



Angels Bridging Gaps

Palm Bay Autism Support Group

www.angelsbridginggaps.org

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 Newsletter Editor: Jennifer Rentrope

Newsletter

January/ February 2011

Community Events

11/17 - Preparing High School Students and Young Adults with Asperger's Syndrome for Success in College - *Debra Sloane, Psy.D., BCBA*, Scott Center for Autism - FIT, Palm Bay. *Wednesday, 6:30 - 8pm Call 321-674-8106*

1/14 - 1/16 - **Think Autism_CARD 18th Annual Conference** *Lake Mary Marriott. Fri, Sat & Sun Jan 14th thru 16th. For more information and to register go to www.ucf-card.org*

1/12 - **Social Networking Groups Teen (Ages 14 -17)/ Adults (Ages 18 and older) of South Brevard & North Brevard - UCF CARD**, Programs run from February 2011 until May 2011 (limit 10 per group). *To register for participation in one of the four groups contact Kim (kcochran@mail.ucf.edu) or Jason (jklazon@mail.ucf.edu) by Wednesday, January 12, 2011*

2/4 - **Applied Behavior Analysis & Organizational Behavior Management Conference "A Conversation About Punishment: 3 Perspectives"**, 9am - 4pm. *Gleason Performing Arts Center Fee: \$40/person before Jan. 10, 2011; \$50 at the door. For more information contact: conversation3perspectives@gmail.com*

2/12 - **5th Annual Heart And Hope State Wide Conference**, 9am- 4pm *South Middle School. For more information contact Family Network on Disabilities at 800-825-5736 /727-523-1130 or email fnd@fndusa.org.*

Our upcoming Events

1/11, 1/25, 2/8, 2/22 - **Parent Support Meeting** - Malabar Baptist Church, Malabar 6pm-7pm. Call 723-1602
(2nd & 4th Tuesday of each Month)

1/15, 2/19 - **Horseback Riding** - Rescued Horses Saves Kids, Malabar. 10am -12noon. R.S.V.P. By 1/14, 2/18.
(3rd Saturday of each Month)

1/15, 2/19 - **Family Bowling** - Shore Lanes, Palm Bay 2pm - 4pm Come out and join us. \$3.00 including shoes
(3rd Saturday of each Month)

** Contact Jackie Yearby for more details

2011
Happy New Year!

Wishing You a Year Filled with Hope & Promise

How To Show Love To an Autistic Child

One of the most pervasive myths that surround autism is that a child who has it will never show affection and can't accept getting affection from anyone. There have been literally piles of stories of parents taking their child to a psychologist and the doctor telling the parents that your child can't possibly be autistic because he gives you a hug now and then. While this opinion is just flat wrong, studies have shown that autistic children do process sensory touch differently than a non-autistic child and that this is where the myth that autistic children don't like to be touched comes from.

Autism and the way it affects kids really runs the gamut from light to severe. An excellent point to remember when dealing with an autistic child is that every single autistic child is different and will react to almost everything differently. Here are some tips for showing your autistic child affection, and remember, your experience may vary.

Trial and error. For some kids with more severe autism, a simple, random hug can be sensory overload. They can become agitated, upset and even violent if they are touched without prior warning. You will probably need to have a trial and error approach when it comes to hugging and touching your autistic child. Some methods may be responded to in a positive way, other ways won't be. You just have to try and see.

Let the child come to you. If you think your autistic child needs a hug, instead of rushing into his personal space and just taking one, speak to the child, bend down to his/her level and open your arms. Smile and let the child know that they are loved and see what the response is. If they don't come running in for a hug, don't be offended, it may just not have been the right time for the child.

Try hand signals. If your child is too sensitive to hugs or touches to show affection, you can try positive reinforcement in addition to hand singles. Things like a simple thumbs up accompanied by a smile and some positive comments can let the child know they are loved and what they did was good. You can also offer the child a chance to hug during these situations and they might just take you up on it.

Make sure everyone is on the same page. If you, the parents, are starting to make progress on getting your autistic child to be more affectionate, you don't need a sibling, teacher or grandparent who doesn't know or understand your child's boundaries messing up all of your hard work. If you've begun to implement an affection program with your autistic child, make sure everyone who would possibly try to hug or touch him/her knows the rules. Consistency and repetition are crucial to autistic kids, and this applies to a situation like this, as well.

