A special thanks to our Conference partners:

Bittersweet Farms - bittersweetfarms.org
Bittersweet, Inc. provides a variety of programs and services for adolescents and adults with ASD at four sites in Ohio. World-renowned, Bittersweet provides supportive and well-structured programs that emphasize meaningful activities and work, and an avenue for using special talents and abilities.

VSA Ohio - Erin Hoppe @ ehoppe@vsao.org

Autism Network - Nationwide Children’s Hospital Amy Hess @ Amy.Hess@nationwidechildrens.org


Sondra Williams and OCALI (also runs a camp called SPEAK)

Food for Good Thought - a supported employment facility for persons with autism. Also, sponsors an Adapted Theater class offered through Adapted Rec at OSU.

Audrey Todd, PhD - todd@foodforgoodthought.com
Related Services
Music Therapy
Art Therapy
Dance Therapy
Equine Hippotherapy

Other Resources

https://beyondautismawareness.wordpress.com/2013/10/16/the-benefits-of-art/

Resources used for this guide:

Thank you to The Art of Music, LLC – hearartseemusic.com – for photos and other information – photos taken during the Art of Music sessions are for children with all abilities.

http://www.sunnydays.com/glossary
https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/video-glossary/glossary-terms
https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/video-glossary
http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/info/autism/
http://www.myinfinitec.org/resources/autism
http://autism.about.com/od/whatisautism/p/autismcauses.htm
Resources

Advocacy and Financial
State Agencies
http://www.benefits.gov/ssa
http://www.ocecd.org
Family Grant Opportunities
http://www.HauglandLearningCenter.com
http://www.uhccf.org
Home and Community Based Waviers
http://dodd.ohio.gov

Biomedical Interventions
Diet and Nutrition
http://www.autismservicesforkids.com
http://nisonger.osu.edu

Community and Support Network
Local Autism Organizations
http://www.autism-society.org
http://www.ocali.org

Support Groups
http://www.autism-blog.com
http://www.fhlautism.org
Sibshop – sibling support groups

Early Intervention
http://nisonger.osu.edu
County Boards of Developmental Disabilities
http://nisonger.osu.eduhttp://www.ohiohelpmegrow.org

Health Services
Community Mental Health Centers
Developmental Pediatricians

Interventions
Applied Behavior Analysis
TEACCH
Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy
What is Autism?

The Centers for Disease Control describes Autism Spectrum Disorder as: "developmental disabilities that cause substantial impairments in social interaction and communication and the presence of unusual behaviors and interests. Many people with ASDs also have unusual ways of learning, paying attention, and reacting to different sensations. The thinking and learning abilities of people with ASDs can vary—from gifted to severely challenged."

The core symptoms are deficiencies related to communication, social interaction, and restrictive or repetitive behaviors. However, autism is a spectrum disorder. This means that no two people with autism will have the exact same symptoms. Along with varying degrees of symptoms, some people with autism will display various combinations of symptoms. A common saying in the autistic community underlines this issue; “If you have met one person with autism, you’ve met one person with autism.”

Other medical issues and difficulties can be related to or be in conjunction with autism. These can include muscle tone, sleep disturbances, poor or altered eating habits, digestion issues, anxiety, or disordered sensory perceptions. Again, these symptoms vary widely with each individual on the autism spectrum.

An individual with autism might exhibit a variety of characteristics as follows:
- Difficulty understanding language, gestures, and/or social cues
- Limited speech, verbalizations that repeat or maintain a particular topic
- Limited eye contact
- Difficulty relating to or participating in a reciprocal conversation or interaction
- Social awkwardness
- Inappropriate laughing or giggling
- Repetitive behaviors
- Insistence on sameness, resistance to change
- Little sensitivity or increased sensitivity to light, sound, smell or touch
- Apparent insensitivity to pain
- Lack of fear or acknowledgement of dangers
- Aversion to touch or human contact
- May prefer to be alone

