

Summer 2024

Possibilities

in Education and Training



Empowering Liam

By Michelle Johnston, Program Coordinator, Iowa UCEDD, Center for Disabilities and Development



Liam McFadden is a 21-year-old who lives with non-verbal Autism, Dravet Syndrome (epilepsy), ADHD, and intellectual disability. When he was nine years old, he moved into a residential care facility in Storm Lake, Iowa, but after six months his family found that the four-hour drive between the facility and their home in Dubuque to be too much distance. In June 2013, after six months in Storm Lake, Liam moved to Hills & Dales in Dubuque. Hills & Dales was an amazing organization for Liam but due to covid and not being able to visit Liam regularly, his mom, Jen, thought it was the right time to look into moving him to a community setting with more opportunity for social interaction. In January of 2023, Liam moved out of Hills & Dales to a home Jen purchased in Dubuque, and he receives 24-hour care from Hills & Dales Supported Community Living (SCL).

Hills & Dales was where Jen heard about Money Follows the Person (MFP), a program which provides eligible Medicaid recipients funding for the transition

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services and enhanced supports needed for the first year after the transition to community living.

Jenn Johnson-Kernan and Jodie Schmidt, Liam's dedicated MFP Transition Specialists, played a pivotal role in ensuring Liam's new home was safe and tailored to his needs. With their assistance, Liam received various home modifications, including a fence for their half acre backyard, a swing, a sensory room, a sensory hammock, and specialized cookware designed for his safety and comfort. Jen couldn't hold back her admiration, "Jenn, Jodie and MFP really put the ribbon on top of making sure Liam is safe and there are less worries."

The essence of community living, according to Liam and his family, lies in the newfound sense of choice and control. From selecting preferred meals to enjoying car rides on a whim, Liam relishes the autonomy he now experiences. Liam, described affectionately by his mom as a "mover and a shaker,"

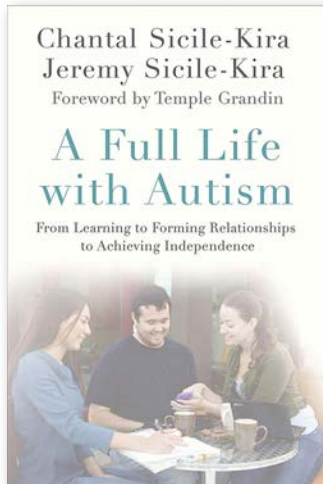


embodies the spirit of vitality and activity. His interests range from bowling to hiking, from car rides to grocery shopping to indulging in a favorite treat like ice cream - even if it means a 40-minute drive! Beyond his recreational pursuits, Liam actively participates in therapy, including horseback riding therapy. The support and love Liam receives from his family, especially his mother, is visible. Liam and his mom

both enjoy regular shopping trips where Liam gets to handpick a new toy every other week, adding a touch of joy to his routine.

Reflecting on Liam's journey, his mother, Jen shares invaluable advice for those considering a move to a similar community: "Dream big and go for it." She dispels the myth that there are limits to what individuals with disabilities can achieve. Liam's story is a testament to perseverance and the power of seeking out opportunities for a meaningful life.

The Disability Resource Library offers a specialized collection of books dedicated to Autism, providing valuable insights, strategies, and personal narratives to support understanding and education on the subject. This selection serves as a vital resource for individuals, families, and professionals seeking comprehensive information and perspectives on autism spectrum disorders. For further information or questions, you may contact the disability resource librarian, Mitch DeFauw, at mitchell-defauw@uiowa.edu.



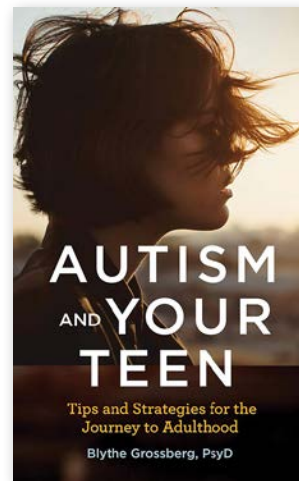
A Full Life with Autism: From Learning to Forming Relationships to Achieving Independence

by Chantal Sicile-Kira, Jeremy Sicile-Kira

In the next five years, hundreds of thousands of children with autism spectrum disorder will reach adulthood. And while diagnosis and

treatment for children has improved in recent years, parents want to know: What happens to my child when I am no longer able to care for or assist him? Autism expert Chantal Sicile-Kira and her son Jeremy offer real solutions to a host of difficult questions, including how young adults of different abilities and their parents can cope with the difficulties of living apart, finding and keeping a job, and creating fulfilling relationships.

professionals working with individuals with autism spectrum disorder is often focused intensively on the child who is diagnosed, the practitioner can also be an invaluable resource for the child's family. Drawing upon clinical research and firsthand family interviews, this book helps clinicians understand the experiences of parents and siblings of a child with ASD from the time of diagnosis through adulthood. It provides clear recommendations for sensitive, informed professional support.

