



# AUTISM

## THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND

### First Word...

### August, 2008

Eileen Hawkins -Administrator  
(216) 556-4937  
Monday-Friday 9AM- 4 PM

Greetings to all of the membership and friends of the ASGC. It promises to be an exciting Fall for the ASGC. The ASGC has experienced unprecedented growth. We are very proud of our growth and realize that it is all due to the generosity of our friends and members and outstanding efforts of our volunteer staff. We cannot thank you all enough.

It is with this in mind, that I am very pleased to announce the unanimous approval of the Board of the ASGC to hire Eileen Hawkins as the Administrator for the office of the ASGC. She has been an active volunteer with the ASGC and has a school age son with ASD. She is very excited to be a part of our staff and looks forward to serving our community. It is our hope that as we continue to grow, we will be even more accessible to our members and all those affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders.

We are proud to serve you and welcome your calls or e-mails anytime. **We are happy to announce that we will now have new office hours with phone coverage from 9:00 AM till 4:00 PM, Monday thru Friday. @ 216 556-4937.**

For our July meeting, we had the great pleasure of hosting a presentation and Q&A session with Hal E. Wildman, PhD from Spectrum Psychological Associates. His wealth of experience was very engaging and educational. Thank you Hal for joining us.

We invite you to join us for our next meeting. Our discussions will feature information on the IEP process on August 5, 2008, at 6:30 PM at the Cuyahoga Valley Career Center, 8001 Brecksville Road, Brecksville, Ohio.

Thanks again for making us your leader in Autism Advocacy in Northeast Ohio. Tell us how we can better serve you in our ongoing efforts to make the Greater Cleveland area the best place to live for those with Autism Spectrum Disorders. We strive always to be the Cleveland area's premier source of autism advocacy, support and unbiased information. You are the reason that is possible.

Sincerely,

Rory McLean, President

### Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

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ASGC  
P.O. Box 41066  
Brecksville, Ohio 44141

The information in this newsletter is for educational purposes only. The Autism Society of Greater Cleveland does not endorse any specific product, method of therapy or organization. Our aim is to provide information that assists our membership in making educated decisions. Thank you for your support.



# News from the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

**From ODJFS: Children's Buy-In Program** Gov. Strickland's TurnAround Ohio initiatives have helped expand health care coverage to more Ohioans including uninsured children.

Ohio is pleased to announce the availability of a new health care program called the "Children's Buy-In" program (also known as CBI). CBI is a cost-sharing health care program for certain children with special needs or expensive insurance premiums. Children may qualify for this program if their families have an annual income that is more than 300% of the federal poverty level (about \$63,600 for a family of four). Applications are accepted online only. For more information, please visit: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/cbi/>.

In addition, Ohio's Medicaid program is covering more Ohioans than ever before! For links to brochures, flyers, facts sheets and more, check out the TurnAround Ohio Medicaid Expansions Toolkit online at: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/tao/toolkit.stm>

## **What is the Autism Scholarship?**

Ohio's Autism Scholarship Program is a program of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The program allows ODE to pay a scholarship to the parents of a qualified child with autism. Through the scholarship, parents have a choice of seeking services for their child with a registered private provider, rather than the child's resident school district to receive the services outlined in the child's individualized education program (IEP). Passed as a pilot as part of the 2003 Budget bill, the program became permanent law as part of HB699, the Capital Bill, passed in late 2006. The amount of the Autism Scholarship is capped at \$20,000 and to be eligible a student must be identified with autism, enrolled in their public district of residence, have a current and agreed upon IEP, and have no administrative or judicial mediations or proceedings pending regarding the IEP. The Autism Scholarship Program (ASP) has helped many families that choose to leave their public school system to obtain very specialized services through a registered private provider in accordance with their wishes. Many children have benefited by that decision and overwhelmingly parents are satisfied with the services obtained through the Autism Scholarship program. The numbers of those enrolled in the ASP continue to grow. **For complete information about Ohio's Autism Scholarship Program contact the Ohio Department of Education. @ 1-877-644-6338 or [www.ode.state.oh.us.com](http://www.ode.state.oh.us.com)**

## **Teacher Education for Autistic Children Act of 2007 (TEACH)**

With the increasing number of children diagnosed with autism, many communities across the country are in desperate need of more teaching professionals with experience working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. This bill, HR 2390, was introduced in May 2007 by Congressman Chris Smith (NJ), co-chairman of the Autism Caucus, and seeks to increase the number of teachers and paraprofessional teaching assistants with expertise in ASD by providing a refundable tax credit.

This bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow a refundable income tax credit for up to \$10,000 of the annual education expenses (e.g., tuition, books, student loan interest) incurred by individuals studying to become teachers of children or adults with an autism spectrum disorder.

For the full text of the bill, a complete list of co-sponsors and current status, visit: <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and enter the bill number - HR 2390.

