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In this issue

President's pen	1-2
Upcoming Events	2-3
Parent Resource	3
Listening therapy & Feeding disorders	4
Monthly Meetings	5
Sponsors	5
Board Members	5
Neurofeedback	6-7
Amazon Smile	8
Big Red Safety Box	8
Realtor Fundraiser	8
Know your rights	9
Donation Letter	10

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

By Nagla Moussa

School is well under way. The excitement of the first day, new clothes, and new teachers has died down, and everyone is settled in to learn and conquer this school year, or have they truly settled in? Sometimes it takes students with autism longer to get used to the huge transition of a new school year, new teachers, and new peers. Difficulties can present themselves quickly and persist if not addressed and dealt with quickly.

The good news is if you, as a parent, learn how to address difficult transitions, you can improve your child's school year without too much pain and suffering for both of you! Here is what you need to know to advocate for your child in a difficult situation:

- All behavior is communication**, what is your child's behavior telling you? Are they in physical pain, are they having anxiety over the amount of work they are presented, are they being bullied by a peer, are they needing more structure and more support, are they in the correct placement?
- Who can you approach** to help make the situation better and address your child's needs at school? Is it the school nurse to deal with headaches or any other physical issue your child is experiencing, is it the special education teacher to help you figure out why behaviors and anxiety are occurring, is it the general education teacher who can help you figure out if peers are annoying your child, is it the district behavior specialist who needs to conduct a functional behavior assessment?
- Now that you have the problem all figured out **what is the solution?** Is it a new placement, some modification in the environment or accommodations, training for the new teachers on the behavior plan, adding social skills goals addressing a certain issue your child is having difficulty with, giving your child a way to communicate he needs help, or he needs a break?
- How do you **get the school to implement the solution?** Do you need to ask for an IEP amendment that adds certain social goals already agreed upon (no meeting is needed, just an amendment and a signature), a formal written ARD request to discuss the need for collaboration and a discussion of possible solutions, or contact the nurse and explain what your child needs?
- How do you determine if the **solutions put in place are actually resolving the problem?** This is important, you need to follow up, have lunch with your child at school to see how they are feeling in the middle of the day, request some observation time to see if your child is doing better, request written daily check sheets, notes, or emails from the teacher to see if the issues are resolved

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN (CONTD)

or at least progressing towards resolution or if everyone needs to re-adjust some steps.

Finally, I love the term HOPEISM coined by the National Autism Association, our parent organization. Hopeism is alive and well. There is no problem you cannot resolve with persistence, diplomacy and collaboration. Ask for help if you need it. NAA-NT has The David Henke Advocacy Scholarship and can help you if you qualify to find an advocate who will assist you in getting the help your child needs in this new transition stage.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The National autism Association of North Texas and Families for Effective Treatment of Autism North Texas will host Dr. Patrick Schwarz for a Workshop.

Designing an Inclusive Education for Students with Autism

Dr. Schwarz will present a workshop that examines rationales for inclusive education, he will guide participants through the planning processes and give tools, such as IEP at a glance, and other illustrations. Instructional strategies, such as differentiation and accommodation, will be outlined and applied. Applications will assist participants to consider their own students and classroom learning situations in creating individual support plans.

When: Friday, February 26, 2016 9:00am to 3:30pm
Where: Sockwell Center 6301 Chapel Hill Boulevard
Plano, TX 75093

Registration is now open:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/dr-patrick-schwarz-inclusive-education-tickets-18528477174>

Invite your
principal and
special
education
teachers

The ARD/IEP Process

Nagla Moussa, President of NAA-NT, and Parent Advocate, and Mara Laviola, an expert on IDEA law who provided parent advocacy for many years, and a parent of a son with autism, will present information that will help parents navigate the ARD/IEP process. They will explain parental rights, IDEA law that applies to the ARD/IEP meeting, and evaluations and their significance, and talk about Mediation, Due Process and filing a TEA Complaint. Please RSVP for this meeting by emailing: nagla_alvin@verizon.net

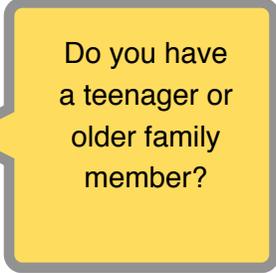
When : October 6th, 2015 7pm to 9pm
Where: St. Andrew United Methodist Church, Theater Rm, 2nd floor, 1401 Mira Vista,
Plano, TX 75093

Become an
informed
participant of
your ARD
process

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS

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.



