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BBB AUTISM SUPPORT NETWORK/  
AUTISM SOCIETY ONTARIO (YORK REGION CHAPTER)

**PRESENT**  
**THE E-NEWS**

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# NEW WAYS TO TEACH OLD FAVORITES

Volume 7; Issue 2

September 26, 2002

Hi everyone!

ABA, IBI and various other behavioral programs are very popular right now, particularly in Ontario, where an exciting governmental initiative made it possible for some of our preschoolers with autism to experience some exemplary behavioral programs. Some parents have been implementing home ABA/IBI programs for years particularly after the publication of Catherine Maurice's "Let Me Hear Your Voice", and her follow up manual "Behavioral Interventions for Young Children with Autism".

Whether you use behavioral teaching in your home or not, many of us have attempted to teach certain academic and self-help skills at different times to our kids. My son tends to thrive when we are careful to have regular maintenance sessions, but these can become boring with a result of tantrums and low scores.

This issue takes some very basic programs and adds a few twists to them to keep things interesting. This also helps with generalization; learning a skill in a variety of ways is a great way to bring what your child has learned into everyday life.

You don't have to even believe in ABA to use these, they are fun games to use as a sneaky way to promote learning. If you have typically developing preschoolers, they are very appropriate as well.

We are also going to discuss a new way to deal with self-restrictive eaters. This was also an issue in our house for years, culminating in an alarming set of behaviors this past spring. Our mediator, Aliya, came up with a great idea that has worked wonders and I want to share it with you in the hopes you'll find it helpful too!

Our wonderful readers have contributed some great strategies in "Cool Ideas for Teaching Children on the Spectrum"; we owe another debt of thanks to them!

I hope you enjoy our ideas, once again, I owe thanks to my team; Aliya, Lisa, Wendy, and Zeenat, along with our wonderful parent contributors!



Bee Cool,

Liz

**COMING SOON: BBB PARENT GUIDE - "GUIDE TO VACCINES IN ONTARIO" WRITTEN FOR PARENTS BY PARENTS. REQUEST YOUR COPY BY EMAILING [liz@deaknet.com](mailto:liz@deaknet.com).**

### "Fishing for Numbers":

**Materials needed:** 1 Chopstick, self adhesive magnet sheets or rolls, paperclips, numbers (we used foam numbers from a bath puzzle, but you can use PECS or any other materials you have). Note: Instead of using magnets and paper clips, you can use both sides of a piece of Velcro.

- Attach magnet (or 1 side of Velcro) to end of chopstick - this is your rod (if child has good fine motor, you could make a more sophisticated rod)
- Attach paperclips (or other side of Velcro) to numbers.

**Set Up:** Have numbers in either groups, isolation or all together laid out; give 'rod' to student.

**Sd (or verbal instruction):** "Fish for Number \_\_\_\_"

Student follows direction using prompts (if necessary).

Remember, you are not teaching the directive "Fish For", so if the student needs a prompt to 'fish' it should not be marked as incorrect. You'll be amazed at how quickly many kids pick this up, though.

### "Wheel of Clothing":

**Materials needed:** Big Foam Board cut in shape of a circle. More foam board in a contrasting colour cut out as an arrow. Split (butterfly) pin. PCS or photos of clothing (laminated), Velcro.

- Make a big "clock" out of the circular board by attaching the arrow in the middle with the split pin.
- Arrange one side of Velcro circularly at the outer rim of circle (i.e. where the numbers would go on a clock face)
- Put other side of Velcro on each picture of clothing

Ensure when attaching clothing that the location doesn't interfere with the spinning of the arrow. If this happens, cut the arrow a fraction shorter.

**Set Up:** Place 'clothing' on corresponding pieces on Velcro on clock face.

**Sd (or verbal instruction):** "Spin for \_\_\_\_"

Student follows direction using prompts (if necessary).

Remember, you aren't teaching the directive "Spin for", so mark accordingly.

### "Find the Alphabet":

**Materials needed:** Film canisters (most photo labs recycle these, so you can get them free of charge), Velcro, Alpha PCS

- Place reinforcers in one canister, keeping track of which canister they are in
- Stick one side of Velcro on lids of canisters, the other on the letters
- Place letters on canister lids, the letter you are teaching goes on the canister where you've hidden the reinforcers



**Set Up:** Place canisters with letters on them on table between mediator and student.

**Sd (or verbal instruction):** “Find the letter \_\_\_\_” (when student finds correct letter, say “Open” and allow them to retrieve treat)

Student follows direction using prompts (if necessary).