Please contact your legislators and urge them to support this bill. To find contact information for your Representative, visit <http://www.house.gov/>, and enter your zipcode+4 at the top of the page where it says "Find Your Representative" and enter your zipcode+4.

# Join the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland!

Dues for the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland are **only \$5.00** per year.

Checks for dues or donations can be sent to:

ASGC

P.O. Box 41066

Brecksville, Ohio 44141

Check out our website at [www.asgc.org](http://www.asgc.org)!

Join us for our Meetings  
August 5th & September 2nd

All are welcome to the monthly ASGC meetings!

When: 1st Tuesday of each month

Time: 6:30pm to 8:30 pm

Where: Cuyahoga Valley Career Center, 8001 Brecksville Rd. in Brecksville, 44141

**Info or RSVP (216) 556-4937**

## Free Childcare is Available for ASGC Meetings

- Provided by staff members from STEPS Behavioral Consulting
- RSVP is requested for childcare by calling (216) 556-4937
- Let us know how many children will be attending



## Upcoming Meetings

Meetings are held at 8001 Brecksville Rd., Brecksville, Ohio 44141

August 5th 6:30 to 8:30 PM "The IEP Process".

September 2nd 6:30-8:30 PM Speaker — Kim Gustely, Co-Director of Victory Gallop a Therapy Riding Center in Bath, Ohio.

Please join us!

DIRECTIONS TO THE CUYAHOGA VALLEY CAREER CENTER  
<http://www.asgc.org/events.htm>

# Family Resources

## 10 Things Every Parent Should Know

All parents face challenges in childrearing. The challenges can be greater if you have a child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or significant support needs. Here are 10 things to remember.

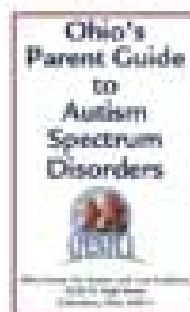
1. If you have concerns about your child, it is OK to seek help. Talk to your child's teacher or in Ohio contact [Help Me Grow](#) toll free at 800-755-4769 to talk about your concerns and get a referral to an appropriate specialist.
2. Your child is, first and foremost, your child, a unique human being with gifts and challenges like all of us. It is the responsibility of the adults in your child's world to learn how to support her successfully.
3. Your child is doing the very best he can with the support available at this stage of his development.
4. You are not alone. There are sources of support for parents of children with ASD and significant support needs. **Contact The Autism of Greater Cleveland @ (216) 556-4937** In addition, both the [Autism Society of Ohio](#) (330.376.0211) and the [Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities](#) (800.374.2806) can help you find the information and services you need.
5. Other parents can be your lifeline during difficult times. Locate and attend a parent support group or [link up with one online](#) to share common issues and concerns and brainstorm solutions.
6. Take care of yourself. Sometimes we become so involved in supporting our child that we don't take time for ourselves. Remember, you can't give from an empty cup.
7. Although your child may have significant needs, it's OK to take time for your other children and your spouse.
8. Be open to what others say, but trust yourself when it comes to your child and what she needs. You know your child and have important knowledge to share with others about her.
9. Remember, not everything has to be educational. Make sure your child has some time every day that's fun.
10. We all belong. Allow your child to participate in community activities and give the community the opportunity to learn to support him.

## Parent Guide

### Family Services

Ohio's Parent Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorders is now online! Thank you to all those parents who devoted so much time and energy to this valuable resource.

[ [Learn more about Ohio's Parent Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorders](#) ]



## Hal E. Wildman, PhD—Spectrum Psychological Associates

We were very pleased to have Hal E. Wildman, PhD speak at our July 1, 2008, meeting.

Hal specializes in the diagnostic and behavioral evaluation and treatment of children and adolescents. With over 20 years of experience as a psychologist, Dr. Wildman's areas of specialization include Autism/Asperger's disorder/PDD, ADHD, school and learning problems, behavior/conduct problems, fears/phobias, depression, and social skills training. His evaluations include specific, practical recommendations for parents, teachers, and other caregivers to follow to help children and adolescents to learn, change behavior, and improve their daily functioning. Evidenced-based treatment for child and adolescent behavior and emotional problems is offered and coordinated with other providers involved with the child, including pediatricians and schools.



Children and adolescents with Asperger's Disorder, PDD-NOS, and others often experience difficulty in making and keeping friends and socializing with their peers. In addition, their parents often have difficulty in helping their children with social difficulties and behavioral problems, such as noncompliance with requests, temper tantrums, and interrupting others. To help with these concerns, Dr. Wildman periodically offers groups to teach peer -relevant social skills to these adolescents and pre-adolescents, as well as groups to help their parents learn what they can do to help their children with social skills and in managing their behavior and emotions. Dr. Wildman received his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1986. Dr. Wildman holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology with honors from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and a Master's Degree in Developmental Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Parents interested in obtaining information about the evaluation, treatment, and/or group services that Dr. Wildman offers, or regarding scheduling an appointment, may contact him at Spectrum Psychological Associates (440) 446-9696. Ext. 44.

