



Reach us



NAA-NT



NAA-NT



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

By Nagla Moussa

Spring is almost here and you know what that means, ARD season. ARD season is really tough for parents; it causes much anxiety and sleepless nights. As a parent of a child with autism, I realized a while ago that ARD season wasn't just about getting the right IEP and services. Emotionally, it was much more than that for me. It was an anniversary of a loss. I wasn't just anxious about the upcoming confrontation with the IEP team, I was also grieving for my family and the loss of what we thought life was going to be for us. I was grieving for my son and all the challenges he has to face, and for the unknown future we were all facing. Realizing this made me understand why I cried for weeks before the ARD, and why I was angry. Walking into the ARD meeting and hearing all the deficits and weaknesses my son has, and where he stood in comparison to his peers just made my heart sink, and I dreaded it without even knowing that I did. These emotions are there no matter how busy we are, how hard we try to ignore them, and how anxious we are to concentrate on the mechanical aspects of the ARD meeting.

Recognizing these emotions, honoring them and allowing myself time to grieve was important. Just as essential were doing things to help me feel some measure of control. I couldn't change how far behind my son was in language and communication, but I could research the latest therapies and treatments to help him progress. I could implement the programs I felt would help him. Changing his academic status in math and reading immediately was not possible, but helping him at home and working with him as much as I could made me feel empowered.

Celebrating every little bit of progress, giving thanks and being grateful for that progress helped me feel positive. Joining other parents in a similar situation and talking, crying and laughing with them helped me find camaraderie and made me feel less isolated. Praying and speaking with God helped me gain some measure of peace. Finally, getting involved and helping others in similar situations gave me a feeling of purpose and reason

Spring always brings allergies in my family and it used to bring ARD season blues and many sad emotions, but I have learned to live with these emotions and use them to help myself and others. I wish you all an allergy and blues free spring as well as successful ARDs.

MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

Parents of children of all ages:

When: 3rd Tuesday of each month, 11:30am — 1:00pm, during the school year

Where: Corner Bakery(941 N. Central Expy, Plano)

Facilitators: Nagla Moussa, Dori Schaefer

Parents of younger children

When: 2nd Tuesday of each month, 8:45 - 9:45 am, during the school year

Where: Corner Bakery(941 N. Central Expy, Plano)

Facilitators: Nagla Moussa, Nanci Roessner

Spanish Speaking Support Group

When: 1st Saturday of each month, 7:00 - 8:30 pm,

Where: St Marks Pastoral Center, 1100 W 15 Street, Suite 209 Room 5, Plano, TX

<http://naa-nt-spanish.squarespace.com>

Self-Advocacy Group

For Teens (7th Grade and up) & Adults with Autism Participants will learn about autism and its' effect on their lives while developing a great appreciation for their individual gifts and talents. It is important that participants know they have autism. Trained volunteers including some with autism, facilitate this group. Bring an object, book, picture or other item that represents your talents and interests, \$5.00 to pay for pizza, snacks and drinks.

When : Tuesday, May 3rd, 2016 at 7:00 pm

Where : St. Andrew UMC, 1401 Mira Vista Blvd. Please check in at the Theater room upstairs on the 2nd floor), Plano, TX 75093

Do you have a teenager or older family member?

PARENT RESOURCE PACKET

Looking for an autism friendly pediatrician, dentist, private school, hair salon, attorney , therapy providers for speech, OT, ABA, or just about any services that make your child lives easier?

Email **Nagla Moussa** at nagla_alvin@verizon.net for a comprehensive parent resource packet. It's invaluable!

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL IS...NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

“Celebrate the Victories and Be a Part of our Future”

NAA-NT Teacher Appreciation Dinner.

Our Children are so precious, and we value everyone who loves them, helps them grow and reach their potential. This is a great opportunity for you to show your appreciation to those who work with your children. Invite your teachers, teacher assistants, therapists, and care givers; treat them to a delicious Dinner at a beautiful hotel venue, great entertainment by the famous jazz sax player Ray Baker, a gift bag, and a surprise present raffle.

Tuesday, April 5th, 2016

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Where: Hilton Garden Inn 7550 Gaylord Pkwy
Frisco, TX 75034

RSVP: [214-925-2722](tel:214-925-2722) or email: <mailto:nagla_alvin@verizon.net> nagla_alvin@verizon.net by 4/1/16

You may also RSVP by filling out this form and mailing by 3/28 to the address shown below.

