



Accepting the Spectrum

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

by Brianna Agosta-Lawes, LMSW on April 28, 2022



This past month of April was celebrated as Autism Acceptance and Awareness Month. We also recognized World Autism Day on April 2nd to raise awareness of Autism and acceptance of people on the spectrum.

What is Autism? Defining Autism Spectrum Disorder can be challenging due to the diverse experiences and variations in the presentation of symptoms reported by Autistic people.

Clinically, ASD is defined as: **“A Neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by extreme difficulties in social communication and social interactions, restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviors, interests, and activities ; and symptoms that can interfere with daily living and/or learning”** (APA, 2022).

As providers, family members, and friends of individuals with ASD, it's essential to learn and understand from their perspective. The Autistic Self Advocacy Network, self described as “run by and for Autistic people”, provides direct insight into the experiences of Autistic adults including this description of ASD as: **“A developmental disability that affects how we experience the world around us. Autistic people are an important part of the world. Autism is a normal part of life, and makes us who we are.”** Read more on the ASAN website: [About Autism - Autistic Self Advocacy Network](#)

The typical world can be challenging for an Autistic child, often they struggle to find acceptance socially, yet when accommodations are made a child on the spectrum can thrive at home and in their community.

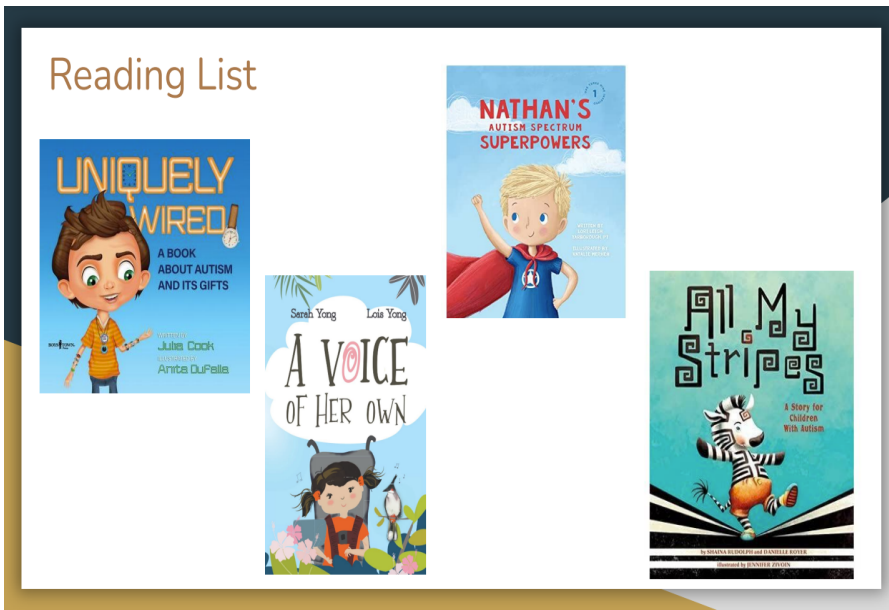
- ★ **Understand-** children on the spectrum socialize and communicate differently, they may have a lower tolerance for noise/smells/touch, enjoy specific interests more than others, follow specific routines, and often have difficulty understanding or expressing feelings and/or facial expressions.
- ★ **Advocate-** for accommodations, use of AAC devices and other alternative communication resources, speech/OT/PT services, policy changes.
- ★ **Accept-** the different ways children on the spectrum play, respond, look, move, and cope with the world around them.
- ★ **Support-** interests and needs through the use of routines, cues, calm language, social stories, and breaks from activities. Remember, children on the spectrum may have difficulty coping with unexpected changes and surprises, they may feel overwhelmed which can make it even harder to process their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
- ★ **Educate** family members and friends on how your child's autism impacts them and what they may need to succeed in social activities prior to events/outings/gatherings.



CT Walk for Autism Event by Autism Services & Resources Connecticut on May 22, 2022

This annual event raises funds for Autistic people and their families living in Connecticut and will host vendors for recreation and employment resources. The link below will take you to the ASRC registration website:

[2022 Walk and T Shirt Wall of Fame – ASRC](#)



Families, teachers, and advocates who support children on the spectrum may find it challenging to explain Autism to non-autistic people. Many families also struggle with explaining autism to non-autistic children; such as your child's peers, siblings, or other younger family members. Reading about diverse characters who introduce Autistic behaviors in a storybook format can help create awareness and acceptance of autistic children amongst their peers and family members. This brief reading list promotes diverse communication and different ways to socialize for all kids ages 3 y.o.-8 y.o.

Agency News:



Meet our new **Assistant Clinical Director**- Sandra "Sandy" Castellon is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA®) with over ten years of experience working in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis. She started working in the field while earning her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Florida International University. Next, Sandy earned her master's degree in both Applied Behavior Analysis and Organizational Behavior Management from the Florida Institute of Technology. Sandy is passionate about providing high-quality behavior analytic services to clients and stakeholders, creating efficient organizational processes, and training staff. Beyond being a stellar behavior analyst, Sandy enjoys spending time with her family and dogs, going to the movies, reading comics, hiking, and eating ice cream. Welcome to the team, Sandy!

Notes from the Author:

Families currently receiving services from Collaborative ABA Services LLC are encouraged to discuss the contents of this newsletter with their supervisor for further support on planning and interventions.

If you or someone you know is in need of ABA services, Evaluations for Autism, Parent Training and Support, or Consultations then please contact Collaborative ABA Services LLC for further information on appointments and services:

Collaborative ABA Services LLC

515 Centerpoint Drive Suite 205, Middletown, CT 06457

P. 860-421-4052

*For emergency crisis support parents, children, and teens can **contact 2-1-1** and an appropriate mobile crisis team from your area will be dispatched to your location for support.