Do you have some news or information to share?

Send information by email to [Hawkins\\_eileen@hotmail.com](mailto:Hawkins_eileen@hotmail.com) by the 1st of each month for the following month's letter.

# Safety Tips for Children with Autism

The latest [newsletter](#) from the [Federation for Children with Special Needs](#), a Boston-based non-profit organization that provides support and information for parents of disabled kids, has an article with safety tips to help parents of children on the autism spectrum.

The tips complement this two-page [handout](#) produced by Dennis Debbaudt, a Florida parent who has become an advocate and safety expert for people with autism and runs [Autism Risk & Safety Management](#), which produces training videos for public safety agencies and educators. Debbaudt's materials are written with both children and adults in mind.

The tips range from simple steps to those that require some shoe leather and homework. As with any contingency planning exercise, some of the steps are sobering. They include:



**Program an "ICE" telephone number into your mobile phone contact list.** ICE stands for "in case of emergency" who should be called. This is a good idea for everyone, but as Douglass points out, it's vital in an emergency if you become incapacitated while with your autistic child.

**Childproof your routes of exit.** Families with young children on the autism spectrum should consider putting door latches out of reach. Douglass notes that her family also installed an alarm system that sounds if a door is opened, so her son won't leave the house unnoticed.

**Prepare an information sheet** about your child to share with public safety officials. Debbaudt's handout has a suggested list of details to include that go beyond name, physical description and photograph: all telephone numbers for parents and caregivers; atypical behaviors the child may do that will attract attention; favorite locations to visit; likes and dislikes when it comes to approaching the person; and method of communication, both verbal and non-verbal. Debbaudt also recommends preparing a map of dangerous locations near your home, including bodies of water.

**Get to know the local police and fire department.** If your child's wandering off is a concern, Debbaudt recommends contacting police, fire and ambulance services with this information, so they can flag it in their emergency response database. "When we provide law enforcement with key information before an incident occurs," he writes, "we can expect better responses." Visit the police and fire stations and emergency medical technician (EMT) station.



**Autism Society of America.**  
*improving the lives of all affected by autism*

# Occupational Therapy for Children with Autism

Autism is a developmental disability that affects how the brain functions, specifically those areas of the brain that control social ability and communication skills. Boys are more likely to develop autism, and most children are diagnosed before the age of 3.

Children and adults with autism typically have difficulty in both verbal and nonverbal communication. People with autism may have a difficult time relating to the outside world and may have unusual reactions to the people around them. People with autism may demonstrate aggressive behavior that may cause injury to themselves or others. The disorder also may cause sensitivity to the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste.

Occupational therapy can provide intervention that helps children to develop appropriate social, play, and learning skills. The therapist aids the child in achieving and maintaining normal daily tasks such as getting dressed and playing with other children.

## What can an occupational therapist do?

- Evaluate a child to determine if he or she has accomplished tasks appropriate to the child's age, such as dressing and play skills.
- Provide intervention to help a child appropriately respond to information coming through the senses. Intervention may include developmental activities, sensory integration, and play activities.
- Facilitate play activities that aid a child in interacting and communicating with others.

## What can parents and families do?

- Join a support group for parents and families of children with autism. Families of people with autism can experience high levels of stress because of the child's challenging behavior and the financial demands.
- Collaborate with the occupational therapist and other medical and educational professionals to encourage improvement in social skills and daily tasks.

P. O. Box 41066  
Brecksville, Ohio 44141  
Office Hours Mon-Friday 9:00 AM-4:00 PM  
Phone: 216-556-4937  
Email: support@asgc.org

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## Autism Conferences, Courses and Events

**September 28, 2008**

**Autism Speaks 2 mile  
Walk @ Progressive Field in  
Cleveland, OH**

Please join Autism Speaks for their 2nd annual 2 mile walk for autism. You may register as individual walkers or as a team. People can be volunteers or sponsor a walker or a team. Schools can participate with fundraisers. Corporate sponsorships are available.

For more information go to [www. autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org) or call Theresa Norvel at 216-333-3241

**October 10-12th, 2008**

**1st Annual International Autism  
Summit**

Event will feature interactive sessions with over twenty nationally and internationally known speakers. This conference is for parents, professionals, caretakers and educators for children and adults living with Autism and Asperger's Disorders. The conference location is the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel and it is sponsored by University Hospitals, Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital, and Autism Today.

For more information go to: [www.autismsummit.org](http://www.autismsummit.org) or call 1-866-8-EVENTS

**August 14-15th, 2008**

**Basic Foundation in Applied  
Behavioral Analysis**

Two Day workshop introduces Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

For Parents & Professionals  
At Cleveland Clinic Children's  
Hospital  
For More Information, contact  
Jennifer Manning (216) 721-1292

[www.clevelandclinic.org/autism](http://www.clevelandclinic.org/autism)