Remember, you aren’t teaching the directive “Find the letter” or “Open”, so mark accordingly.

### **"Hot Jumpers (colours)":**

**Materials needed:** Sheets of construction paper in different colours.

**Set Up:** Place colours on the floor

**Sd (or verbal instructions):** “Jump on \_\_\_\_\_”

Student follows direction using prompts (if necessary).

Remember, you aren’t teaching the directive “Jump on”, so mark accordingly.

### **"Sponge Squeezers (shapes)":**

**Materials needed:** Thin sponges, sharp scissors, shallow bowls, and water

**Note:** This is best performed at kitchen table; it can be a little messy!

- cut shapes out of sponges
- put shapes in bowls with just enough water added so the sponges soak it up

**Set Up:** Put bowls with sponges on table within reach of student

**Sd (or verbal instructions):** “Squeeze \_\_\_\_\_”

Student follows direction using prompts (if necessary).

Remember, you aren’t teaching the directive “Squeeze”, so mark accordingly.

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All of the above can be changed around, for example, you can do “Sponge Squeezer Numbers”, “Find the Shape”, Wheel of Colours”, etc. Use your imagination to come up with more ideas. We use these to keep maintenance and daily review from getting boring. We schedule each program (using a different method) for each week and rotate weekly. If one program goes over really well, we take it out of circulation and save for the more challenging days!

Please remember to keep art supplies out of the reach of children; also, these programs are more effective if they are not available any time the child wants them.

### **SCHEDULING:**

If you do have a home program, you are going to want to rotate your games. An example would be:

- ✓ Week #1:
  - ◇ Fishing for COLOURS
  - ◇ NUMBER Hot Jumpers
  - ◇ Sponge Squeezing SHAPES
  - ◇ Find the ALPHABET
  - ◇ Wheel of CLOTHING
- ✓ Week #2



- ◇ Fishing for CLOTHING
  - ◇ ALPHA Hot Jumpers
  - ◇ Sponge Squeezing NUMBERS
  - ◇ Find the COLOURS
  - ◇ Wheel of SHAPES
- Keep rotating!

## A NEW WAY TO APPROACH EATING DIFFICULTIES

By Liz

My son was severely self-restricting in food choices. It became evident that the medications he was taking had turned him off certain foods and the situation became alarming. We eventually noticed that, while he would eat a variety of reinforcers during programming, he would not do this at the dining room table. We began introducing new foods (crackers, rice, wieners, chicken, fruit etc) during programming times as reinforcers and he accepted them with enthusiasm!

After he accepted a new food, we would immediately introduce it as part of a meal during lunch or dinner and this worked! We have been able to increase his repertoire of foods very quickly in this manner and mealtime is not nearly the struggle it used to be!

## COOL IDEAS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN ON THE SPECTRUM

By Parent Contributors

**I haven't tried this but I've heard about...**

by Lucy

...video self-modeling. This is where you film the child doing different steps of something you want them to be able to accomplish then through creative editing you make it look as if the child is already doing it. They can watch the video tape and see themselves being successful at the task. Sounds like it would be very reinforcing to me. I heard of a family that did this with toilet training with success.

**shoe lace tying**

by Khris

We are working on shoe tying right now, and we found a neat book called The Helpful Shoelace that really "did it" for J. There are pictures to lace on each page (therefore increasing hand and finger strength) and it finished with a shoe to lace and tie.

**Ideas**

by Juli



Because N can/likes to read we use words a lot. This way it removes the prompt/reminder/discipline from us and sort of makes him in charge of it in a way. I write on my kitchen cupboards with washable crayon, right now it says "I will not yell or scream". Diana was here on the weekend and thought it was a message for me! It also says "The fair is on Thursday" just things like that so when N gets obsessive about something and says it 3,000 times or worse - asks 5,000 times - I have the cupboards to which I can direct him. We also have a daily planner but I don't like the format, will probably make my own for him since I can't find the perfect one.

It's a matter of finding a strength and then using it, building on it, etc.

### **Bubbles and speech**

by Lisa

I found this little technique to help my son practice some sounds, like P, B, T etc. I blow some bubbles, catch it on the wand and then say the letter making the bubble move a bit until he pops it. I continue with the same letter each bubble blowing session till he can master it himself. So far he's actually learned the word bubble and pop.