Special-Imitative Play- Acting out typical actions or daily routines in the context of play.
Special Needs- A term that describes a child with a mental or physical disability that requires special services or treatment.
Speech and Language Pathologist- A professional who evaluates a child’s ability to communicate.
Stereotyped Behaviors- Abnormal or excessive repetition of actions.
Stereotyped Language- Abnormal or excessive repetition of words or phrases.
Symbolic Play- When a child pretends to be something or someone else and perform actions typical of that person or thing.
Tactile Defensiveness- A strong, negative response to sensations.
Tantrum- The expression of intense frustration. Typical of children that cannot typically express emotions or verbalize needs.
Transition- The process of a child moving from an early intervention program to a preschool program or other support service.
Vision Services- Professional services to aid children's visual disorders or delays.
speech tend to make unusual sounds.
Psychological Services- Administering of psychological and educational tests, interpretation of test results, and efforts to understand the neurobiological process that result in cognitive functions and behaviors.

**Receptive Language**- The ability to understand words and comprehend sentences produced by others.

**Regulatory and Sensory Systems**- The internal systems that control ability to register and respond to internal sensory input and external stimuli.

**Repetitive Motor Mannerisms**- Repetition of movements or posturing of the body. May include hand and body movements, and odd postures of body parts. These movements or postures do not appear to have meaning, but are typically significant to children with ASD.

**Restricted Patterns of Interest**- Limited range of interest that are intense in focus. These interests tend to be narrow and rigid and appear to be obsessions.

**Rituals**- Repeated behaviors that appear to be meaningless but are repeated by an individual in certain situations or circumstances.

**Screening**- The process of assessing a child’s development and determining if their needs warrant further evaluation.

**Self-Stimulating Behaviors**- Self-stimulating movements, postures, and/or mannerisms significant to the performer.

**Sensory Input**- Internal (heart rate, body temperature) and external (sights, sounds, tastes, etc.) sensations.

**Sensory Stimulation**- Behaviors performed to stimulate internal response. May be for avoidance, attention requests, or a means of soothing. Appear meaningless to everyone but the person performing the action.

**Social Interaction**- Verbal and/or nonverbal behavior used to communicate with others.

**Social Reciprocity**- Back and forth flow of social interaction. A person’s behavior influences another’s behavior and so forth.

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**What causes autism?**

If you would Google the question, “What causes autism?” you are likely to come across many websites that proclaim a certainty of an answer. It is important to know that the subject is highly controversial. One parent’s passionate statements or researcher’s claims should not take the place of solid research. It is also important to note that these statements and claims should also not be taken lightly and could warrant solid research, especially if there isn’t already research into them. The easiest answer is we don’t fully know yet but there are increasingly more and more theories on the subject.

**What is this Guide?**

This guide is designed to be a helpful tool for a parent of a child with autism. It is a collection of resources put together to aid in the research and care for the child. This guide champions the arts as an available avenue but is by no means all encompassing. It is designed to be a starting point for the parent to delve further into autism, their child, and the resources available to them. Not all resources will be helpful to all parents. As with individuals with autism are uniquely different, it is encouraged that the research, planning, and care should be tailored to each individual’s needs.
The Benefits of The Arts

Did you know?

“Art, understood as spontaneous creative play, is what children naturally do – singing, dancing, drawing, and role playing. We also know that the arts engage all the senses and involve a variety of modalities including the kinesthetic, auditory and visual.

When caregivers engage and encourage children in arts activities on a regular basis from early in life, they are laying the foundation for – and even helping wire children’s brains for – successful learning.”

- “Arts Education Partnership”

N
Nonfunctional Routines- Repeated actions or behaviors that appear to not have a purpose. Children with ASD may place purpose in what appears to be senseless routines.
Nonverbal Behaviors- Acts performed by people in order to convey or exchange information without the use of speech. May include eye gaze, facial expressions, body posture, and gestures.

