



"The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) provides support and assistance with the goal of building the capacity of individuals, families, schools, and communities to optimize the potential of people with autism and related disabilities."

READ ONLINE



Dear Friends,

Spring has sprung, April is just around corner, and we are gearing up for Autism Awareness and Acceptance month. As you will see in this newsletter, we have several events and training opportunities happening in April celebrating Autism Acceptance month. We celebrate and promote autism acceptance every month, and enjoy the additional attention April brings to share what we know about autism to a broader audience.

This newsletter is full of information about upcoming events, trainings, and information about women and autism, spring cleaning, drowning prevention, sensory processing differences, and nutrition. We have something for every age group and hope you can find something that meets your needs.

We also have information about the Florida Department of Education ESE Parent Survey. We need your help to make sure your voices are heard by completing the survey.

Our Client Corner spotlight features a young man with autism who uses an augmentative/alternative communication device and shows us just how much he has to say. If you would like to be considered for our Client Corner spotlight, please reach out to autism@med.fsu.edu.

There are too many events and trainings in this edition of our newsletter to review all of them in my letter, so I will end highlighting our **8th Annual Kickin' It for Autism** event with the FSU Women's Soccer Team and Coaches on **Saturday, April 26, 2025**. Registration is now open, and so are opportunities to become a sponsor for the event. We are so thrilled and grateful to the FSU Soccer team and coaches that we can continue this rich tradition of a fun community event where ALL are welcome!

As always, I welcome your feedback on how we can serve you better. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly: czenko@fsu.edu.

Sincerely,
Cathy Zenko

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Catherine Zenko



FSU CARD - Safety Kits & Seat Belt Covers*

We have a limited number of Safety Kits to give to our registered clients who have a tendency to wander away or have limited safety awareness. Each kit includes:

- 2 door alarms
- 2 cabinet safety locks
- 2 seat belt covers
- 2 "Water Watcher" lanyards (1 English, 1 Spanish)
- 1 FSU CARD magnet

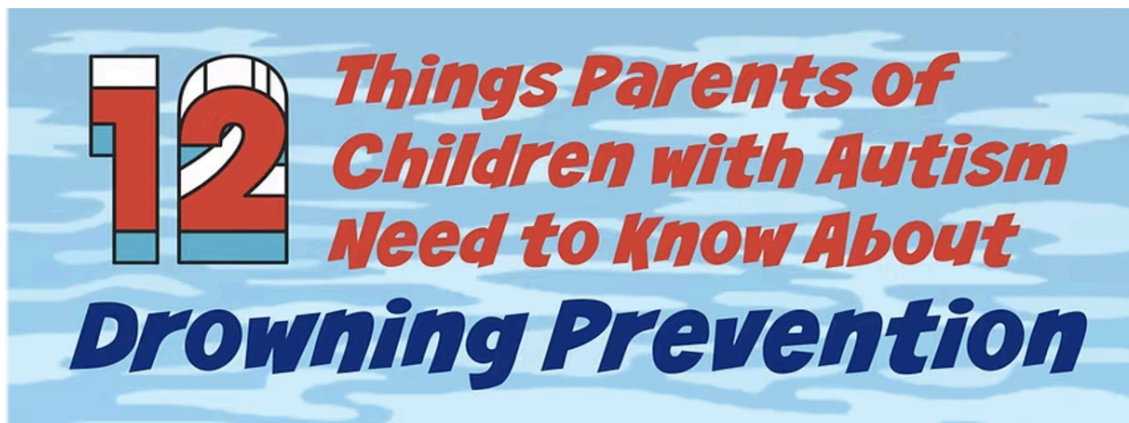
Thank you to **Leon County Sheriff's Office** for donating the Autism Awareness Seat Belt Covers and your generous donation to help us create these kits! We LOVE our community partner's.

If you are not already signed up as an FSU CARD client, we encourage you to complete the FSU CARD application online at: <https://fsucard.com/services/becoming-a-client/>

****We have limited quantities of Safety Kits & Seat Belt Covers, so we will distribute items until we run out.***

Please email autism@med.fsu.edu or call 850-644-4367 if you have any questions.

