



Paragon Autism Services

Newsletter

December 2014

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

IN THIS ISSUE

What's New?

We hope everyone is enjoying the holiday season so far and we have a couple bits of news for you. With our second office up and running, Paragon Autism Services now has openings for in-home ABA services beginning in December and January for those with availability from 12:00-3:00pm living in Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania or Stafford. Please contact us if you are interested!

The first meeting of our new Special Needs Lego Club was fantastic! We had an excellent turnout and everyone had a lot of fun. The club will continue to meet on the first Saturday of each month from 10:00am-12:00pm at our Chatham Square office. We'll have multiple rooms set up for club meetings to include sensory activities, trains and lots of Legos of all sizes. The next meeting is Saturday, January 3rd. The club is free, but please RSVP to attend.

Our monthly Special-needs Family Fun Night at KD'z Kidz World has taken off and we hope you'll join us this month! The December event is Wednesday the 17th from 5:00-7:00 pm. The facility will be closed except to those with special needs and their siblings. Paragon Autism Services is very excited to collaborate with KD'z Kidz World and make this a great, monthly event!

The monthly Autism Lunch and Learn meetings will go back to the regular schedule in January, and will take place Thursday, January 22nd from 12:00-1:00 pm. The Lunch and Learn events are meant to serve as an opportunity for families to share information and ask questions of a group of area service providers. For more information, reach us at: RAACinfo@gmail.com

To keep up-to-date with new events and services we are offering, please "like" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter if you have not done so already. Updates, details on events, questions for the community and general information are regularly posted on Facebook. Behavior management tips and fun items are posted on Twitter.

If you haven't seen it yet, check out our Facebook online support group page. We hope that this page may serve as an always-on, online extension of our monthly support group meetings for parents of children with autism. Members of the group can post comments and ask questions to the rest of the group. The group is called Fredericksburg Autism Support Group and the address is indicated to the right.



Happy Holidays!

In this month's newsletter we'll provide a few tips for successfully navigating the holidays. If the commotion and crowds of holiday events are overwhelming for your child, try a few of the tips listed below. As always, feel free to contact us if you have questions or are looking for resources.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Questions:

marc@paragonautismservices.com

Like us at:

www.facebook.com/ParagonAutismServices

Support group:

www.facebook.com/groups/fredericksburgautismsupportgroup/

Follow us:

[@ParagonAutism](https://twitter.com/ParagonAutism)

paragonautismservices.com

Our Services

In-Home Applied Behavior Analysis

Paragon Autism Services provides Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to individuals ranging in age from 2-21 diagnosed along the autism spectrum. Our services include individualized ABA therapy delivered to the client in their home, parent/caregiver education and training, educational advocacy, collaboration with other service providers and assistance in locating resources. ABA is a service provided through Virginia's Medicaid program, covering 100% of the cost for services. Children with a diagnosis of Autism can qualify for Medicaid through the EDCD waiver, regardless of family income level.

Educational Advocacy

Paragon Autism Services is pleased to announce that we are now offering educational advocacy and consulting services as a standalone service to families in Fredericksburg city, Spotsylvania, Stafford, King George and Caroline counties. Our rate for advocacy will be \$60.00/hour and pro bono services will be offered on a limited basis to those with demonstrated need. Contact us for more information.

Parent Support Group

Paragon Autism Services hosts a monthly support group for parents/caregivers of children with Autism. Co-hosted by the Autism Society of Northern Virginia, meetings will take place at Paragon's offices on the second Tuesday of every month from 6-8 PM. Meetings are free and open to anyone, and free childcare will be provided to children on the spectrum. RSVP is required and should be sent in advance to receive childcare.

CPR & First Aid Training

Marc, our Community Outreach and Education Facilitator, is now a certified CPR and First Aid instructor. Paragon will soon begin offering CPR/First Aid courses to area families at a nominal cost. Additionally, Paragon is now offering CPR/First Aid training to local human services and educational agencies at a discounted rate. Please contact us for details

Community Trainings

Free community training events will now be offered on a quarterly basis in a conference format. Guest speakers will be featured and a variety of topics will be offered at each event. Quarterly conferences will take place on Saturdays with the first to be held this winter. These training events will remain free and open to anyone. More details will follow regarding the first conference.

Play Opportunities

Paragon Autism Services has begun our monthly, special needs Lego Club for children with autism or other disabilities and their siblings. It is an inclusive event and will have multiple play options. We provide standard Lego, Duplo and Mega Blocks, as well as wooden trains and tracks and sensory activities. Paragon Lego Club is free, but RSVP is required. The club will meet from 10:00am-12:00pm on the first Saturday of each month at our Chatham Square location.

KD'z Kidz World and Paragon Autism Services host a monthly special-needs night on the third Wednesday of each month from 5-7 PM. KD'z Kidz World is an indoor bounce house facility and is only open to children with disabilities, their siblings and other family during these events. Admission is \$8.00 per child (2 adults free). For more information go to: <http://kdkidzworld.com/>

Social Skills Training

Additionally, we are still interested in providing intensive social skills training as a separate service, but must have appropriate peer pairings in order for participants to derive the most benefit. If you are interested in this service for your child, please contact us.