O
Occupational Therapist- A professional who evaluates fine motor (small muscle) and self-care skills.
Occupational Therapy- Professional services offered to assist with self-help skills, adaptive behavior, and sensory, motor, and postural development.

P
Perseveration- Repetition of a behavior with an appearance of "being stuck" in that behavior.
Perseverative Speech- Repetitive use of language or repetitive mention of a specific topic. Appearance of "being stuck" in the need to verbalize specific words, phrases, or topics.
Pervasive Developmental Disorders- Umbrella term to describe Autism Spectrum Disorder.
Physical Therapist- A professional who evaluates gross motor (large muscle) skills, strength, balance, coordination, and mobility.
Physical Therapy- Professional services that help enable bodily movement and helps prevent onset of mobility difficulties.
Positive Behavior Support- Analysis of a child's problematic behavior and identification of the reasons and triggers for the behavior then the teaching of proper and expected behavior.
Pragmatics- Social rules for appropriate, meaningful use of speech and conversation.
Prosody- The rhythm and melody of spoken language. Includes rate, pitch, stress, inflection intonation. Children with ASD that verbalize tend to have odd intonation in their speech, flat, monotonous or sing-songy. Children with ASD that have limited
then signal interest in interacting.

**Family Training**- Services provided to the family by qualified personnel to assist in understanding the needs of the child and helping the child's development.

**Functional Analysis of Behavior**- Also Functional Behavioral Analysis. The analysis of a child's inappropriate behavior and discovery of its cause. Includes documenting the antecedent (action prior to behavior), the behavior, and the consequence.

**Functional Play**- The appropriate use of objects in play.

**Health Services**- Public services to promote, improve, conserve, or restore a child's mental and/or physical well-being.

**Healthy Development**- The expected physical, mental, and social development of a child in a specific timeframe.

**Home Visits**- Professional visits to your home in order to plan and provide intervention services.

**Hyperresponsiveness**- Abnormal sensitivity to sensory input. Many children with ASD are extremely sensitive to commonplace sounds, sights, tastes, touch, and/or smells. Typically, this input triggers a defensive, negative response.

**Hyporesponsiveness**- Abnormal insensitivity to sensory input. Under-reaction to sound, sight, taste, touch and/or smell. A child may appear to be deaf or have a high tolerance for pain. May lead to aggressive behavior in searching for sensory stimulation.

**Idiosyncratic Language**- Language with private meaning that only makes sense to those in the situation where the language originated.

**Individualized Education Plan**- (IEP) An agreement between the parent(s) of a child with special needs and the child's school system that outlines special services and instructional services.

**Individualized Family Service Plan**- (IFSP) The birth-3 year old equivalent to the Individualized Education Plan. A document created between the parent(s) of a child with special needs and early intervention professionals to outline goals for the child's development.

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**It’s the Process, Not the Product**

“Process not Product” means you can explore music/art and simply enjoy what happens. You don’t have to mimic what an adult does or try to make something your friend has made. There is no right or wrong way to sing, dance, play an instrument, paint or draw; there is only YOUR way. YOU are the Musician. YOU are the Artist.

**MUSIC/ART PROMOTES:**

- Self Esteem
- Self Expression
- Creativity
- Speech and Language Development
- Positive feeling and happiness through the sharing of enjoyable experiences
- Brain development by stimulating auditory, visual, tactile and kinesthetic neural pathways
- Social Interaction
- Fine and Gross Motor
Art and Creativity to Engage any Child in the Classroom

Physical and emotional benefits

The Arts have benefits both practical and emotional. Some young autistic children may struggle with their fine motor skills, for which the simple act of guiding crayons over paper can render a huge improvement. Making drawings allows autistic children to communicate thoughts and feelings they may otherwise struggle to express. Viewing a child’s drawing opens a window into interests, preoccupations and emotions which may go unregarded in a child with ASD, who does not communicate these things in a conventional manner. This can provide a greater understanding of the child.