Ticket Prices (all money to be paid at door) - \$10.00 for Adults and \$7.00 for Children under 12

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Office phone (____) _____ Home phone (____) _____

Email _____

Number of People _____ X \$10.00 (Adults) = \$ _____

Number of People _____ X \$7.00 (Children under 12) = \$ _____

Total = \$ _____

NATIONAL AUTISM ASSOCIATION OF NORTH TEXAS (NAA-NT)
P.O. Box 261209
Plano, TX 75026

Nicole Wallace

Magnesium deficiency is not only an issue for people with chronic illness, including autism, but also those in the typical population. Some estimates say 70-80% of us are magnesium deficient. The Recommended Dietary Intake (RDI) for magnesium is 320-420 milligrams of magnesium per day and most of us do not get that in food or in supplemental magnesium.

Why is magnesium important? It is responsible for over 300 biochemical reactions in the body and impacts blood pressure, metabolism, immune function and many other aspects of health. Magnesium also helps to regulate inflammatory reactions in our tissues. You must have magnesium for your cells to make energy, to keep the sodium/potassium pump in each cell working properly, to stabilize membranes and to help muscles relax.

Why are we deficient in magnesium? Our soil has become depleted of minerals and plants that we eat are lower in magnesium than they used to be. Other things that deplete magnesium are pharmaceuticals, unbound copper, caffeine, nicotine, dehydration, phosphates, supplemental Vitamin D (this one is controversial), excess calcium and most of all stress. Is there anyone who does not have stress?

What are the problems caused from magnesium deficiency? Calcification of the arteries, muscle spasms (think restless leg syndrome), anxiety, depression, headaches, high blood pressure, hormone problems and sleep problems. Dr. Sidney Baker says "Magnesium deficiency can affect virtually every organ system of the body. With regard to skeletal muscle, one may experience twitches, cramps, muscle tension, muscle soreness, including back aches, neck pain, tension headaches, and jaw joint (or TMJ) dysfunction. Also, one may experience chest tightness or a peculiar sensation that he can't take a deep breath. Sometimes a person may sigh a lot," notes Dr. Sidney Baker. "Continuing with the symptoms of magnesium deficiency, the central nervous system is markedly affected. Symptoms include insomnia, anxiety, hyperactivity and restlessness with constant movement, panic attacks, agoraphobia, and premenstrual irritability. Magnesium deficiency symptoms involving the peripheral nervous system include numbness, tingling, and other abnormal sensations, such as zips, zaps and vibratory sensations."

What's the solution? We should get magnesium rich foods into our diet like seaweed, spinach, chard, quinoa, pumpkin seeds, yogurt, almonds, black beans, avocado, figs, bananas and dark chocolate. There it is in black and white, we need chocolate!

Often oral and topical magnesium are also needed. Dr. Mark Hyman of the Cleveland Clinic recommends up to 1,000mg/day for adults and 500 mg/day for kids. He calls magnesium the secret weapon against illness. The gotmag.org group recommends supplementing 5 mg per pound.

There are **several types of magnesium** and usually a combination is best.

Magnesium Chloride : for detoxing, metabolism (read The Magnesium Miracle by Carolyn Dean, MD)recommended

Citrate : for constipation (but not recommended by the gotmag.org)

Glycinate : for relaxing, nerve pain

KNOW YOUR MAGNESIUM

Malate : for energizing, use in fibromyalgia and muscle pain

Oxide : for constipation (Mag07 or Oxypowder)

Sulfate: as in Epsom Salts - best in bath

Taurate & Orotate : for cardiovascular health

Threonate : for brain injuries, PTSD, depression, anxiety

Magnesium citrate and magnesium oxide are great for constipation, although they are not as great at increasing your RBC magnesium levels. Usually a combination of different types of magnesium is best. Topical magnesium (magnesium chloride) can be sprayed directly on the skin. It works well as a non-toxic deodorant. Having a foot bath or spraying the magnesium on the feet before bed makes for a very good night's sleep. Try using magnesium chloride flakes, 1 cup in a foot bath or bath with a couple teaspoons of borax (a co-factor of magnesium) for 15-20 minutes a few times a week.

To learn more about magnesium, here are a few resources:

drhyman.com/blog/2010/05/20/magnesium-the-most-powerful-relaxation-mineral-available/

drsircus.com/medicine/magnesium/magnesium-deficiency-symptoms-diagnosis

gotmag.com

www.doctorshealthpress.com/magnesium-deficiency-symptoms-list-supplements

http://drcarolyndean.com/magnesium_miracle/

Nicole Wallace is a warrior mom , who through her support and knowledge, has been an invaluable resource to the autism community. She works as a Care Manager at the Kotsanis Institute in Grapevine, TX. The information provided in this article is her opinion, and cannot be substituted for medical advice.

