

Accepting the Spectrum

A monthly newsletter sharing information and support for families, caregivers, and friends of children on the Autism Spectrum

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The change of seasons is just around the corner and with that comes the drop in temperature. With changes in temperature comes a new wardrobe change! Soon it will be time to put away summer clothes and transition into fall clothing such as long sleeves, pants, and close toed shoes. This change can be difficult for some children with autism. Here are some ways you can help your child to become more comfortable with this change.

- Offer your child multiple choices. Sometimes feeling like a child has a little bit of control can help ease the frustration of wearing something that they might not be so excited about. By offering choices between two coats, or two pants and letting them choose can promote independence and allow them to feel more comfortable.
- Try different fabrics and material! Children with autism can easily become uncomfortable with certain fabrics and that may be the reason your child won't wear the new wool sweater you just bought. Try cotton blends, fleece, silk, etc. until you come across something a bit more tolerable for your child. Removing tags off of your child's clothes can also be helpful.



- Some children may not understand why they can't wear their favorite shorts or sandals all year long. Social stories are a great way to prepare them for sensory changes with their clothing.
- When you do find something that works for your child, buy more of it! Some children are very particular about clothing. Understanding that your child may just be truly uncomfortable in their outfit, and that you just need to try and work with them to find what is most comfortable for them!



Agency News:

Our annual Meet and Greet Event in collaboration with Middletown Police, South Fire District, and Middletown Recreation Department is on Saturday, September 28th from 10-12 . This is a free family fun event for families with all abilities. There will be face painting, balloon twisting, snacks, and activities. Families will be able to meet Police and Firefighters. There will also be additional community resources at the event for families to obtain information.

Police and Firefighters Meet and Greet

In collaboration with Collaborative ABA Services LLC, Middletown Rec,
Middletown Police, and South Fire District






 **Saturday September 28th, 2024**

 **10am-12pm**

 **140 Wilderman's Way Middletown CT**

**Free food, games, and activities! All Inclusive event and
FREE! Additional community agencies and resources
available!**

Register at:
<https://www.collaborativeabaservices.com/register>





Lisa's Coaching Corner:

Loving the Child You Have

My son, Ben, was diagnosed with Autism at the age of 2. After his diagnosis, my life stopped. The life I had expected, anyway. I went from planning my next baby to learning the ropes of Autism parenting. For me that looked like diving into the research, consulting experts, trying new therapies and interventions and always, always wondering if I could be doing more. This took a toll on me, and it took a toll on my parenting experience. Instead of looking at my perfect, beautiful son as the miracle he was (and is), I was looking at him like a “work in progress”. Instead of focusing on his strengths, I was focused on his deficits. Instead of loving every minute of my time with him, I spent it worrying about his future.

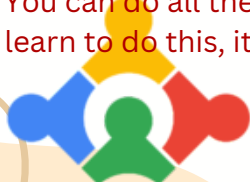
I probably would have continued this for years, if it weren't for Ben pulling the hair of a little girl named Sammy in his pre-school class. I was terrified that Sammy's parents would insist on Ben's removal from the class, so I decided to do damage control by calling them directly, explaining the situation, and apologizing. Good thing I braced myself, because what the father said blew me away: “I am so sorry to hear that your son is struggling. Sammy's brother, Jake, died of brain cancer when he was 4 years old, and it breaks my heart to see any child who is struggling.”

In that moment of simultaneous heartbreak and gratitude, everything shifted for me. Their son was dead, and my son was alive and right in front of me. Yes, he struggled in so many ways, but he was right here for me to love. I vowed that I would continue to work my hardest for Ben's best possible outcome, but not at the expense of enjoying and loving the child right in front of me, exactly as he is.

From that point on, I made it my job to celebrate all of Ben's successes, no matter how ordinary they were, or how much time it took him to achieve them.

- ✓ I threw a Poop Party for a 5 year old
- ✓ I shared his Ben-isms (MY-PAD, NetClicks) with anyone who would listen
- ✓ I bought him a Lego set when he (finally) stopped interchanging the letters “b” and “d” making it sound like he was constantly telling people to “dye”.

I have never regretted a moment I spent loving on my child, and neither will you. It is not either/or; it is both/and. You can do all the things to support your child's development AND love them exactly as they are. When you learn to do this, it is the most freeing act of love for both you and your child. Give it a try! -Lisa



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