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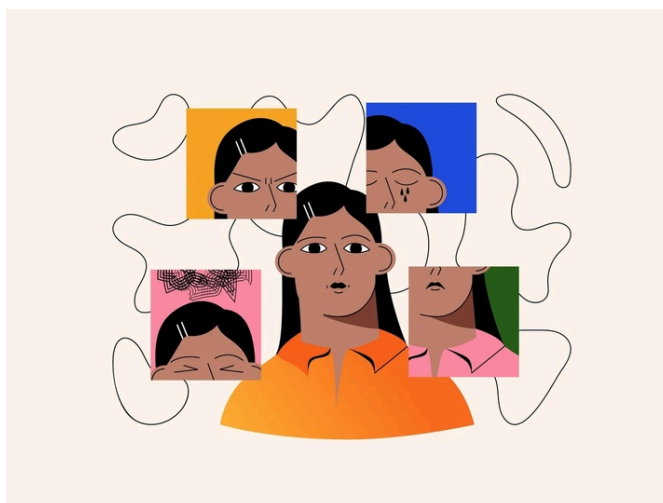
[Safety Kit Request](#)[Seat Belt ONLY Request](#)

Drowning Prevention Resources

[Autism Society of Florida](#)

It may be March, but in Florida, that means swim season is right around the corner (or very possibly underway). Unfortunately, children and adults with autism have a higher risk of death by drowning. Keep these tips in mind when it comes to swimming and drowning prevention, because as the weather gets warmer, we want everyone to have fun and be safe.

Take a look at the wide variety of drowning prevention resources our friends at the [Autism Society of Florida \(ASF\)](#) have on their website.

[Drowning Prevention Resources - ASF](#)

Autism Diagnoses in Adult Women Are on the Rise

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Autism diagnoses for women have been on the rise in recent years. This article highlights some factors contributing to this increase, and offers some insights from women that have recently attained their diagnoses about what it is like to receive this as an adult.

Autism In Adult Women Article



Spring Cleaning

Many of us like to use the spring as a time to focus on sprucing up our environment, and this article has some great tips for helping people with autism be able to participate in this time-honored tradition.

Spring Cleaning



Leon County Public Library Celebration of Neurodiversity Event

Join us for the opening of our fifth annual Autism Acceptance Month art exhibit, Artists and

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refreshments. Hosted in partnership with the [FSU Center for Autism and Related Disabilities \(FSU CARD\)](#) and [Arts4All Florida](#), the exhibit features both an in-person display at the Bruce J. Host Northeast Branch Library and a virtual gallery.

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

4 pm - 5 pm (EST)

Bruce J. Host Northeast Branch Library

5513 Thomasville Road

Tallahassee, Florida 32312

LCPL Autism Acceptance Month Event Information

Photo by : Bob Capazzo



ON
OPENING NIGHTS
#FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Opening Nights at Florida State University introduces
Larry Mitchell and Friends
FSU Museum of Fine Arts
530 West Call Street
Tallahassee, FL 32306

Thursday, April 3, 2025
7 – 8:30 PM

An Artists and Autism event presented by the
FSU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities and Arts4All Florida
Acclaimed Florida musicians Matt Cravener on piano, Carly Fulcher on cello,
Trevor T-Rev Williams on guitar, and William Yazid Johnson on African drums
join Grammy-award winning producer and guitarist Larry Mitchell in concert.



Register/free tickets:
<https://fla.st/FGGNCNH5>






FSU | COLLEGE OF MUSIC Many thanks to the Florida State University College of Music for generously providing a piano for the event.

Larry Mitchell and Friends - SOLD OUT

We are thrilled to host another Artists and Autism event in partnership with Arts4All and FSU Opening nights. *Larry Mitchell and Friends* is led by Mitchell and blends the talents of five acclaimed Florida musicians – regional artists Matt Cravener, William (Yazid) Johnson, Trevor Williams (T-Rev) and Carly Fulcher.

The performance will take place from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Thursday, April 3, at the Museum of Fine Arts in the College of Fine Arts. This event is sold out, but you can read more about it in the press release below. Keep an eye on our social media

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Larry Mitchell & Friends Event Press Release



**REGISTRATION
REQUIRED.**



**Carl the Collector with WFSU PBS and FSUCard
Saturday, April 12 at 10 a.m. CT
Bay County Public Library**

Carl the Collector is a groundbreaking PBS KIDS show and recipient of the American Library Association Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media Award. Meet Carl, a lovable raccoon on the autism spectrum with a passion for collecting. Through adventures with a great group of friends, Carl navigates challenges and celebrates the beauty of neurodiversity.

Watch an episode, have a snack, share what you collect and make a craft.

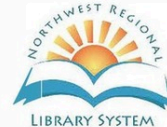
This FREE program is geared for families with children in Pre-K up to 3rd grade (4 -8 years).

Registration Required. Call 850-522-2118 or visit the Youth Services department to register.

The **FSU Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)** is dedicated to providing individuals with Autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them with free consultation, resources, and educational support within the community.