Do you have a teenager or older family member?

When : Tuesday October 6th, 2015 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

Occupational Therapy Panel

Listen to a panel of occupational therapists and learn how to support your child's sensory needs.

When: Tuesday November 3rd, 2015 7p.m.

Where: St. Andrew UMC 1401 Mira Vista Blvd Plano, TX 75093

Annual Holiday Party

NAANT is thrilled to announce the annual holiday party. Bring your entire family to this not-to-be missed event and take a picture with Santa, make craft and enjoy holiday snacks. This is one holiday party where your child can be their true self.



Time for Santa

When: Saturday, December 12th, 2015 11:30a.m.

Where: Prince of Peace Catholic Community (Cana Center) 5100 Plano Pkwy Plano, TX 75093

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!

IN TIME LISTENING & FEEDING DISORDERS

By Sally Bober

Sally Bober & Associates is so proud to share with you the results of a 12 month study just completed on the use of in Time listening and feeding disorders. These findings were presented at the Advanced Brain Technologies international conference last month. We are the first to use and study the effect of in Time listening with our feeding disorder kids. As you can imagine there is quite a buzz with this new information for speech-language pathologists who specialize in feeding disorders.

Our brain health and brain-body connection depend upon rhythm. We engage with this rhythm-based music of in Time to help stimulate rhythm awareness, focus, timing precision and adaptive responses to stress, all of which supply the brain with the highest quality of stimulation it needs for optimal function. As brain health and the brain-body connection improve, these abilities improve as well. So begins the pattern for change.

One of the keys to the effectiveness of in Time is the ABC Modular Design, which has evolved from two decades of research and development with The Listening Program. It has been refined for an emphasis on beat/pulse, time and pattern, and for combined rhythm and sound frequency stimulation. The four zones of training are: creativity/alertness/organization, cognition/interaction/attention, integration of all zones and self-regulation/body awareness/coordination and timing.



How does in Time help with feeding disorders?

Our clinic specializes in moderate to severe feeding disorders in the neurotypical population, kids with SPD diagnosis and kids on the Autism spectrum. Their most pervasive symptom is fear and anxiety of new foods along with rigidity which all leads to negative behavior. In Time has been found to work on the emotional regulation part of the brain. Each child listens for 9 minutes at the beginning of each feeding session. This is where the magic begins working. The kids come into the clinic anxious, fretful, nervous about the unknown new foods and their heightened oral/tactile hypersensitivity. During that 9 minutes they settle down and the anxiety lessens so that our work can begin. What used to take 8-12 months to complete feeding therapy in the neurotypical children is now taking 4-7 months. Our oral motor protocol used to take at least 2 months and is now taking 3-4 weeks and then we are ready to begin foods. The in Time also works on the rate, rhythm and timing of chewing, bolus formation and timely swallowing. Everything works better in and out of the session with the initiation of the in Time program at our clinic. We are ecstatic!!

Sally Bober M.A., C.C.C. & Associates is a specialized, private speech language treatment clinic located in Plano, TX and serving all of North Texas. Their services include bone conduction, interactive metronome, oral motor and feeding therapy, The Listening Program, Voice Therapy, articulation and social skills. They can be reached at 6829 K Avenue #111, Plano, TX 75074 (214)491-7704

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

Self Advocacy Groups (SAG)

When: 1st Tuesday of each month, 7:00pm, same time as monthly general meetings

Where: St Andrews United Methodist Church, 1401 Mira Vista, Plano, TX 75093

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>

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

St. Andrew United Methodist Church

Concept Connections- Jenny Keese

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

Sally Neff, Stella & Dot

Help, Hope, Solutions – Cristina Busu

NAA-NT BOARD

President: Nagla Moussa
Vice President : Sherry Pearson
Secretary: Kelly Barnes
Treasurer: Nathalie Laforest