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Junior League of Collin County

Plano ISD SAGE Committee

Gordon Biersch Restaurant/Kraft Works Corporation

The Motch Family Foundation

Region 10 Educational Service Center

RBC Wealth Management (Plano)

Therapy and Beyond - Regina Crone Ph.D

The Behavior Exchange - Tammy Cline-Soza

Help, Hope, Solutions – Cristina Busu

COMMUNITY EVENTS

On February 26th, 2016 about 175 educators, professionals and parents attended a workshop on Designing an Inclusive Education for Children With Autism by Patrick Schwarz, a professor, author, motivational speaker and leader in Education (Inclusive Education, Special Education). The participants took away great inputs on differentiated learning, accommodations, designing lessons plans for varied learners and providing access to after school clubs and activities.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Region 10 Education Service Center
All Behaviors Considered
Therapy and Beyond
Unique Pathways

Plano ISD Sage Committee
Concept Connections
The Behavior Exchange

Lisa Brackin

The Cognitive Profile, Fingerprint of the Mind

Michael, a smart ten year old boy with autism, sits at the kitchen table reading with his mother. He has been able to read since he was three and he does it flawlessly. He has only a few reading materials he enjoys personally. He scours through the dictionary on ship mechanics that his grandfather gave him for Christmas three years ago and has one popular science magazine that he re-reads the same three pages of, intensively. Michael can recall every detail of his favorite movie, How to Train your Dragon, recalling the script flawlessly. All of this, but he cannot recall the characters, setting, or basic plot point of a book or story, even ones chosen because they might be of high interest. His precocious reading and his interest in ship mechanics has amazed his mother and others in his family, but they are baffled and frustrated by his difficulty with grasping even the most basic story elements. Michael's mind, like everyone's, has a unique "fingerprint" that impacts his learning.

While the story of Michael is not a case study of a specific individual, his challenges may remind you ones you have with your own child, or of a child you know.

To gain more insight into the concept of a "mental fingerprint," consider this : have you ever heard someone say, "I just don't have a memory for names", or "I just really have to take some time to mull it over."? Have you ever watched someone in wonder as they drew an accurate picture free-hand and wondered why your brain didn't work like that? We all have a unique brain "fingerprint", in which our mental or cognitive, strengths and weaknesses help us to make us truly unique individuals with unique abilities and challenges. The term that I like to use for this "fingerprint" is *cognitive profile*.

We all have the same basic cognitive functions and they work in unison with one another to help us learn new information, gain new skills, and to think and reason.

Below are broad descriptions of eight cognitive functions.

Visual Processing (Gv) - This function is used when someone takes in visual information and uses it. This skill is used any time someone uses their eyes during the learning process, but also is used when visualizing or imagining events.

Auditory Processing (Ga) - This function is used when someone takes in auditory information and uses it. This skill is used for attending to someone speaking and is used for reading and decoding skills.

Short-Term/Working Memory (Gsm) - This function can be considered the white board of the mind. It is where we actively think about and consider new information. All information is filtered through short-



term memory and processed using working memory before being used or stored for later.

Long-Term Storage/Retrieval (Glr) - This function helps someone store information long-term and then retrieve that information later for further use.

Processing Speed (Gs) - This function looks at how quickly our minds work to take in, store information, and reason.

Comprehension/Knowledge *also known as Crystallized Intelligence (Gc)* - We all know and understand certain things about our world. This is our foundation that we connect new knowledge and learning to. As we learn new things, we make connections between the new information and what we already know.

Logical Reasoning *also known as Fluid Reasoning (Gf)* - This function looks at the ability to take information provided or previously acquired and combine that information to draw conclusions or to apply to new situations. It is needed for mathematical reasoning and reading comprehension.

Executive Functions - This category of functions looks at how the previously listed cognitive functions are used in conjunction in order to manage life and learning, or rather, to “execute tasks”. No cognitive skill is used in isolation, but rather, it is their combined effort that help us to learn and grow.

