

# BBB AUTISM/AUTISM SOCIETY ONTARIO (YORK REGION CHAPTER)

PRESENT

## THE E-NEWS

[http://www.bbbautism.com/about\\_bbb.htm](http://www.bbbautism.com/about_bbb.htm)

# SUMMER CRISIS!

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### SUMMER SURVIVAL TIPS

by BBB Autism member Lynn

>>Summer, a time meant for fun and adventure for children, can be the most stressful time of the year for a child with autism who requires routine to make life easier. It has been my experience that the first two weeks of summer vacation can be an excruciating experience for both child and parents if there aren't a few survival steps taken. My son, who turns 11 this summer, was not diagnosed with HFA until last year but I have had to learn these tricks before then just to make it through the summer.

The thing I noticed the most over the course of the first 3 years of my son's schooling life was that he struggled with the early summer. I couldn't figure out why that was until I heard him one day saying..."It's Tuesday today, if I was in school I would have library and gym class in the morning and then after lunch it is silent reading and Language Arts." That was like being hit on the head with a brick! " Hello Mom! I am missing knowing what to expect from each day. Please tell me what we are going to do!"

So we sat down that afternoon with a calendar, paper, pens and coupons for free admissions and set to work on a schedule. First we started with putting down the days and times that mom and dad work and who was looking after them when both parents were working. Then we put down on the calendar the days that we were going camping and where we would be. Next we looked at the free admission to local attraction coupons handed out at school and put down which days we would go to these attractions. (Note: after the first year I realized that I needed to have back up dates in case of rain already laid out otherwise I didn't hear the end of it!) Then we looked at the days individually and set out an hour by hour routine for each day. For example:

Tuesday:

- 8am - up and dressed, make bed, get breakfast
- 8:30- 9:30 - watch cartoons
- 9:30 to 11 - go for a walk around the park
- 11- 12 - play outside in the yard
- 12 -1- lunch
- 1 - 2 reading
- 2- 3 computer time

and so on until bedtime. Now living in BC requires that we have rainy day back up plans. What we do is that we make up pages for each day. At the top of one side there is a sunshine picture with the sunny day schedule and on the top of the other side is a cloud with rain picture with the rainy day schedule. My son takes the paper for the day and sticks it

to the fridge so he can refer to it during the day.

It takes discipline on my part to make sure I am able keep the schedule but it sure has changed our summer atmosphere! My son is far more relaxed and enjoys the summer!

Another tip I have found works well is giving my son some added summer time responsibility. He is in charge of watering the garden and takes this responsibility very seriously.

I tell my son social stories about what he can expect when we go to an activity or when we go camping so that he knows what to expect and doesn't worry about it. This helps bring down the stress levels on "activity" days.

These are just a few of the things that I have learned to do over the course of the last few years. They have worked for me and I no longer have the high levels of stress over the summer months! I hope that your summer is fun and stress free!

Lynn<<

## Member Tip: Surviving Your Summer - Laying a good foundation

*by BBB Autism member*

*Becca Lynn*

>>Every fall when a new group of students arrive in the classroom even really nice sweet teachers try to start out tough.

Why?

Because being tough right from the get go makes it easier to have a softer gentler atmosphere later....

I notice the same thing with my children and bringing them all into the house for summer vacation. If I crack down really hard at the start with rules and follow up on those rules then August is far more gentle and relaxed.....

The worst possible thing is to threaten, yell or not follow up with a consequence. That just makes me madder but doesn't stop the behavior. So I crack down hard right away.....

Seems to work well around here anyways.....

Becca Lynn : ) (On summer vacation crack down....)<<

## Chris's Corner

*(regular contributions by BBB member Chris)*

### Author Spotlight: Charles Hart

In searching for information on the topic of autism, we often look for those most experienced in the trenches for guidance and advice. As the parent of an adult son with autism and the legal guardian for his twenty year older brother with autism, Charles Hart is indeed experienced. In his unique role, he offers a wealth of knowledge in his two books, "*A Parent's Guide to Autism*" and "*Without Reason*".