Board Members: Paulina Ayesreran, Archana Dhurka, Julie Hornok, Alla Kellman, Carla Robbins, Leah Tesfa, Lucia Weber
Committee Members: MariAnn Gattelar, Julie Liberman, Myrna Silver, Nicole Wallace

WHAT, HOW & WOW OF NEUROFEEDBACK

By Dr. Laurie Harrier, LP, LSSP, NCSP

Neurofeedback is commonly recommended for those on the autism spectrum. Due to mixed results, cost, and time many families are not sure if this is a viable option for their child.

What is neurofeedback?

Neurofeedback is based on operant conditioning. This is the concept that underlies learning new habits such as riding a new bike. In neurofeedback, a particular brain area is told to be at a certain threshold (level) before it receives an award (like a tone, a color, a picture moves, etc.). When it receives that award it knows that it performed the right function. So the brain, because it loves to learn, will try to experiment to see what happens if it does it again or does it differently. It is only rewarded fully when it fulfills the expectation (just like a child gets to hear great job and cheers when they get the bicycle moving all by themselves). As the brain receives more “awards” it keeps reaching for that threshold more often until a new habit is laid down. In neuropsychology that new habit is equal to a new pathway being formed that is typically more efficient than the first one.

How can neurofeedback help my child with autism?

Neurofeedback can be used to help a host of issues including increase socialization, increase verbalizations, and increase attention. It does this by targeting various areas in the brain that correspond to aspects needed for the “big skills” of attention, language, and social. The gains though that are made through neurofeedback can only be seen if the pathways are well formed. To make a new pathway and have the “gains stick” a person undertaking neurofeedback must do a sufficient number of sessions, and make sure the protocol was directly tied to the symptoms they are wanting to address. The gains they will see vary as each person is different. The gains that can be seen can be attributed to the age, the number of sessions undertaken, the site targeted, how it was generalized during the sessions, and how far from the mean (normal) the person’s brain is at the start of the neurofeedback.

Are there various types of neurofeedback?

There are four main types of neurofeedback, but I will only address the two most commonly used: QEEG guided LoRETA Z-score neurofeedback (NF2) and traditional QEEG guided neurofeedback. Both NF2 (QEEG guided LoRETA Z-score neurofeedback) and traditional

QEEG guided neurofeedback have their protocols (what the practitioner will target) developed from a full 19 channel QEEG. Channels means the number of sites read on the brain, with each site being around the size of a quarter. An eyes closed and an eyes open QEEG sample is taken with a cap that is placed on the client’s



WHAT, HOW & WOW OF NEUROFEEDBACK

head. The protocol is developed from the data obtained and compared to various aspects such as age, symptoms wanting to remediate, etc..

In NF2 the client wears the 19 channel cap EACH time they come and multiple brain sites can be targeted and monitored for change. The actual training is about 30 minutes each time the client comes, but because you are training multiple sites at a deep level the number of sessions (times you come in person) could be reduced from 40 to 20 before gains that stick are made. The con for this protocol is that the cap must be put on the client's head EACH time they come and they must be able to sit still for the sessions. Only a few practitioners will perform this on children, especially younger ones due to this reason.

In traditional neurofeedback the cap is not used for the sessions, only for the QEEG to determine the protocol. Instead various leads (long wires with electrodes) are lightly attached to the client's head. The electrodes just like the cap send out information to the computer that the client can see and manipulate, but nothing shocks or hurts the client. In traditional neurofeedback you can either do one lead (target one site) or target multiple sites through a Linear Channel (all leads are monitored and a mean of their input is formed for each threshold being rewarded). The pro for traditional neurofeedback is that it does not need the cap on each time so it is quick to set up and take off plus it is more comfortable. The con is that it may not target as deeply or as quickly so the client needs to do a longer amount of sessions (normally come around 40 sessions). The time at each session though is still the same, around 30 minutes of actual working their brain.