### **Fun way to practice handwriting**

by Lisa

The other night I found D struggling though his practice homework for printing his name. I knew he loved anything to do with cars. So, I had him imagine each letter as a track, and then he was driving his pencil in the shape of a letter. For instance I'd say "OK, D, let's make an E track, zoommm zoom, it's comin' around the curve, now the end of the track makes a loop". I know it sounds silly, but it got his attention and he found it fun. 😊

### **Cool new ways....**

by Becca

Well I don't know about cool new ways but I have a few tried and true methods I used in M's program. I'll try to break down the concepts into smaller sizes.

1. Learning to listening to a book. Since she was incapable of listening to a book I gave her control over the process either through video or a tape recorder. These ways of delivery not only had complete consistency to the sounds and patterns but she had complete control over starting, stopping, or repeating the book. After getting used to being read to in this manner she slowly was able to allow herself to be read to.

2. Using her obsessions to teach her various concepts and obtain her attention. For example she was obsessed with cards and labeling and repeating what she found on the card. This had been occurring since an extremely early age.

This made it possible to teach her all kinds of concepts through use of the flash card. Another



obsession was the calculator, her first toy. A great tool for teaching numbers and simple math as she was already focused on it.

The computer was again an excellent teaching tool as it brought out the obsessiveness. It was able to teach her reading and writing concepts as well as math.

3. Learning to Print. This was very difficult for her to accomplish on paper but I found our greatest tools were a stick and consistent white stuff falling from the sky. It was here in perhaps the non pressured context of the outdoors that she learned how to write and spell her own name... and mine.

4. Song... rhythm and consistency of voice. She was attracted to a pattern which one could follow because it was consistent. For instance rhyming would grab her attention, get her to listen to your words, meet your eyes and become socially engaged. A song which she was attracted to could teach her new concepts by changing just some of the lines.

An added bonus of the songs was when she began to sing in the bathtub she would experiment with the lines herself. I was amazed and had difficulty convincing others that she did have an imagination.

5. Repetition. Moving her through the same action over and over though she might seem completely unaware of what was going on while repeating rhythmically and robotically a description of what she was doing.

My purpose as well as introducing her to language was to help her to orient herself in this consistency, become aware of herself in relation to her environment, and eventually connect. So much comfort did she apparently find in what became rituals for us that even now she remembers and wants me to do the same when she is feelings in need of this safety.

6. Social connection. The most essential element of helping her obtain a sense of social connection came from "active listening." This meant doing as she did... her verbal utterances, her rituals, and her obsessions. Another word for this is mirroring.

With my daughter this mirroring eventually led to her being aware of me. After some time I could change some element of my own behavior while still keeping her engaged. I would also aid and abet her own obsessions making myself a necessary element of her obsessions. This way I could eventually guide, control and use her obsessions to teach and socialize her.

For example one such activity involved Winnie the Pooh and the entire family. We actively encouraged her obsessiveness and repetitive video watching concerning pooh. We bought her Tigger and Winnie the Pooh stuffed animals and encouraged her to use little plastic piglets and kanga's to act out the movie.

She memorized it word for word repeating it everywhere that we went. I got a sense she used the movie as a reference point to order and understand her universe. For example every member in the



family would be addressed as a character in the movie.

Daddy was Tigger, her sister Piglet, one brother Eeyore, and I was Rabbit. Amazingly for a child who was and still is socially challenged she placed us each with the proper character identification. This allowed her to begin to connect with us and identify who we were.

Another way we utilized her video obsession was through acting out the video with her. My second-born son instigated this procedure. He got it in his head he could teach her to play and act out imaginative parts.

First he would follow my her lead as she acted out the video interjecting himself into her scenery as various characters. Then he started to take on a more active role and later changing little bits and pieces of the action.

Through this my youngest learned to model much of her imaginative play on a child with a voracious imagination. And by going into her world my son was able to connect with M before gradually leading her into his world.

As I said probably not new ways but these are some of the ways that worked for our youngest daughter based on sound psychological principles which is where I turned for answers when we first saw signs of Autism.

#### ENEWS BITES:

1. **“AUTISM FRIENDS:** ([www.autismfriends.com](http://www.autismfriends.com)) Come check out our 800+ links, shopping section fundraisers for parent run sites coming soon!) Family pages and our Community section for chats 5 days a week! Coming soon to Autism Friends! Parent tips, ponderings and wisdom!

