

# SPECIAL EDUCATION

Logan County Schools

April 2017



## DATES TO REMEMBER

- 1<sup>ST</sup> April Fool's Day
- 2<sup>nd</sup>~ Autism Awareness Day
- 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>~ Blue Ribbon Week
- 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>~ Spring Break
- 16<sup>th</sup>~ Easter
- 22<sup>nd</sup>~ Earth Day
- 26<sup>th</sup>~ Administrative Prof. Day
- 27<sup>th</sup>~ Progress Reports

## APRIL FUN FACTS

Flower: 

Birthstone: Diamond

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disability; signs typically appear during early childhood and affect a person's ability to communicate, and interact with others. ASD is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum condition" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause of autism, but increased awareness and early diagnosis/intervention and access to appropriate services/supports lead to significantly improved outcomes. Some of the behaviors associated with autism include delayed learning of language; difficulty making eye contact or holding a conversation; difficulty with executive functioning, which relates to reasoning and planning; narrow, intense interests; poor motor skills' and sensory sensitivities. Again, a person on the spectrum might follow many of these behaviors or just a few, or many others besides. The diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder is applied based on analysis of all behaviors and their severity.

Autism is treatable. Children do not "outgrow" autism, but studies show that [early diagnosis](#) and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes. For more information on developmental milestones, visit the CDC's "[Know the Signs. Act Early](#)" site.

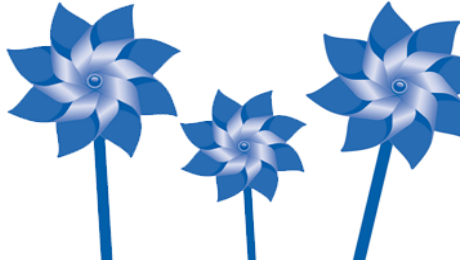
## **HERE ARE SOME SIGNS TO LOOK FOR IN THE CHILDREN IN YOUR LIFE:**

- Lack of or delay in spoken language
- Repetitive use of language and/or motor mannerisms (e.g., hand-flapping, twirling objects)
- Little or no eye contact
- Lack of interest in peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous or make-believe play
- Persistent fixation on parts of objects

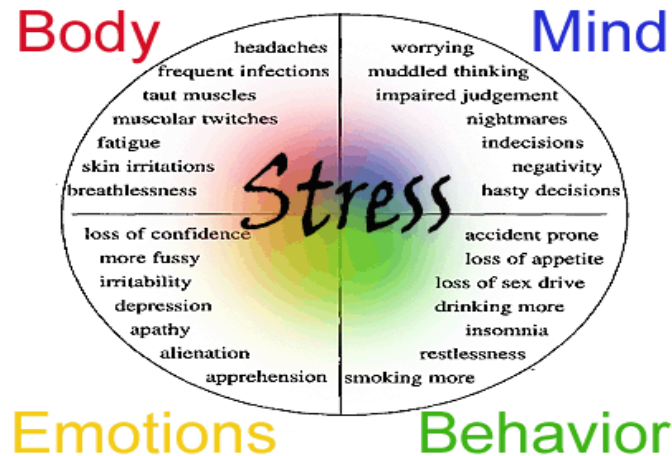


# APRIL

National Child Abuse  
Prevention Month



National Child Abuse Prevention Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect, and to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families. During the month of April and throughout the year, communities are encouraged to share child abuse and neglect prevention awareness strategies and activities and promote prevention across the country.



The Health Resource Network has been proud to sponsor Stress Awareness Month every April in the U.S. since 1992. During this annual thirty day period, health care professionals and health promotion experts across the country are encouraged to join forces to increase public awareness about both the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic.

For more information about Stress Awareness Month 2017, please visit <http://stressawarenessmonth.com>



**Earth Day** is an annual event, celebrated on April 22, on which **day** events worldwide are held to demonstrate support for environmental protection. It was first celebrated in 1970, and is now coordinated globally by the **Earth Day** Network and celebrated in more than 193 countries each year.

# 5 Great Spring Break Activities for Children with Special Needs

Spring break can be a great opportunity to engage your child in new activities, even you aren't traveling to a luxurious locale. It is also a great time to work on generalizing speech and language skills. In [speech-therapy](#), it's important to remember that getting away from the environment in which we were taught a skill is the best way to generalize and reinforce the lesson. Take advantage of spring break and consider the following activities for your child:

## 1.) Find a Camp

Enrolling your child in a camp does not mean they'll have to sleep away in cabins. Instead, "camps" can be a wide variety of activities that promote participation, provide structure or can support intensive therapy services. Here are a few:

### Spring Break Camp for Kids with Autism

Join TouchPoint Autism Services in Saint Louis, Missouri for an "under the sea adventure" during this spring break camp beginning March 18, 2013. TouchPoint is a nonprofit dedicated to helping children with disabilities. They serve more than 2,800 individuals on the spectrum in 95 counties across the state of Missouri. Crafts, group activities, swimming and exploring different sea animals are all a part of this great camp. Children with autism ages 5-12 are welcome and a low staff to student ratio is provided. REGISTER BY FRIDAY MARCH 8.