The differences between the cognitive strengths and weaknesses of an individual on the autism spectrum, is often profoundly varied. Their cognitive weaknesses may be notably weak while their strengths are dramatically strong. Because of this, we often note remarkable abilities, such as the ability to put together complex puzzles, or maintain a wealth of knowledge in one or two areas, while also demonstrating certain challenges in learning, such as in reading comprehension, or the ability to reason mathematically. Because each foundational cognitive skill does not work in isolation but in conjunction with other cognitive skills, sometimes these demonstrated abilities and difficulties can be baffling to the observer who does not fully understand why a child on the spectrum can have mastered one skill, but a similar and seemingly parallel skill, they have trouble grasping.



To have a better understanding of an individual’s cognitive profile, the first step that can be taken is to observe. How well do they attend to what they see? Do they focus in on one element of a picture or object or observe the whole? Do they attend well to what people are saying, or do they get easily confused? With long term and short term memory, do they quickly forget instructions or directions? Are they able to memorize information and facts easily? For comprehension and knowledge, do they have a good vocabulary, can they describe, explain, recognize or identify information from many different topics? Logically, are they able to solve puzzles, explain or

demonstrate why a math problem is solved a certain way? All of these are clues into how a child learns and processes information. Another route is to have cognitive assessments done.

It is important to ask the diagnostician or psychologist doing the assessment if their evaluation covers the specific cognitive items listed. One way to be certain is to ask if they use the Cattell-Horn-Carrol (CHC) Cross-Battery Assessment Method. Public schools often use the CHC method in their Full, Individual Evaluations (FIE) that they conduct every three years, but may not use, depending on their goals for the evaluation. It may be worth reviewing previous evaluations reports for information on specific cognitive processes.

In returning to Michael, his parents and professional team did some investigation into how Michael learns. They discovered that Michael can likely process information that he actively sees, incredibly well. This is demonstrated by the fact that he read early, enjoys mechanics, and recalls details of his favorite movie, but he may have difficulty creating mental images in his mind. As he reads, they discovered that he may not be “creating a movie” mentally, but rather, just reading through words that are not “sinking in”. Also, while Michael has strong knowledge in certain areas, such as ship mechanics, he may be missing foundational knowledge in the area of vocabulary, chronology, geography, culture, etc., to understand the depth and breadth of a story he reads. He may do better with reading for the purpose of making or creating something, as is indicated by his interest in mechanics.

Armed with new information, Michael’s parents and the professionals that work with him were able to more readily address his needs. They put a plan into action. In conjunction with a solid Lindamood-Bell, Visualizing and Verbalizing Program, they worked to give Michael real-world hands on experiences that were helped by Michel’s strong visual processing. These activities, though not directly requiring a reading component, were designed to give him a strong knowledge and vocabulary base necessary for him to make associations and build connections needed for reading comprehension. They worked with him on chronology concepts, such as past, present, future, yesterday, today, tomorrow, next month, and next year. This helped him to begin to think and recall information sequentially. They helped Michael deepen his own experiences in the world, observing, experiencing, and, describing after the fact, events in such a way that it demonstrated that he recalled visually what he experienced in detail. At that point, Michael was able to “experience” a story with depth of understanding, and recall that experience vividly. All of this took some time and work, but he was then he will be able to read both for enjoyment and information.

Once parents and an intervention team get a better understanding of a child’s cognitive profile, the pieces often fall into place and intervention becomes much more effective. Along with this comes an opportunity to view a child’s amazing abilities through a new lens, using those abilities as leverage for teaching new concepts and skills.

Lisa Brackin received her bachelor’s degree in elementary and special education from Hardin-Simmons University in 2001. She received her Master of Science from the University of Texas at Dallas in the area of Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders. She is a certified educational diagnostician, via Dallas Baptist University. She is certified as an Educational Therapist/Professional from the Association of Educational Therapists. She has been helping families find educational solutions for their children for over a decade. She has a private practice in Richardson, Texas.

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Just click <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-8388811> to support the National Autism Association when you purchase at amazon.com. Your Amazon prices remain the same, and with each purchase, NAA-NT receives a donation. Thanks for your support!

DO YOU HAVE A CHILD THAT WANDERS?



Keep your
child safe!

The National Autism Association's Big Red Safety Box is back in stock! If you have a child that wanders or know one that wanders, please click on this link <http://nationalautismassociation.org/big-red-safety-boxes-now-available/> to learn how you can get this box with tools to help keep children with autism safe.

BUYING OR SELLING A HOUSE?

We are excited to have the generous support of a real estate agent, Kirk Iverson! Kirk will donate 25% of net proceeds directly to NAA-NT anytime someone buys or sells a home and mentions NAA-NT as a referral.