Autism Friends is a Member supported website run by a parent. We are always looking for parent contributions! Book recommendations, photos, best links, personal stories, poems & artwork by our creative geniuses. Contact Tina at: [founder@autismfriends.com](mailto:founder@autismfriends.com). Tina”

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**2. THE GENEVA CENTRE announces: Geneva Centre International Symposium** is scheduled for October 23, 24, 25, 2002 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. The Symposium 2002 brochure has been mailed out and is available at <http://www.autism.net>. This year you have the option to register on-line; major discounts for early bird registrations. Also, for the first time, delegates from around the world can access 8 presentations of the International Symposium 2002 live through the Internet. Some presentations have special interest for adults on the autism spectrum.

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**3. Autism Children's Intervention Services Inc.** (<http://www.aciscanada.com/>) Grace Damouni, Director/Founder - 8171 Yonge Street, Suite 226, Thornhill ON, L3T 2C6, Tel 416. 219 2316, Fax 905. 832 3139 E-Mail: [Grace@aciscanada.com](mailto:Grace@aciscanada.com)

"Certified in PECS, Sensory Integration (went to Florida and took the course/lab with Pat Wilbarger), Greenspan's Early Infancy and Childhood course (Floortime/DIR), training in Lovaas, workshop in Handwriting Without Tears, degree in psychology and most importantly, many, (9) years of clinical work with children with PDD/Autism.

I work very closely with Dr. James Bebko of York University and Dr. Carolyn Lennox who are the consulting psychologists to ACIS.

I am proud to say our IBI program is very comprehensive as it includes collaboration with SLPs and OTs as well as the educational team. We help develop IEPs and provide trained shadows for classroom integration.

We do travel outside of the immediate catchments region (once every month or two depending on the time of year) to administer staff training, consultations, assessments and program development. We will travel to Guelph, Hamilton, Cambridge (for example) but only during certain times of the year. However, we do not provide ITs (mediators) to service this region although we can train staff that the family has already recruited. For parents who are not interested in hiring a "team" we can set up the programs/binder.

We do however, provide "teams" and oversee the program for our catchment region, which is Markham, Pickering, Aurora, Richmond Hill, Thornhill, North York, Maple, and Woodbridge. If families live within this region we can offer a "team" with full services (assessments, programs, supervision etc) and this ranges in price from \$20,000 and up depending on the treatment plan the family has in mind (we offer different plans). In this regard we are very flexible which I believe makes us unique-we customize plans so that we are able to take into consideration the families needs/expectations. *Grace Damouni, Director/Founder*"

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**4. Workshop Emphasizes Teaching Verbal Communication Skills to Children with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities** - Dr. Vince Carbone is a Board-certified Behaviour Analyst with over 25 years of experience designing learning environments for people with autism and developmental disabilities. He provides preparatory training and clinical consultation to certified behaviour analysts, teaches university courses, and consults with schools, agencies, and families. He is the developer and presenter of a series of workshops on teaching verbal behaviour (verbal communication skills) to children with autism.

Dr. Carbone will be conducting a 3 day intensive workshop "Teaching Communication Skills to Children with Autism and other Developmental Disabilities: Introduction to Verbal Behaviour" on **October 28, 29 & 30, 2002 in Oakville, Ontario**. The cost of the workshop is \$400.00 per person if registered prior to August 15, 2002 and \$425.00 per person after





August 15, 2002. The workshop is sponsored by Express Yourself Speech, Language and Communication Services. For more information please call 905-333-9730.

Participants in Dr. Carbone's workshop will learn (1) to conduct a Behavioural Language Assessment, (2) to select the most appropriate form of communication for a child, and (3) to identify the communication responses and supporting skills that should be taught first. He shares a special emphasis on teaching verbal behaviour to the most difficult to instruct learners.

Through methods of errorless teaching, specific quick-transfer procedures, and the use of discrete trial training Dr. Carbone has helped many children improve their communication skills. The natural environment and intensive teaching sessions are both employed during program implementation. Dr. Carbone's introductory workshop will provide parents, teachers, therapists, psychologists, and speech-language pathologists with practical information for program planning and implementation.

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5. ANNOUNCING Children's Residential Respite at Reena Commencing November 2002  
Families who have children with Autism Spectrum Disorder between the ages of 9 - 15 are invited to attend an information session When: Thursday September 19, 2002

Where: Toby & Henry Battle Developmental Centre, 927 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill  
Time: 7:00 pm

For further information and to RSVP, please call Brenda Rothenberg, Manager, Community Outreach (905) 889-2690 X 2226. Refreshments will be served.

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6. The Fall 2002 Training Institute on Autism Presented by Autism Society Ontario - Halton Chapter & H.A.R.T. Partnership Agencies of the Halton Autism Resource Team

Who should attend?