The first book, "*A Parent's Guide to Autism*" is in a question and answer format that answers those many questions

we have upon receiving a diagnosis. It covers causes, therapies, medications, diets, education, and most importantly, where to turn for help.

His second offering "*Without Reason*" chronicling his life as a sibling and as a father to someone with autism is by far one of the best insights into the advances in how we deal with autism. In his comparisons of brother and son, he offers us a view of what early interventions, new teaching methods, and the importance of loving, accepting parents in this equation. It is a true testament of what is achievable with persistence and respect for our individuals with autism.

He also offers invaluable teaching methods that motivated his son.

*"A Parent's Guide to Autism"* is a general handbook for parents and *"Without Reason"* gives the very personal story of some of those examples in action.

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## Kid's Corner

*by Chris*

For some fine motor skills activities and lots of fun too, take the kids fishing!!! In a child's swimming pool, or even a plastic container add water and tint it blue. Add some colorful rubber worms( used for fishing, or even gummies if you want to eat them!) to the water. For those of our kids who will shirk at the idea of touching these, provide tongs for capturing those squirmy worms. Have them sort them according to color, size, type, etc. Any aquatic creatures will do! Use your imaginations, and don't forget try some frogs!!!

## FEATURED ARTICLE

### Summer Vacation

*by Stuart Janousky, MD*

As I write this article, my children are only two weeks shy of their school term ending.

Gone are the thoughts of studying for tests, keeping grades up, or anything remotely related to education.

At this time of year, my normally responsible children turn into entirely different creatures. These creatures are governed by a sophisticated system that allows them to function on autopilot. They go to school, but manage not to absorb anything. Their brains become highly focused and can only concentrate on one subject: Summer Vacation.

Interestingly enough, this time of year also causes a similar shift in parental behavior. We too are focusing on summer vacation, but for entirely different reasons. We choose to focus on the anxiety provoking issues:

- What do we do with our darlings now that school is over?
- Should they stay home or attend summer camp?
- How do I evaluate a summer program?
- Where can I find good childcare?

If you are the parent of a special needs child, summer can present an even greater challenge. Not all programs have the facilities to accept a child with a disability, and sadly, not all programs feel comfortable in attempting to

meet the needs of these children.

So where you do begin?

In my opinion, the best place to start planning your child's summer is with your child.

School aged children can be quite verbal about their likes and dislikes. While you may think that opera camp is a once in a lifetime experience, your child may have a very different opinion on the subject. A family meeting can do wonders for reducing stress.

The next step is to gather information. In Orlando, our local newspaper publishes a directory of summer programs. Our local mall also hosts a camp fair. If your city does not have these resources available, there are many other options. Check with your child's school or your place of worship. Many times these facilities will, either know of, or host summer programs. If your area has a college, museum, or art facility, this may be another summer option.

If you are new to an area, word of mouth may be an excellent way to find a summer camp. Ask your neighbors, or child's classmates where they go for the summer. Some of our best leads have come from friends or acquaintances.

As the parent of a special needs child, we have also found valuable resources through local organizations. This summer, our youngest will have the opportunity to attend summer camp through our local autism society. The camp will also include typical peers. We feel comfortable because we know that this camp will give our son the ability to spread his wings in a safe structured environment. We also know that the staff is professionally trained to meet the needs of children with autism. To us, the peace of mind is priceless.

After you and your child have waded through the information and narrowed down the list, the time has come to thoroughly check out each program. Here are several questions to keep in mind:

- Is the facility licensed?
- How do you screen your staff?
- Do you do background checks?
- What is the child/counselor ratio?
- Are meals and snacks provided?
- What does a typical day consist of?
- Is there any flexibility to the schedule?
- Are there any trips?
- How do you accommodate special needs: Food allergies, disabilities, etc.?
- How do you handle emergencies?
- Are you affiliated with any organizations?
- Will the camp provide references?
- Is before and after care available?