Lending Library

We recently began a lending library at our office, and though it's a humble beginning, we hope to see it grow quickly. There are books on many autism related topics, including education, special education law, behavior analysis, skill development, as well as memoirs. Please take a look the next time you're here. Any donations will also be graciously accepted!



WHY ABA?

ABA is the science of changing behavior through the manipulation of environmental factors. Through the use of ABA strategies our team brings about positive and meaningful change. ABA strives to increase and teach socially acceptable behaviors through skill-building and the reduction of inappropriate behaviors to include aggression, self-injurious behaviors, tantrums and elopement. ABA is a scientifically validated approach for the treatment of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

We help reduce inappropriate behaviors to include aggression, self-injurious behaviors, elopement and noncompliance.

We help clients build functional skills including:

Language and conversation skills

Socialization and play skills

Self-help skills to include grooming, toileting, and eating skills

Replacement behaviors for and reduction of undesirable behaviors

Cooperation and compliance skills

Tips For The Holidays

Dress comfortably. This probably isn't the best time for your child to wear something new or different – especially if this has been an issue in the past. (Pick your battles.)

Talk with your family about keeping conversation, music and TV volume levels down. Another option is to have your child use noise-reducing headphones – either alone or with some music he enjoys. Wearing headphones may not be appropriate for the entire day. But it can be very useful when you sense that your son is becoming overstimulated.

Create a quiet room where your child can retreat and relax while waiting for the big meal. This is a great place to keep a bag of his favorite toys, books and other independent activities.

Most importantly, remember to catch your child being “good” – that is, playing, socializing or eating in an appropriate and healthy manner. Be sure to provide plenty of positive feedback. You know what your child likes – be it praise, a hug or a small reward such as a sticker or favorite toy. I understand that it can be hard to remember to reward a well-behaving child while you're juggling the demands of preparing a holiday meal. Consider having a kitchen timer in your pocket or set your cell phone alarm as a reminder to touch base with your child and provide that positive feedback *before* disruptive behavior occurs.

Consider minimizing table décor, including scented candles. Remember, the day will be filled with the savory and sweet aromas from all the delicious food you're preparing. It can help to reduce other sensory input at the table.

If you're worried that your child will gorge on snacks and appetizers prior to the meal, consider moving these treats out of sight or under cover. You may need to enlist the help of understanding family members. For example, consider placing the appetizers in one place in bowls and platters that have covers. Ask family members to take turns monitoring the “snack zone” and assist children with appropriate portions. (1)

Plan ahead whenever possible. Compile a list of activities that can help your child fill his or her time wherever you go.

Use rehearsal and role play to give children practice ahead of time in dealing with new social situations, or work together to write a “social story” that incorporates all the elements of an upcoming event or visit to better prepare them for that situation.

Keep an eye out for signs of anxiety or distress, including an increase in behaviors such as humming or rocking - they may indicate it's time for a break.

Engage kids with autism in repetitive activities such as stringing popcorn for trimming the tree.

Practice unwrapping gifts ahead of time, which will help a child with autism learn the understanding and the meaning of gifts.

Take toys and other gifts out of the box before wrapping them. It is more fun and less frustrating if a child with autism can open the gift and play with it immediately.



Try to relax and have a good time. If you are tense your child may sense that something isn't right.

Get a list of gift ideas for relatives from your child's teacher and therapists.

Don't shield your child from the extended family. Family members need to understand the challenges you face.

Take pictures when you and your child trim the tree, visit relatives, open gifts, etc. Make a book about your holiday by gluing the pictures onto construction paper, writing a short sentence under each picture, and stapling the pages together. When someone asks your child a question regarding the holidays, your child can use the book as a visual cue to help tell about the things he or she did. (2)

1. Tips selected from blog entry on autismspeaks.org, 11/21/14 by Kara Reagan

2. Tips selected from news item on autismspeaks.org, 04/23/07 by Dr. Gary Goldstein, Dr. Fred Volkmar, Dr. Melissa Nishawala, Dr. John Brown, Dr. Ivy Feldman, and Diane Marshall

HEADS UP!

The next Special Needs night at KD'z Kidz World is Wednesday, December 17th from 5-7pm. Come join us for a bouncing good time!

The next meeting of our Special Needs Lego Club will be Saturday, January 3rd from 10am-12pm. Please RSVP to attend!

Paragon Newsletter

312 Progress St., Suite 300
Fredericksburg, VA 22401



Paragon Autism
S E R V I C E S
Making a Difference Together

Upcoming Events

December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Parent Support Group 6-8PM	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 Special- Needs Night at KD'z Kidz World 5-7PM	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3 Special Needs Lego Club 10AM- 12PM