**CENTER FOR AUTISM &
RELATED DISABILITIES**
AUTISM INSTITUTE



CARL THE COLLECTOR Event in Bay County

Carl the Collector is a groundbreaking PBS KIDS show and recipient of the American Library Association Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media Award. Meet Carl, a lovable raccoon on the autism spectrum with a passion for collecting. Through adventures with a great group of friends, Carl navigates challenges and celebrates the beauty of neurodiversity.

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The FSU Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) is dedicated to providing individuals with Autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them with free consultation, resources, and educational support within the community.

Throughout the event, FSU CARD staff was available to answer questions and provide information about services and supports for individuals and families with autism related needs. Accessible in both English and Spanish, you can find more information about this animated series for children ages 4 to 8 years of age by visiting <https://pbskids.org/videos>.

[Learn More About CARL THE COLLECTOR Series](#)



Eighth Annual
KICKIN' IT FOR AUTISM



**SOCCER CLINIC WITH
 FSU SOCCER TEAM & COACHES**

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025
 Don't miss out on this fun community event!

Who: Soccer players of all ages and experience
What: Soccer clinic - learn new skills or sharpen existing techniques with the FSU Soccer team and coaches
When: 10:30 - 12 pm (Onsite Registration 9:30 - 10:30 am)
Where: FSU Soccer Complex 1119 Spirit Way, Tallahassee 32306
Why: Support FSU CARD & promote Autism Awareness & Acceptance by welcoming ALL athletes to participate

All participants need to wear athletic shoes & bring a water bottle (please label bottle clearly)

**\$20 ONLINE REGISTRATION
 *UNTIL 4/21/25***

\$20 ONSITE REGISTRATION
 (IF EVENT DOES NOT SELL OUT BEFORE DAY OF EVENT)

*Registration includes:
 T-shirt
 (while supplies last), prize ticket, refreshments

**TO LEARN MORE, GO TO:
 WWW.FSUCARD.COM**

All net proceeds benefit the FSU Autism Institute and FSU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD)

**CLINIC
 10:30 AM - 12 PM (EST)
 AUTOGRAPHS WITH THE
 TEAM & COACHES
 PRIZES & REFRESHMENTS
 12 PM - 1 PM (EST)**

8th Annual Kickin' It for Autism - April 26th

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The **8th Annual FSU Kickin' It for Autism Soccer Clinic** will be on **Saturday, April 26, 2025!**

Registration is now open and space is limited to the first 150 people.

The event **SOLD OUT** last year so be sure to register early.

Don't miss your opportunity to learn from Florida State Seminoles Soccer team and coaches. ******Four-Time National Champions******

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

If you are a local business who wants to become a sponsor for this amazing event, email us to learn more: autism@med.fsu.edu or click on the sponsorship information below.

[Registration](#)

[Sponsorship Information](#)

[Event Flyer](#)

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Cracking the Behavior Code:

A Book Study for Educators on *The Behavior Code* by Jessica Minahan, M.Ed., BCBA

Hosted by: FSU CARD

Facilitated by: Audra Burch, Crystal Grey-Hewett & Tisha Melton

About the Author

Jessica Minahan is a licensed and board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA), author, special educator, and consultant to schools internationally. Since 2000 she has worked with students who struggle with mental health issues and challenging behavior in public school systems. She specializes in training staff and creating behavior intervention plans for students who demonstrate explosive and unsafe behavior. In *The Behavior Code*, she reveals a systematic approach for deciphering causes and patterns of difficult behaviors and how to match them with proven strategies for getting students back on track so they can learn effectively.

Facilitators: Crystal Grey-Hewett, Audra Burch and Tisha Melton Crystal Grey-Hewett is an FSU CARD consultant trained as social worker, who has worked with people on the spectrum, their families, and professionals for over 15 years. Audra Burch is an FSU CARD consultant trained as a speech-language pathologist who has guided individuals with challenging behaviors, including those with autism, for 20 years. Tisha Melton is a BCBA and before coming to FSU CARD as a consultant, worked as an educator and behavior analyst, serving students with challenging behaviors within the public schools.

Training Description

Target Audience: This training is for special and general education teachers, administrators, related service providers, and paraprofessionals.

This 6-week training series will provide educators with a forum to read *The Behavior Code*, learn about strategies to help with challenging behavior, and discuss ways to apply the concepts in their own classrooms. Topics include author Jessica Minahan's FAIR Plan system, anxiety-related behavior, oppositional behavior, withdrawn behavior, and problematic inappropriate behavior.