Don't be afraid to ask too many questions. Your sanity and your child's safety are the most important priorities. A good program will welcome your input. Most importantly, trust your instincts. If a program doesn't feel right to you, walk away and find another camp.

The next step is to match up a program with your own family's schedule and finances. Our boys often have to attend separate camps because of their differing ages and abilities. As a result, we have had to pass up on many wonderful programs because we had to be at different camps at the same time. In the same respect, we have also had to inform our older son that we found six hundred dollars a wee bit too much to spend for one week of camp.

As you can see, summertime calls for a radical shift in scheduling strategy. It often requires far more planning, because not all summer programs run for the whole summer. My own children's schedule often resembles a jigsaw

puzzle: two weeks at art camp, a week at karate camp, and so on. We spend the entire summer wallpapered in bright yellow sticky notes in an effort to keep each child's schedule straight. For us, the effort is worth it because our kids are happy. We have respected their needs without sacrificing the needs of the family. Who could ask for anything more?

## Our Favorite Links

[BBB Autism Web Site](http://www.bbbautism.com/) *http://www.bbbautism.com/*

[\*BBB Autism Online Support Network\*](#)

### CAMPS/RESPITE

[Therapy/Respite Camps for Kids](#)

[Speech and Language Summer Camps in Ontario](#)

[Developmental Disability Camps](#)

[Camp Winston \(Ontario\)](#)

[ACAP Summer Program \(Portland, Oregon\)](#)

[Disabled Summer Camps](#)

[Summer Fun Pages: Special Needs Programs](#)

## ARTICLES

**[Why ADHD Kids Need Summer](#)**

**[Summer Programs for Children with Special Needs](#)**

**[Preventing Heat Stress in Children and Adolescents](#)**

**[How to Survive Summer](#)**

**[Summer Survival](#)**

**[School's Out](#)**

## SUMMER/RAINY DAY ACTIVITIES

**[Check out your local weather here](#)**

**[Summer Vacation Playground: Family Education.com](#)**

**[Travelling With Kids](#)**

**[Family Crafts and Coloring Pages](#)**

**[Paper Bag Grass Skirt](#)**

**[July Special Days](#)**

**[Enjoying Stress-free Summer Activities](#)**

**[Tropical Fun: Leis and Grass Skirts](#)**

**[Candy Lei](#)**

**[Coloring Pages of the World - Polynesia](#)**

**[Craft Project Sheet](#)**

**[Silk Flower Lei](#)**

**[How to Enjoy Disney World with your ASD Child](#) (scroll down the table of contents, look under Editorials)**

**[Camping](#)**

**[Summer Links](#)**

**[The Learning Page - Free E-books!](#)**

**[Celebrate July](#)**

**[101 Family Activities](#)**

**ETC...**

**[Body Blocker](#)**

**[Hot Summer Movies](#)**

**[Busy Cooks \(recipes for pot luck parties\)](#)**

Please send all submission to Liz at [elkowen@deaknet.com](mailto:elkowen@deaknet.com)

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Volume 1; Issue 1 - WELCOME ISSUE!

**Attention: Upcoming Specialty Chats:**

**Spousal Issues!**

**Thursday, July 12 at 1:30pm and 8:30pm, est**

**Monday, July 16 at 9:00pm, est and**

**Tuesday, July 17 at 3:00pm, est**

**To convert these times to your own time zone, click [here](#).**

**ALL ARE WELCOME TO THESE CHATS!**

**Enter our chat room by clicking [here](#).**

**coming soon: "How to Set Up a Home Program"**

**BBBAUTISM ONLINE SUPPORT NETWORK**  
<http://www.bbbautism.com>

A notice to our readers...

The founders of this newsletter and the BBB Autism support network are not physicians.

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