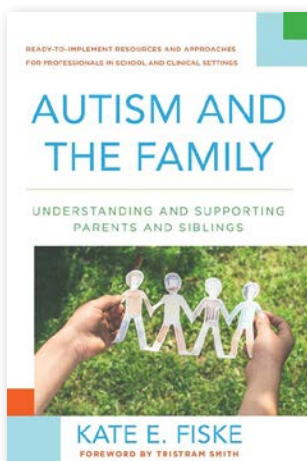


Autism and Your Teen: Tips and Strategies for the Journey to Adulthood

by Blythe Grossberg PsyD

If you have a child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), your journey together through the teenage years to adulthood may be complicated not to mention confusing,

rewarding, and financially challenging. This book offers scientifically validated guidance to help you raise your tween, teen, or young adult on the autism spectrum. It contains supportive advice for finding good medical and psychiatric care, helping your teen learn executive functioning and social skills to navigate middle and high school, and talking to your teen about sexual development and sexual activity. You will also find helpful resources for college and transition programs, as well as ideas for taking care of yourself as you embark on this stage of your parenting adventure.

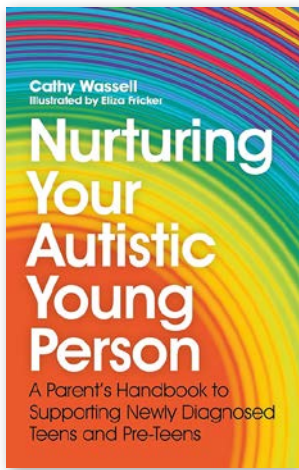


Autism and the Family: Understanding and Supporting Parents and Siblings

by Kate E. Fiske

Ready-to-implement resources and approaches for effective professional care in school and clinical settings. The reverberations of autism spectrum disorders among

parents and siblings can be complex. Although the energy of clinicians, teachers, and other



Nurturing Your Autistic Young Person: a Parent's Handbook to Supporting Newly Diagnosed Teens and Pre-Teens

by Cathy Wassell

Children who make it to late primary/early secondary age before being picked up by the system tend to present with traits that are harder to spot, meaning it can be

harder to engage professionals in the diagnostic process and gather the necessary support. Cathy Wassell, CEO of Autistic Girls Network, has tailored this handbook to support parents with older children or teenagers who are at the identification stage, walking them through the basics in an engaging and accessible manner. She addresses key challenges for this age group, including co-occurring conditions, puberty, and safeguarding, as well as looking to the future, advising on schooling options, and beyond.

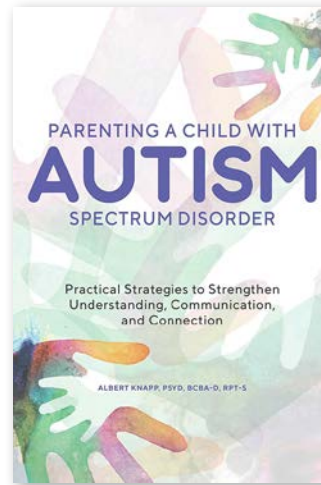


Fifteen Things They Forgot to Tell You About Autism: The Stuff That Transformed My Life as an Autism Parent

by Debby Elley

What if the things people need to know about autism is not the information they're getting? Combining myth-busting advice with personal experience, this book from the mother of autistic twins shares

simple strategies to build children's confidence, communication, and independence. From sharing the joy of yodeling around shops on the weekend, to finding creative ways to communicate with both her verbal and her non-verbal sons, Debby Elley gives practical and fun tips for everyday living and shows that being autistic is just another way of being. Both witty and candid, the book discusses labels, meltdowns, acceptance, happiness and much more.

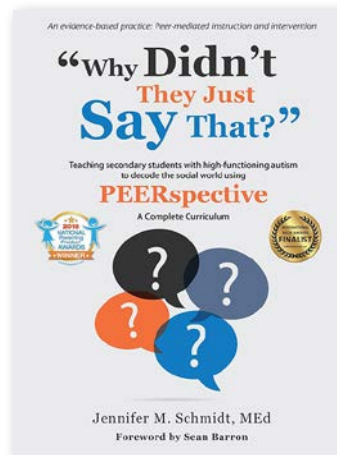


Parenting a Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Practical Strategies to Strengthen Understanding, Communication, and Connection

by Albert Knapp PsyD, BCBA-D, RBT-S

Get the guidance you need to meet the challenges of raising an exceptional

child. Parenting a Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder offers several approaches to help you effectively and respectfully manage everyday situations. Cut down on stress with practical advice drawn from clinical knowledge. Whether building a personal support network, creating safe environments, or navigating your child's relationship with others, you'll discover a variety of ways to set your child and yourself up for success in Parenting a Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder.



“Why Didn't They Just Say That?": Teaching Secondary Students with High-Functioning Autism to Decode the Social World Using PEERspective: an Evidence-Based Practice: Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention

by Jennifer M. Schmidt, MEd

“Let's create a class instead of the typical social skills programs!” With this statement began the development of this innovative evidence-based curriculum for secondary students with ASD and their neurotypical (NT) peers. PEERspective is a complete curriculum that teaches high school students' self-awareness, self-acceptance, relationship building, conflict resolution, managing stress and wellness, and many other topics that have lifelong impact on students' lives. The curriculum is popular among students with ASD as well as their NT peers, leading to friendships and relationships far beyond the classroom.

Possibilities in Education and Training is a quarterly publication of University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital Center for Disabilities and Development, Iowa's University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities. It is an outreach initiative of the Conner Training Connection, a program funded by the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) to support the transition of individuals with disabilities from congregate to community-based settings.

The good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction not a destination.

–Carl Rogers

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