



## Autism Resources

### Help for a wide range of people

#### Greetings,

The newsletter may focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), but just about everyone can find valuable information in the resource links included. So please at least skim through this and check out a few links. It will be worth the time even if there is no diagnosis of ASD in your family or classroom.

Two new studies are making headlines on the Autism front recently. We thought these new reports provided an opportunity to send out some information on autism. The "autism spectrum" covers many children with very wide range of issues and abilities.

A new report released by the Centers for Disease Control on February 9th found about one out of 150 American children have some form of autism. This is up from the last estimate of one in 166.

A second finding, announced Feb 18th, from the [Autism Genome Project](#), has identified a link between certain microscopic abnormalities on chromosome 11 and autism. The study was co-sponsored by the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH).

Again, lots of the information in this newsletter can be beneficial to many parents, teachers and students whether or not a diagnosis of autism is present.

Pat Heffernan and Alex Rittberg - Co-Presidents, BSNPTA

## The New CDC Report

### Autism rates continue to rise

*According to [Prevalence of the Autism Spectrum Disorders \(ASDs\) in Multiple Areas of the United States, 2000 and 2002](#), while the rate of children getting a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has leveled off since the ten fold increase in the 1990s, the rate continues to rise. It is not clear how much of the rise is because of changes in reporting patterns and how much is because of an actual rise in incidence.*

*This report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) summarizes several studies and discusses how the data was derived and how the rates vary by*

region. For example, in Philadelphia County, about 0.87% of 8 year old boys have an ASD diagnosis and in Newark, NJ, about 1.48% have the diagnosis. Delaware was not in the study.

The report discusses how the ASD counts are related to various special education categories and how not all the students with a diagnosis of ASD are categorized as receiving special ed services for "autism".

- [CDC's Autism Information Center](#)
- [Autism Society of Delaware](#)
- [Is it Aspergers or Non Verbal Learning Disability?](#)
- [GAO Report on Autism and Special Ed](#)
- [NICHY Pervasive Developmental Disabilities Brief](#)
- [Related Articles on bsnpta.org](#)

## Autism Genome Project

The search for a genetic component of Autism

Published February 18th in the journal [Nature Genetics](#), the report out of the Autism Genome Project identified certain anomalies on a part of chromosome 11 related to neural transmission with increased risk of having autism. According to NIH Director Elias A. Zerhouni, this is the most ambitious effort yet to find the locations of genes that may confer vulnerability to autism.

The entire article can be read online but without a subscription, the cost to download the article is \$30. Search for the title of the article "Mapping autism risk loci using genetic linkage and chromosomal rearrangements " in the [current issue](#). The journal appears to be fairly technical so unless you have a background in genetics, a summary will probably give you the important details.

The links below contain the basic findings.

- [From the National Institutes of Health](#)
- [From Science Daily](#)
- [Autism Speaks Press Release](#)
- [Related Links on bsnpta.org](#)

## What is it Like to Have Autism?

Perspectives of adults with the diagnosis

There are a number of prominent authors who are able to describe what it is like to live with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Temple Grandin is a successful engineer and university professor who has an autism spectrum disorder. She has written a number of books and articles. Her article, [An Inside View of Autism](#), is a great place to start.

- [More Articles by Temple Grandin](#)
- [Books by Authors with Autism](#)
- [Women with Aspergers](#)

## Social Skills

Teaching more than the three Rs

*Students who exhibit characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have issues in school beyond learning core subjects like Reading and Math. Actually, some students with ASD can learn the "facts" quite well. However, there is so much more going on in school - especially in the middle and high school years. Students with ASD often need help mastering social skills that many students, parents and teachers take for granted.*

*The links below are great resources for many students with difficulties in this area whether they have a diagnosis of ASD or not.*

- [Carol Gray](#)
- [Social Skills for Middle School Students](#)
- [Jed Baker's Social Skills Training Project](#)
- [Using Acting Lessons](#)
- [Michelle Garcia Winner](#)
- [Books for Help with Social Skills](#)
- [Learning the Hidden Curriculum](#)