It is recommended that the sites targeted remain the same for the duration of the protocol being selected, 40 for traditional and 20-25 for NF2. The longer the sites are kept the same the stronger the pathway is that is formed and then when the intervention is stopped the gains will stick. Most practitioners will aim for over learning of the pathways to occur so that when the intervention is removed and time passes the gains will only regress back to the mean (where we wanted it to be at and not below).

What is the frequency and duration of the protocol?

Overall either type of neurofeedback can be used to reduce impulsivity, restlessness, aggression, slow processing, emotionality, etc. It can also be used to reduce the effects of reading and comprehension issues. It can be used to increase verbal communication, attention, memory, and socialization. Neurofeedback is not a cure, rather it helps prime the brain (get it more ready) to receive the next invention. Often neurofeedback is recommended to do before most interventions because then the gains for other interventions will be more pronounced and stick better too because the neuronal pathways are more efficient and in a better ready state to receive input and process the input. Some practitioners will work with children under the age of 7. Some clients may need more than one protocol done as the first protocol may have been like peeling a layer off an onion-once it is peeled off you see the root of the problem better and need to dig further. The frequency of the protocol is twice a week. Increased frequency only helps at first to begin the learning. After a certain point it is best practice to reduce the frequency to twice a week, so you can begin preparing the brain for eventually removing the intervention.

Dr. Laurie Harrier has 12 years of experience working as a LSSP (Licensed Specialist in School Psychology). She is the Executive Director of United Through HOPE, a non profit that has various social programs geared to help individuals age 3 through adulthood overcome their social challenges. Dr. Harrier also has a private practice in the North Texas area that focuses on neurofeedback and neuropsychological evaluations. She has been practicing neurofeedback for the last 6 years. She can be reached at info@unitedthroughhope.org.

DO YOU SHOP AT AMAZON?



Love shopping at
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)?

Support families with Autism all year round just by doing your normal shopping!

Just click <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-8388811> to support the National Autism Association when you purchase at [amazon.com](https://www.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

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Notes taken by Sreedevi Jayakrishnan at the recently concluded Autism Education Summit in Dallas

At the recently concluded Autism Education Summit, one of the keynote addresses was “Being prepared for the Legal Fight” by Alison Folmar, Detroit attorney. She was awarded by CCHR with its Human Rights Award in Feb, 2014 for her outstanding contributions in the on-going struggle on behalf of parents—not the State—to decide whether to administer psychiatric drugs to their child.

- For those parents who dread that phone call or knock on the door by Child Protective Services for the choices they make in treating their children, she had some important tips:
- Federal law prevents CPS from knocking on the door and placing parents under duress, that their child will be taken away. On the contrary, they have to make an appointment to visit you. Remember, CPS are social activists, not law enforcement agency.
- Reach out to advocacy groups who will help you prepare for a visit from CPS - whether they are issues related to school or medical issues
- When CPS visits you, get rid of the fear and anxiety, convey information that will make them leave by finding out why they are here and who sent them. Provide them sufficient information to answer these questions. Do not be intimidated by them, but let them in and answer their questions. (Even though you don't have to, it might help you to provide sufficient information)
- Be prepared - if you have to make a trip to ER, arm yourself with your child's medical history and a video of your child's behavior, if it supports your case. If you are outside your home with your child, you could carry medical records on a bracelet. (<http://medicalhistorybracelet.com/how-it-works/> or <http://www.universalmedicaldata.com/shop/products/usb-medical-alert-bracelets-3333.html> are some examples)
- Know your rights - Health care rights mean that a parent has the right to choose the course of medical treatment for their child as opposed to Medical neglect which means that when you have to do something, you do NOTHING.
- Lastly, remember that your child has the right to be parented by you.

Sreedevi Jayakrishnan is a Warrior Mom



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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 this holiday season. 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: _____
Name: _____ email: _____
Amount: \$10 \$20 \$30 \$40 \$50 other \$ _____

'Tis the
season to give
- Donate to
NAA-NT.