Trying to figure out a puzzling condition like autism can be a lifelong challenge. For many parents, the affection issue may be the biggest. But with patience and learning to go by the child's cues and not your own, you will be able to connect with your child in a deep and meaningful way.

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♥ H A P P Y ♥
 VALENTINES DAY

Treatments & Therapies

A Nikken Wellness Home: Real Solutions to Today's Lifestyle Challenges

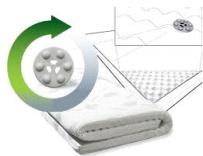
Your home is your castle, your safe haven, your place to rest, relax, restore and refresh. Now, you can produce a nurturing place to offer solutions for your family health issues, stress reduction, WiFi and cellular toxicity, environmental wellness and a balanced lifestyle.



A Nikken Wellness Home is an unsurpassed environment for creating and raising healthy children. Nikken, a world leader in wellness technology for 35 years,

brings together a set of technologies and prevention strategies that invite the benefits of the natural world into your home. Nikken's Wellness Home understands that good health depends on a balanced lifestyle. The company's philosophy is about protecting people from 21st century influences that jeopardize their well-being. Nikken provides creative ways to build health every day through stress-reduction and products that keep people well.

Nikken promotes wellness through a comprehensive line of products including three major aspects of daily living: sleep, air and water, supporting a healthier lifestyle.



Better Sleep for Rejuvenation

A good night's sleep is an essential element for health. Children on the autism spectrum often don't get deep, regenerative

REM sleep. Even if your child does not get up and roam in the middle of the night, So far, my family has benefited in some way- sleeping deeper, less insomnia, less stiffness/pain, feeling more rested in the morning, more energy all day, less or no snoring, and/or less likely to get sick. Deep restorative sleep helps the body repair itself. Obviously I'm not going to tell you that a Nikken sleep system will fix all of your sleep problems. Those are medical claims reserved for doctors, and I'm not a doctor.

Nikken combines earth (magnetic) energy, sun (far infrared) energy and ionic technology to create deep relaxation and rejuvenation. The Kenko Naturest™ Sleep System's three pieces are scientifically designed for a deeply restful sleep experience in a cocoon of soothing energy, replicating the conditions of the natural environment.

The Kenko Naturest™ Mattress Topper – with massaging dual-density design, in all bed sizes, with memory foam provide support and alignment to body contours reduces formation of pressure points, built-in ventilation promotes free flow of air. The cover is a

weave of 100% certified-organic cotton without chemical fertilizers or pesticides-allows maximum breath ability.

The Kenko™ Dream Comforter – encloses you fully in the cocoon of energy, breathable and temperature regulating, Far Infrared technology reflects natural energy to keep you warm and release excess heat to keep you cool.

The Kenko Naturest™ Custom Pillow – conform perfectly to any desired degree of firmness, internal support collar to provide head and neck alignment. The cover is a weave of 100% certified-organic cotton without chemical fertilizers or pesticides-allows maximum breathability.



Better Air for Breathing

Children spend 90% of the time indoors, where air pollution is highest, and more than 65% of that time is spent at home. Our homes are full of harmful chemicals (household cleaning products, solvents, insecticides, herbicides, disinfectants), natural allergens (dust, fibers, odors, per dander, molds, and mildews), and construction and furniture materials (lead, formaldehyde, volatile organic compounds, adhesives, finishes, paints, vinyls, and more). Because our homes are designed to be very air tight, it is important that we take extra steps to ensure the quality of air.

The Environmental Protection Agency lists poor indoor air quality as the fourth largest environmental threat to our country. Childhood asthmas have increased by 400% and cancer is the leading cause of death in children ages 5-9. Unfortunately, there are thousands of new chemicals introduced to our environment each year and only a small percentage have even been tested for carcinogenic properties. Health effects may show up either years after exposure has occurred or only after long or repeated periods of exposure.

The Nikken Air Wellness Power5 Pro features five filtration stages. One filter cannot do it all. Here is what each is designed to do: The Prefilter/Mesh removes larger particles of dust, mold, pollen, dirt, mildew and more. It is important to trap these large particles early to prolong the filter life. Third, Oranigc Neutralizing filter contains a plant material that attracts, retains, inactivates and destroys microscopic containants. Fourth, Activated Carbon Filter is highly effective method of reducing contaminants. Less than a teaspoon of activated carbon will clean the size of a football field- now that is powerful. Last a HEPA filter stands for high efficiency particulate air and is used in operating rooms, laboratories, etc. Don't be confused by HEPA-like filter, it is not a HEPA filter. Be sure to get a Certified HEPA filter which will remove very small particles (3/10ths of a micrometer if you care). This will filter at 99.97% efficiency, and a patented system for producing stress-reducing negative ions. The Energy Star



Better Water for Drinking and Bathing

Water is the essence of life. More than 70% of your body, brain is 75-85% water, and your blood is 50% water.