- Teachers
- Parents
- Early Childhood Educators
- Educational Assistants, SERTS
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Professionals providing service to children with autism/PDD

These workshops are FREE to current members of the ASO - Halton Chapter and Members of H.A.R.T.



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[www.bbbautism.com](http://www.bbbautism.com)

Also members of the Halton District Catholic School Board & The Halton District Educational Assistants Association. Non-Members: Each seminar is \$5.00, payable at the door. NO ADVANCED REGISTRATION

Web Site: <http://www.asohalton.org>

FOR INFORMATION ON THE GREAT WORKSHOPS BEING PRESENTED, EMAIL: ASO Halton Chapter at [asohalton@cogeco.ca](mailto:asohalton@cogeco.ca)!

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7. "Shirley Sutton's Sensory Strategies Workshop. For parents, teachers, and professionals working with children with sensory processing problems. Sat. Oct 5, 2002, Barrie, Ont. Registration deadline Sept 27. Parent \$50, Professional \$75 For more info contact Kathy Rudachyk 705-721-0187 or [clan.rudachyk@sympatico.ca](mailto:clan.rudachyk@sympatico.ca) or Shirley's website <http://shirleysutton.tripod.ca/>"

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8. Are you looking for an Educational Assistant to work with your son or daughter in primary school? Are you looking for someone who is patient, sensitive to children's needs and has first hand experience because of an autistic daughter herself? Well an occasional Educational Assistant is more than willing to take on this position. As well, for children with mild learning disabilities, I provide one on one tutoring in my home after school.

My experience as an Educational Assistant at Seneca College for a College Vocational Program has made it possible to look for employment in this field. As well, I am a past graduate from the Social Service Course with Ryerson Polytechnic Institute. References can be available upon request. For more information contact Rhonda Shlanger.

[rmshlanger@msn.com](mailto:rmshlanger@msn.com)

9. **Please Join Us Monday October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002 Wine and Cheese 'Evening in the Atrium'** with Margaret Spoelstra, Executive Director, Autism Society Ontario, Junior League of Toronto - North Geographic Group and York's New Regional Support Leaders in Celebration of October Awareness Month, Volunteer Recognition Official Opening of our New Offices and Resource Centre (Rooms 326 - 330, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor) At Loyal True Blue and Orange Home, 11181 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill All parents and professionals welcome! Please RSVP to voicemail 905-780-1590 or e-mail [liz@deaknet.com](mailto:liz@deaknet.com)

*Do you have an event, announcement, information or a request? Email us at [liz@deaknet.com](mailto:liz@deaknet.com) and we'll put it in an upcoming E-News issue. Email early to avoid disappointment! BBB Autism is not responsible for misrepresentations of persons or agencies utilizing this service. Due to the positive response we've had from this feature, we regret we are going to have to start limiting entries to no more than 50 words, plus one email address for each submission. This will be in effect next issue. Thanks for your cooperation! ☺*

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### BBB PARENT GUIDES

**CONTAIN PRACTICAL INFORMATION BY PARENTS FOR PARENTS Available on request, e-mail [liz@deaknet.com](mailto:liz@deaknet.com) and ask for: (also available in PDF format) NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE: OUR BBB GUIDES IN A PLAIN TEXT FORMAT SUITABLE FOR PRINTING. FIND THEM HERE:**  
[http://www.bbbautism.com/bbb\\_guides\\_contents.htm](http://www.bbbautism.com/bbb_guides_contents.htm)

1. Halloween
2. Epsom Salts (Calcium too) - expanded version
3. Epsom Salts - condensed version
4. Pros and Cons of telling your ASD child his/her diagnosis
5. How we advocate for our children
6. Guide to holidays and large family gatherings

A notice to our readers...

The editor of this newsletter and founder of the BBB Autism support club is not a physician.

This newsletter may reference books and other web sites that may be of interest to the reader. The editor/founder makes no presentation or warranty with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained on any of these web sites or in the books, and specifically disclaims any liability for any information contained on, or omissions from, these books or web sites. Reference to these web sites or books herein shall not be construed to be an endorsement of these web sites or books or of the information contained thereon, by the editor/founder.

The editor/founder reserves the right to make decisions as to whether contributions are appropriate with respect to content, length, etc. We will not publish offensive material using foul language, or contributions that are inflammatory or disrespectful to decisions by or beliefs of other parents (i.e. therapies). We do not **generally** accept contributions if they are ads for private service agencies/clinics. We are also unable to accept contributions after an issue has been completed. We reserve the right to edit content, but will inform you in advance if we are going to do this. ☺

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