Training Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Understand and apply the FAIR Plan system.
- Identify patterns and causes of challenging behavior.
- Match appropriate strategies to the type of challenging behavior exhibited.
- Apply concepts and strategies from *The Behavior Code* to their own classrooms.



Regional Trainings are hosted by the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, through the Partnership for Effective Programs for Students with Autism (PEPSA), a program funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, K-12 Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.

www.DOEpartnership.org



Save The Dates:

Tuesday Afternoons

April 1st–May 6th, 2025

4:00 – 5:30 pm EST/

3:00 – 4:30 pm CST

This is a 6-week series. Attendance is expected at every session.

Location: online via ZOOM

Limited to first 250 participants*

Register Online:

Registration is mandatory.

Click here to [Register](#)



*The first 50 educators to register & participate from the state of Florida will receive a FREE e-book of *The Behavior Code* if you have not received one previously.

To preview & order book, click: [Here](#)

Each session is worth 1.5 contact hour. Certificates of attendance will be provided for anyone who attends at least 72 of the 90 minutes.

Be sure to contact your ESE District Staff or Staff Development Contact to determine the process for receiving in-service credits.

For more information contact:

Lerena Fleck: Lerena.Fleck@med.fsu.edu or
Cathy Zenko: czenko@fsu.edu

Cracking the Behavior Code Registration

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FSU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities

Supporting Your Child With a New Autism Diagnosis



A free webinar for parents with children who are newly diagnosed with autism, waiting for a diagnosis, or who have observed characteristics of autism in their child. We will be discussing what it means to have an autism diagnosis along with an overview of potential services and resources.

FSU | CENTER FOR AUTISM & RELATED DISABILITIES

FSU CARD is dedicated to providing individuals with autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them, free consultation, resources, and educational support to build knowledge, confidence, infrastructure, and sustainability within the community.

Tuesday: April 8, 2025

12:30-1:30pm EST / 11:30am-12:30pm CST

Online via Zoom

<https://bit.ly/4ie0XAq>



Presented by:
Audra Burch, M.S. CCC-SLP
Dawn Merrix, M.C.D. CCC-SLP

Supporting Your Child with a New Autism Diagnosis Registration

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FSU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities Parents' Place for Middle School: Hygiene and Self-Care



Please join us as we discuss strategies for teaching hygiene skills to your adolescents on the spectrum. We will share ideas on how to use visual supports to help promote independence and tips on talking about the importance of good hygiene skills.



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Wednesday, April 9, 2025

5 pm EST / 4 pm CST

Online via Zoom Video

Crystal Grey-Hewett, crystal.grey-hewett@med.fsu.edu

Register:

<https://fsu.zoom.us/meeting/register/k8wp5kKuQfCHzLB81zeTbg>



Parents' Place: Hygiene and Self-Care Registration

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FSU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities *Women and ASD Group*


Join CARD consultants to discuss topics of interest for women on the autism spectrum. In order to participate in this group, participants must be women registered with FSU CARD and be 18 years or older.



FSU CARD is dedicated to providing individuals with autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them, free consultation, resources, and educational support to build knowledge, confidence, infrastructure, and sustainability within the community.

Tuesday, May 13 & 27, 2025
6 pm EST / 5 pm CST

Zoom Video Conference
Presenter: Sonia Clark-Rosier
Email: sclarkrosier@fsu.edu
Register: <https://bit.ly/3XOzixZ>



Women and ASD Group Registration

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FSU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities Walk It Out Wednesday Tallahassee



Join us each Wednesday, May 28th to September 24th, for information, conversation, and a walk inside Governors Square Mall.

Each Wednesday will feature a fitness or social skill mini lesson, conversation practice, and a 30-minute walk throughout the mall.

A filled water bottle is suggested.

This weekly event is for adults (18+) who are registered with FSU CARD.



FSU CARD is dedicated to providing individuals with autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them, free consultation, resources, and educational support to build knowledge, confidence, infrastructure, and sustainability within the community.



Wednesdays

May 28th to September 24th 2025
6 PM -7 PM EDT

Governors Square Mall
(2nd level, near old Sears entrance) 1500
Apalachee Parkway,
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Contact: Allison Leatzow, aleatzow@fsu.edu Registration:
<https://bit.ly/42cel2x>

[Walk It Out Wednesday - Tallahassee Registration](#)

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Sensory Differences and Communication

Audra Burch, MS CCC-SLP,

FSU CARD Autism Consultant



Sensory processing differences are commonly observed in individuals with autism, possibly causing atypical responses to sensory stimuli like sounds, light, and motion. These differences alter the way in which individuals receive, process, and respond to sensory information.