Water is so important to all functions of your body and your cells, without water you will die. Water helps maintain key bodily functions-circulation, assimilation, digestion, elimination of toxins, metabolism, and temperature control-plus, it gives you energy! Chronic dehydration is a big problem and it's signals: Sinus, allergies, breathing problems, Joint and back, neck, knee pain, obesity and digestive problems, Headaches, heart problems, high cholesterol and high blood pressure, sleep disorders, depression, brain dysfunction. Want to make a big improvement in your overall health and energy? After all, it is not how much you drink that matters, it is how much your body absorbs.

Nikken's PiMag™ Water Filters alkalinize, remove contaminants AND replace lost minerals, creating delicious hydrating water. After filtering, using the PiMag Optimizer further energizes, oxygenates and mineralizes PiMag water, making it even more hydrating. Eliminate the unsustainable practice of buying bottled water; PiMag water costs only pennies per gallon.



Our skin is the largest organ in our body. Avoid bathing in chlorinated water with the PiMag™ Ultra Shower System which neutralizes chlorine, reducing it up to 90%, without adding chemicals. A superfine filter reduces a wide range of other contaminants. The showerhead has five settings.

News! I am offering a 20% discount on the Nikken Sleep system packs

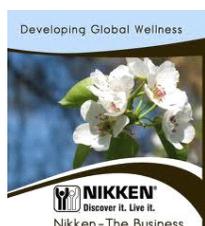
for the month of January. The packs are already a great value at 10% less the individual items. A Nikken Wellness Home can change lives, create wellness, and contain costs!

We offer free assessments for individuals, family's, and corporate solutions for performance and rejuvenation, the environment, improving your health and enhancing energy levels.

For questions: Angelique Edelen 321-327-3268, and mention you read about Nikken in "Angels Bridging Gaps" and receive a 10% discount on all other products.

To learn more and order:

www.nikken.com/edelen ,
www.3yearstofreedom.com ,
www.bonejointheath.info



Helping Children with Autism

Autism Treatment Strategies and Parenting Tips

There are many things parents can do to help children with autism overcome their challenges and get the most of life. From learning all you can about autism spectrum disorders to getting your child into treatment right away, you can make a big difference.

It's also important to make sure you get the support you need. When you're looking after a child with autism, taking care of yourself is not an act of selfishness—it's a necessity. Being emotionally strong allows you to be the best parent you can be to your child in need. Read on to learn how to choose effective treatments for your child, and where to look for support. Plus, you'll also find parenting tips to help make daily home life with an autistic kid easier.

A parent's guide to autism treatment and support

If you've recently learned that your child has or might have an autism spectrum disorder, you're probably wondering and worrying about what comes next. No parent is ever prepared to hear that a child is anything other than happy and healthy, and a diagnosis of autism can be particularly frightening. You may be unsure about how to best help your child or confused by conflicting treatment advice. Or you may have been told that autism is an incurable, lifelong condition, leaving you concerned that nothing you do will make a difference.

While it is true that autism is not something a person simply "grows out of," there are many treatments that can help children learn new skills and overcome a wide variety of developmental challenges. From free government services to in-home behavioral therapy and school-based programs, assistance is available to meet your child's special needs. With the right treatment plan, and a lot of love and support, your child can learn, grow, and thrive.

Don't wait for a diagnosis

As the parent of a child with autism or related developmental delays, the best thing you can do is to start treatment right away. Seek help as soon as you suspect something's wrong. Don't wait to see if your child will catch up later or outgrow the problem. Don't even wait for an official diagnosis. The earlier children with autism spectrum disorders get help, the greater their chance of treatment success. Early intervention is the most effective way to speed up your child's development and reduce the symptoms of autism.

When your child has autism: Tips for parents

- Learn about autism. The more you know about autism spectrum disorders, the better equipped you'll be to make informed decisions for your child. Educate yourself about the treatment options, ask questions, and participate in all treatment decisions.