Adaptation and control

Many autistic children struggle in conventional classrooms because the methods utilized do not suit their own particular way of doing things. The idea of adapting their personal methods can be upsetting. The Arts give them a degree of control over their learning experience which many greatly appreciate. A child shown a dance and told to learn that dance may become bored or frustrated, let their attention wander, or simply refuse to participate in the lesson. A child asked to create their own dance, immediately has much more control over their learning experience. They are more likely to become engaged in the task, actively seeking out the information they need on their own terms.

set of rules for completion. May involve counting or cleaning and can be identified early through restricted patterns of interest.

Developmental- Having to do with the stages and steps involved in the growth of a child.

Developmental Delay- Evidence a child is not functioning at an expected level for his/her age.

Developmental Milestones- Markers of ability used to monitor a child's development. These guideposts consist of skills and behaviors that should be developed by a certain age.

Disability- A physical or mental condition likely to lead to a developmental delay.

Early Childhood Intervention- A support system designed for children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

Early Intervention Services- The system of coordinated services designed to promote a child's developmental growth and the ability to cope with disabilities.

Echolalia (Scripting) - The repetition of words, phrases, intonation, or sounds of others. Children with ASD use this in the process of learning to talk and serves a communicative purpose for the child.

Eligibility Requirements- A standard a child must meet to qualify for early intervention services. Qualifiers include age, disabilities, and developmental delays.

Emotional Regulation- Voluntary and involuntary responses by a child to internal and external sensory input. The child adjusts emotions and behavior to the surroundings. Many children with ASD have difficulties with adjustments and exhibit abnormal or inappropriate responses.

Evaluation- The process of determining if a child is eligible for early intervention services.

Expressive Language- Verbal behavior or speech. The ability to form sounds into words which can be strung into sentences.

Eye Gaze- Nonverbal form of communication. The act of looking at another individual's face to see what they are looking at and
Musical engagement

People with ASD can respond in surprising ways to creative teaching methods. Music, in particular, has been found to elicit amazing responses from children with ASD. Many autistic children respond far more enthusiastically to a lesson framed musically or rhythmically than they would to a more conventional lesson. Some ASD children like the patterns and rhythms of music or chants, and these can benefit from, for example, math lessons phrased in rhyme, or chanted. Others like the opportunity music gives for them to engage with others through clearly defined parameters. Making music or singing a song with the rest of the class gives the autistic child a part to play which is predictable and easy to complete yet simultaneously creative, expressive, and inclusive. Making them feel included is one of the greatest ways a teacher can ensure that the mind of an autistic pupil is ‘in the moment’, so to speak, that their attention is on the lesson and, crucially, that they are enjoying the lesson. See the Art of Autism story on the importance of music by Jacqui Callis.

Learning through personal expression

Creative methods of teaching can thus provide an unparalleled way of communicating and engaging with autistic pupils. Framing lessons which may otherwise seem dull or pointless within a creative context lends a sense of focus to a lesson, and gives the child a measure of control over their learning experience which helps to ease frustrations and make their education more enjoyable. This will allow them to develop their skills, and to demonstrate to their peers that, although they may not engage with lessons in quite the same way as others, they are in no way intellectually deficient!
One mom’s list of books and resources:
This list is one mom’s experience and reading pathway of discovery that helped her choose the right journey for her child.

Parent Books
Isaacson, Rupert. *The Horse Boy: A Father's Quest to Heal His Son.*
Kearney, Albert J. *Understanding Applied Behavior Analysis: An Introduction to ABA for Parents, Teachers, and Other Professionals.*

Children’s Books
Buron, Kari Dunn. *When My Worries Get Too Big!: A Relaxation Book for Children Who Live with Anxiety.*
Kutscher, Martin L., Tony Attwood, and Robert R. Wolff. *Is a Worry Worrying You?*