When someone is uncomfortable, distracted, or agitated due to sensory differences, they can struggle with attention, concentration, and engagement—key components in learning and using speech and language effectively, and therefore greatly affecting communication.

To help sensory regulation and increase communication:

Identify sensory differences: Recognize behaviors linked to specific sensory issues.
Adjust the environment: If needed, modify surroundings to reduce sensory overload, such as minimizing noise, lights, or demands, to make the person more comfortable and open to communication.

Meet sensory needs: Satisfy sensory cravings (e.g., deep pressure, movement) or address avoidance behaviors to help them become more comfortable, focused, and communicative.

Remember, when someone with autism is in a state of sensory regulation, they are more likely to communicate effectively.

Resources:

Patil O, Kaple M. (2023). Sensory Processing Differences in Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Narrative Review of Underlying Mechanisms and Sensory-Based Interventions. *Cureus*. 15(10). doi: 10.7759/cureus.48020. PMID: 38034138; PMCID: PMC10687592.

Mogaldi, N. (2025). How Can Sensory Deficits Impact Communication With ASD? *Autism Parenting*.

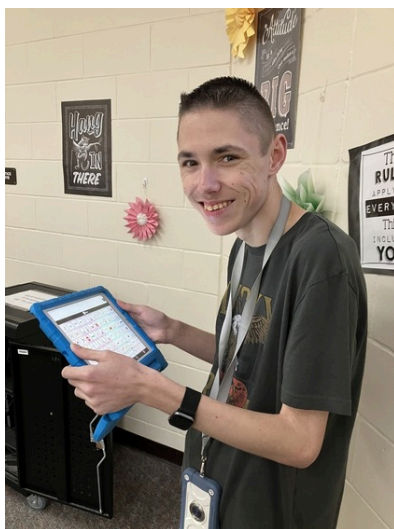
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ESE Parent Survey

By: Crystal Grey-Hewett, MSW

The 2025 Florida Department of Education ESE Parent Survey is currently live. This is one of the most effective ways to provide feedback about the education being received by our students and how best to continue serving them. If you are the parent of a child with an IEP, please take a few minutes and complete the survey.

[ESE Parent Survey](#)



Client Spotlight

Devin is an 18-year-old high school senior and a client of the Florida State University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (FSU CARD). Born in San Diego, California, he was considered a micro preemie at 27 weeks, weighing 1 pound and 12 ounces. Devin has been diagnosed with autism and cerebral palsy, and he is non-speaking; however, he effectively and efficiently communicates with a communication app, with which he talks about his interests, including space, planets, stars, and his concerns about global issues. He says that being non-speaking

will have lifelong challenges, but he will always fight and move forward.

Throughout his high school career, Devin has actively participated in the choir and is currently a member of the Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) club. Known for his friendly and upbeat personality, he is also described as an "extreme movie buff" with a good sense of humor. Devin deeply loves his family and spends time

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As he approaches graduation in May, Devin is focused on acquiring essential life skills to support his transition into adulthood. He plans to pursue employment doing “something he loves” and aspires to travel internationally. Devin is also eager to develop meaningful friendships, with a particular desire to find a best friend.

Click the Links Below to Request Assistance

[Become a CARD Client](#)

[Technical Assistance Request](#)

[Training Request](#)

[Public Awareness Request](#)

[Client Annual Update Form](#)



Baby Navigator Website

The Executive Director of FSU CARD and Director of the College of Medicine's Autism Institute, Dr. Amy Wetherby, launched the BabyNavigator.com website that walks parents through early childhood development and alerts them to early signs of autism. Please share this wonderful resource with anyone who is pregnant or has a baby 18 months old or younger.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

[Learn More About Baby Navigator](#)

nutrition



Nutrition and Eating Problems—Autism Toolkit

While children and teens with ASD have the same nutritional needs as their peers, it can be challenging to meet those needs if the child is a picky eater. This article from the American Academy of Pediatrics explores some ideas for tackling this challenge head-on.

[Read Article - Nutrition and Eating Problems—Autism Toolkit](#)

Share with CARD

FSU CARD is continuously looking for clients who would like to share their art, writing pieces, or success stories in our quarterly newsletter. If you are interested in sharing for our next issue, please send a message and image electronically to FSU CARD (autism@med.fsu.edu). All art or writing pieces should be titled. Select submissions will be chosen for each edition of the newsletter; artists and authors will be notified if their article is chosen.

Edgewater Office Park

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fax: 850.644.3644
Email: autism@med.fsu.edu

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