- Become an expert on your child. Figure out what triggers your kid's "bad" or disruptive behaviors and what elicits a positive response. What does your autistic child find stressful? Calming? Uncomfortable? Enjoyable? If you understand what affects your child, you'll be better at troubleshooting problems and preventing situations that cause difficulties.

- Accept your child, quirks and all. Rather than focusing on how your autistic child is different from other children and what he or she is "missing," practice acceptance. Enjoy your kid's special quirks, celebrate small successes, and stop comparing your child to others. Feeling unconditionally loved and accepted will help your child more than anything else.

- Don't give up. It's impossible to predict the course of an autism spectrum disorder. Don't jump to conclusions about what life is going to be like for your child. Like everyone else, people with autism have an entire lifetime to grow and develop their abilities.

Helping children with autism tip 1: Provide structure and safety

Learning all you can about autism and getting involved in treatment will go a long way toward helping your child. Additionally, the following tips will make daily home life easier for both you and your autistic child:

Be consistent. Children with autism have a hard time adapting what they've learned in one setting (such as the therapist's office or school) to others, including the home. For example, your child may use sign language at school to communicate, but never think to do so at home. Creating consistency in your child's environment is the best way to reinforce learning. Find out what your child's therapists are doing and continue their techniques at home. Explore the possibility of having therapy take place in more than one place in order to encourage your child to transfer what he or she has learned from one environment to another. It's also important to be consistent in the way you interact with your child and deal with challenging behaviors.

Stick to a schedule. Children with autism tend to do best when they have a highly-structured schedule or routine. Again, this goes back to the consistency they both need and crave. Set up a schedule for your child, with regular times for meals, therapy, school, and bedtime. Try to keep disruptions to this routine to a minimum. If there is an unavoidable schedule change, prepare your child for it in advance.

Reward good behavior. Positive reinforcement can go a long way with children with autism, so make an effort to "catch them doing something good."

Praise them when they act appropriately or learn a new skill, being very specific about what behavior they're being praised for. Also look for other ways to reward them for good behavior, such as giving them a sticker or letting them play with a favorite toy.

Create a home safety zone. Carve out a private space in your home where your child can relax, feel secure, and be safe. This will involve organizing and setting boundaries in ways your child can understand. Visual cues can be helpful (colored tape marking areas that are off limits, labeling items in the house with pictures). You may also need to safety proof the house, particularly if your child is prone to tantrums or other self-injurious behaviors.

Helping children with autism tip 2: Find nonverbal ways to connect

Connecting with a child with autism can be challenging, but you don't need to talk in order to communicate and bond. You communicate by the way you look at your child, the way you touch him or her, and by the tone of your voice and your body language. Your child is also communicating with you, even if he or she never speaks. You just need to learn the language.

Look for nonverbal cues. If you are observant and aware, you can learn to pick up on the nonverbal cues that children with autism use to communicate. Pay attention to the kinds of sounds they make, their facial expressions, and the gestures they use when they're tired, hungry, or want something. Figure out the need behind the tantrum. It's only natural to feel upset when you are misunderstood or ignored, and it's no different for children with autism. When children with autism act out, it's often because you're not picking up on their nonverbal cues. Throwing a tantrum is their way communicating their frustration and getting your attention.

Make time for fun. A child coping with autism is still a kid. For both children with autism and their parents, there needs to be more to life than therapy. Schedule playtime when your child is most alert and awake. Figure out ways to have fun together by thinking about the things that make your child smile, laugh, and come out of their shell. Your child is likely to enjoy these activities most if they don't seem therapeutic or educational. There are tremendous benefits that result from your enjoyment of your child's company and from your child's enjoyment of spending unpressured time with you. Play is an essential part of learning and shouldn't feel like work.

Pay attention to your child's sensory sensitivities. Many children with autism are hypersensitive to light, sound, touch, taste, and smell. Other children with autism are "under-sensitive" to sensory stimuli. Figure out what sights, sounds, smells, movements, and tactile sensations trigger your kid's "bad" or disruptive behaviors and what elicits a positive response. What does your autistic child find stressful? Calming? Uncomfortable? Enjoyable? If you understand what affects your child, you'll be better at troubleshooting problems, preventing situations that cause difficulties, and creating successful experiences.

Resource: http://helpguide.org/mental/autism_help.htm