



Paragon Autism Services

Newsletter

August 2014

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

IN THIS ISSUE

What's New?

Paragon Autism Services is excited to announce that we are partnering with KD'z Kidz World to offer a monthly special-needs night beginning in September! The facility will be closed except to those with special needs and their siblings. Details will follow regarding the day and time.

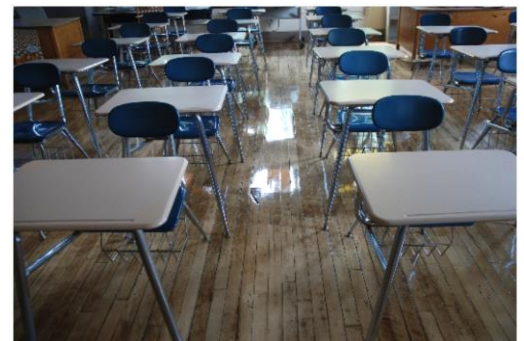
We're also excited about the addition of Cara Gugliemella to our team! Cara is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and will head up our new Stafford office beginning in September.

Also beginning in September, the Rappahannock Area Autism Council (RAAC) will begin holding its monthly meetings at the disAbility Resource Center. The newly formed council will provide leadership and coordination for local agencies and service providers in order to maximize outcomes for individuals with autism in the region. A lunch and learn event will follow each meeting to afford families the opportunity to share information and ask questions of a group of area service providers. More information will follow and questions can be addressed to: RAACinfo@gmail.com

We are discontinuing the monthly schedule for our free community training events and will instead begin offering quarterly conference days. See the *Our Services* section below for details. We would also love to hear what training topics are most important and relevant to you.

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.



Back to school!

In this month's newsletter we will cover some strategies to aid in the transition back to school. Whether the change in routine is difficult for your child or you're just interested in staying on top of things, we have some suggestions to offer. Don't forget to check out the *Our Services* section for changes to our free community training events and stay tuned for more details about the new Rappahannock Area Autism Council that will begin meeting in September!

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 and the first will be held in November. These training events will remain free and open to anyone. More details will follow regarding the November conference.

Playgroup Outings

We have begun our playgroup outings for children with autism/Asperger's. These meetings will take place at local recreational facilities and are designed to foster increased social contact between children and allow for a friendly environment in which they can play as they wish. Playgroups will provide a casual, free-play event. The only costs for playgroup meetings will be admission fees charged by the planned facility. Playgroups will be open to any child with autism and their siblings. Though these meetings will be open to children of any age, we anticipate most participants will be between two and eight years old.

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

Getting Ready

If the back to school time of year is a challenge for your family, there are a few things to consider. For the school year to go well, it helps if everyone is prepared. Let's talk about a few simple strategies to help prepare yourself, your child and your child's teacher.

To prepare yourself, especially if you know that school can be challenging for your child, the first thing you'll want to do is ensure that you know who all the relevant staff are at school. Not just your child's teacher, but also any therapists they'll see, the administrator in charge of special education, the special education chairperson, etc. Sorting all this out at the beginning of the year will save time and help prevent confusion and miscommunication should questions or concerns arise during the course of the school year. Another good idea to implement at the start of the year is to set up a nice big binder – divided by month – for all documentation to be filed in. Of course, if you're already the organized type you might as well go ahead and subdivide by category (e.g., tests, homework, discipline). In any event, these records will prove invaluable in getting a true, measurement-based grasp on your child's progress over time, and will aid in making your case should you need to seek changes to your child's placement, services, etc.

As far as helping prepare your child for the return to school, getting them in for a tour is always a good idea if they'll be attending a new school. It's probably best to do this during the summer when it will be less overwhelming, and most schools offer open houses for just these types of visits. Allowing your child to meet their new teacher is a good idea too, especially if they don't always respond well to new people.

If possible, riding the bus route to school before the first day could be very helpful as well. If appropriate, social stories and similar planning events can be helpful for children who might be anxious about returning or who have difficulty with new routines.

Regarding your child's teacher/s, it may be helpful to put together a short biography of your child to provide them. This wouldn't necessarily contain the same information included in your child's IEP, but would instead detail more about likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses and what to expect in terms of behavior and performance. This type of document is meant to be an up-to-the-minute description that will help prevent surprises and emphasize your child's strengths and best qualities. Be sure to include an explanation of which strategies you believe do or do not work for your child behaviorally and educationally. You'll want to keep this brief, as it's a busy time for everyone, and there will be opportunities for more in-depth conversation moving forward.

If you feel that these types of strategies will not be enough, you'll want to consider what you can do to ease your child into the school year and reward them for their success. One option would be to attend half-day for a few days before attempting full-day attendance. As soon as the day is over, you'll want to provide some reward to your child for having completed the day. If difficulties persist, reach out to the school staff and attempt to formulate a plan for success together. Forging positive relationships with school staff from the start will lead to a more pleasant experience and better outcome for all.



Support Group

The positive response to our parent support group in collaboration with the Autism Society of Northern Virginia has been overwhelming. There is a clear need for more centralized information on resources and services in the area, and we hope that these meetings can be a first step in establishing this. We welcome any feedback or suggestions you can offer. Meetings will continue on the second Tuesday of each month. Childcare is provided for children on the spectrum. RSVP required.



Playgroup Outings

Our August playgroup at the YMCA playground in Patriot Park was a blast! We had a great turnout and everyone had a good time. We'll send out details later in the month regarding the September outing.

HEADS UP!

Stay tuned for more details regarding the new monthly special-needs night at KD'z Kidz World beginning in September and the first quarterly conference we'll put on in November!

Upcoming Events

August

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Playgroup Outing to Patriot Park 4-6PM	8	9
10	11	12 Parent Support Group 6-8PM	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Paragon Newsletter

312 Progress St., Suite 300
Fredericksburg, VA 22401



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