## Visual Strategies

Presenting information so it "sinks in"

*Many students, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorders, are "visual learners". That is, they understand what they see better than what they hear. For these kids of students, Visual Strategies can be a great help.*

*These strategies are part of a [differentiated instructional strategies](#) toolbox and many children with and without ASD who are [visual learners](#) can benefit from these techniques.*

- [Linda Hodgdon](#)
- [PECS](#)
- [Excerpt from Thinking in Pictures](#)
- [Learning Styles](#)

## Behavior

Difficulties at home and at school

*Dealing with difficult behavior is a problem for just about all parents and teachers at one time or another. Children with ASD can present some real challenges. Here are some resources that we think can help.*

- [NICHCY on Behavior at School](#)
- [Teaching Strategies](#)
- [SchoolBehavior.com](#)
- [Functional Behavioral Assessment](#)

## Parents

**Taking lemons and making lemonade**

*For those readers who would like to hear parents' perspective on caring for a child with the more severe symptoms of autism, this short video, [Autism Every Day](#) is a "must see". This video was produced by [Autism Speaks](#), the organization which helped organize and fund the Autism Genome Project.*

*Some parents are doing some interesting things. Below are parents who have somehow found the time and resources to get businesses going "on the side" related to their experiences with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Don't miss the [articles](#) on the Coulter Video site.*

- [Dan Coulter](#)
- [Lucas Works](#)

## Upcoming Events

**Follow the links for the details**

[Temple Grandin in Philadelphia](#)

*Friday, March 23rd, 8:30-4:30, Holiday Inn Stadium*

*The same Temple Grandin who is featured in this newsletter will literally be in our backyard!*

[Acting Antics](#), is presenting a Parent and Professional Workshop

*Saturday, March 24th, 9am-noon, Exton, PA*

*Come learn about fun and effective techniques to use with youngsters to build self-esteem and social competence through acting!*

[Speech and Language Pathologist Task Force](#)

*Monday, March 26th, 6:30pm, Mitchell Hall basement, U of Del, Newark, DE*

*The Governor's task force working to correct the shortage of SLPs state-wide wants to hear from parents about how the lack of SLPs has affected the education of students. For details, contact [president@bsnpt.a.org](mailto:president@bsnpt.a.org)*

[Teresa Bolick, Ph.D: Six Essential Skills and How to Teach Them.](#)

*Wednesday, April 11th, 7pm, Avon Grove Charter School, West Grove, PA*

Dr. Bolick is the author of [Asperger Syndrome and Adolescence: Helping Preteens and Teens Get Ready for the Real World](#) and [Asperger Syndrome and Young Children: Building Skills for the Real World](#) as well as numerous articles and book chapters. She is on the faculty of the Autism Spectrum Disorders Certificate Program of the Antioch New England Graduate School.

[Asperger's Syndrome: Entering the Real World at Home and School](#) - Cathy Grayson and Dr. Alan Sohn of SOHN GRAYSON, noted authors of *Parenting Your Aspergers Child*, will be presenting on Friday, April 13, at Williamson's Restaurant/ Conference Center.

Conference objectives include understanding Cognitive Social Integration Therapy (CSIT) & neurological issues that affect individuals with Aspergers, understanding the importance of identifying behavioral casualities, how to integrate your findings and design appropriate interventions and how to generalize skills for the real world through implementation of effective strategies.

[Michelle Garcia Winner](#), SLP & author of *Thinking About Me, Thinking About You* and *Inside Out: What Makes The Person with Social Congtive Deficits Tick*, will be presenting at the Springfield Country Club in Springfield, Pennsylvania on May 10, 2007. Michelle specializes in the treatment of students with social cognitive deficits. [Download brochure and application.](#)

email: [president@bsnpta.org](mailto:president@bsnpta.org)  
web: <http://www.bsnpta.org>

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