Check out his page <https://www.facebook.com/kirk.iverson.942?ref=ts> or <http://BuyHousesSellHomes.KWRealty.com>

Support our
sponsor

Marcie Friedman

"Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program." American Music Therapy Association"

Music therapy interventions can be designed to assist the individual with autism to decrease anxiety, increase socialization, express feelings, enhance memory, improve communication, strengthen fine and gross motor coordination skills and enhance sensory integration and auditory skills

When working with "Alicia", a 5 year old child diagnosed with Autism, music therapy proved very beneficial. (*the names mentioned are fictitious in order to maintain confidentiality). She presented delays with her overall sensory and fine/gross motor abilities. Her eye contact was minimal and she constantly sang parts of songs from her favorite shows not allowing anyone to break through and engage her in conversation. Through movement to the beat of a metronome while singing her favorite songs and using imitative melodic exercises on the xylophone and piano, her eye contact began to increase as well as her overall engagement during the music sessions. She was also beginning to play her songs by ear on the piano, increasing her overall hand/eye coordination and auditory skills. During the months that followed, she began to present more appropriate social interaction with her peers and initiate in conversation with her family members.

Research has shown that every one of all ages, with disabilities, or without are able to exhibit positive responses to music. One misconception about music therapy, is that the client or participant has to have musical abilities to benefit from the therapy. That is not true. All styles of music are useful when effecting changes in the life of the client. Based on the assessment of the individual's preferences, treatment and goals, this will establish what kind of music will be most beneficial for the client.

Sometimes there are issues with hyperacusis or sensitivity to certain frequencies and volumes of sounds in individuals with Autism diagnosis. Through the use of broadband noise, acoustic training for frequency discrimination, relaxation, vocal exercises, and retraining techniques using overtones and musical harmonics, the brain can be trained to enhance signal extraction for auditory processing, resulting in creating higher perceptual efficiency.

(Argstatter H., Grapp M., Hutter E., Plinkert P., Bolay H. V. (2012). Long-term effects of the "Heidelberg Model of Music Therapy" in patients with chronic tinnitus. Int. J. Clin. Exp. Med. 5, 73)

State of the art research in music therapy continues to expand. Many studies documenting the effectiveness of music therapy in autism, and neurological effects of music and brain functioning are being published in medical and scientific journals throughout the globe. The field of Music Therapy's professional outlook is very promising and continues to gain recognition as a legitimate therapeutic resource. The Journal of Music Therapy and Perspectives are publications that support current research findings and can be found on the American Music Therapy Association's website: www.musictherapy.org

Music Therapy is effective for helping individuals suffering from Autism, Brain Injury, and Developmental Disabilities. In addition, Music Therapy can positively influence overall functioning and development, and should be highly considered when seeking out options for therapeutic interventions.

Marcie F. Friedman, MT-BC, NMT is the owner of Southwestern Music Therapy, L.L.C. Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas. She can be reached at marcie@swwmusictherapy.com.



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Did you know that

- all the money the NAANT raises goes directly to help families dealing with autism in the North Texas area?
- the NAANT uses donations to educate and serve our community by holding educational and advocacy seminars?
- the NAANT gives grants to local families with annual salaries below \$50,000 for autism treatments?
- the NAANT works with the law enforcement to ensure the safety of our kids?
- the NAANT holds weekly parent support groups including one in Spanish?
- the NAANT provides fun events to help families dealing with autism relax?
- the NAANT provides support for autism couples and financial assistance for counseling?
- the NAANT has an online parent and professional support yahoo group: <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/ascc2/> ?
- the NAANT has a Parent Resource Packet that is free?

The National Autism Association of North Texas (NAA-NT) is a 501C3 chapter of the National Autism Association (NAA). The mission of the National Autism Association is to educate and empower families affected by autism and other neurological disorders, while advocating on behalf of those who cannot fight for their own rights. By donating to NAANT you are helping children and their families who live in our community.

“No person was ever honored for what he received. He was honored for what he gave.” – Calvin Coolidge

NAA-NT honors each and every one of our contributors that have made all of the above programs possible. It is from what you give that our families are able to move forward with success. Please consider a donation of any denomination. With your help, our new year will bring many new beginnings for our families affected by Autism.

Donations can be made by check to PO Box No. 261209 Plano, TX 75026-1209 or online at: <http://naa-nt.org.eventbrite.com>

This letter can serve as your tax deductible contribution receipt.

Date: _____ Amount given: _____
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 Amount: \$10 \$20 \$30 \$40 \$50 other \$ _____

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