### Therapeutic Handwriting Spring Break Camp

If your child struggles with handwriting and other fine motor challenges, consider an intensive spring break camp like the one offered by The Kids Center for Pediatric Therapies in Louisville, Kentucky. This camp offers instruction for children and parent training from an occupational therapist with specialized knowledge of handwriting. This therapy can build upon and expand what children are learning in school and promotes generalization with take-home activities too!

## 2.) Indoor Recreational Sports

Any parent knows that staying indoors for five days is not an option when you're raising small children. For any child, exercise and a chance to get out of the house and run around are a spring break necessity. For indoor recreational sports including swimming or organized soccer, consult your local YMCA for open pool time, gym or community programs for children with special needs. [Children with developmental disorders love swimming](#), but you could also consult local horse-farms for [therapeutic riding programs](#) with knowledge and accommodations for special needs.

## 3.) Visit a Children's Museum

Children's museums are one of the few places where children are not only expected but encouraged to touch everything they see. Perhaps you live in a big city or even a small one, but haven't taken the time to look up your local children's museum or haven't made it there. While it can get crowded, spring break would be a great time to try this new activity with the family. [New interactive exhibits](#), group classes and presentations in addition to free-play make this an option suitable for everyone.

## 4.) Visit Your Local Library

While book reading is important, don't forget that libraries have other resources to explore over spring break. Most libraries also have story time and other child-friendly events in addition to computer and video access. With headphones to make the computer games quiet, children and parents can enjoy their separate activities- or play together. If you're planning to check out books, try asking your child's teacher for suggestions before spring break to help narrow the search.

## 5.) Spring Cleaning

While it isn't as glamorous as the others, spring cleaning is important for families with children at any age or ability level. Cleaning doesn't have to mean scrubbing, it could include organizing, decorating or rearranging. By making these chores into a family activity, kids can get involved and practice problem solving, language comprehension and expression, sorting and taking ownership of their items. Take this time to help make your home more efficient or more comfortable by throwing out old art projects, school notes and toys that just aren't used.



## Modifying Easter activities for your special needs child



Tired of your child coming back with an empty basket at Easter egg hunts? Is regular egg decorating too difficult for your child? Here are modified or alternative activities you can do with your child this Easter.

by Dawn Villarreal, One Place for Special Needs

### Easter egg hunt

An egg hunt is not fun if you never get the chance to find an egg. If this is your child, consider not attending your town's local egg hunt and do your own. Here's how:

#### Egg hunt for just your children

Hide your eggs in your own home or backyard. Consider having the eggs out in the open to make them easy to find. If you have several children in your home, select one color for each child. This ensures that everyone will get the same amount of eggs. For children in wheelchairs, hide mini eggs and trinkets in a plastic container full of rice or Easter basket grass that is at table level. Here are more [creative ideas](#) for making your own Easter themed sensory box. For children with vision impairments, you can now purchase beeping or [talking Easter eggs](#).

#### Work on skills while having fun

Older children may enjoy a treasure hunt. Write clues on how to find deeply hidden Easter eggs. This is a good exercise for children learning to follow step by step instructions or working on vocabulary skills. Children can follow a series of clues (e.g. First clue: Look under the potted plant in the kitchen) or put together a riddle format (e.g. I'm hiding behind a small appliance that makes things toasty).

#### Neighborhood egg hunt

If you like the social aspect of the big egg hunt, you can host your own egg hunt for very little money. Invite your neighbors with kids to a backyard Easter egg hunt. Have every family drop off 14 filled eggs before the day of the hunt. Hide these eggs in your yard (ask your neighbor if you can use their yard to make the hunting space larger). Remind kids that the rule is to find 14 eggs and no more. This allows everyone the fun of getting eggs. If you have it in your budget, put a number inside a few eggs. The kids can turn in these numbers for a small gift. This adds a little extra excitement to the egg hunt.

#### Educate the community

Don't have an accessible egg hunt in your area? Educate your local park district or other organizations hosting these events. Special needs children deserve to have just as much fun as other kids. Outline the needs of individuals with your child's disability. Then follow up with a phone call. One person or local disability group can make a difference in their neighborhood. All it takes is one well placed call or email.

#### Special diets

Children with juvenile diabetes, Celiac disease, food allergies and other dietary restrictions have a tough time on Easter with all the chocolate bunnies and eggs. Here are some [non-candy alternative treats](#).

#### Decorating Easter eggs

Trying to pick up an Easter egg with those little metal egg holders is difficult for all kids, let alone the child with fine motor difficulties. Here are some alternative ideas. Instead, use a crayon on a warm egg to make melted color designs. Try sponge-painting, stickers, glitter or stencils. [Click here](#) for more ideas on decorating Easter eggs as well as some ideas on what to do with those plastic Easter eggs after the holiday.

#### Meeting the Easter bunny

Some kids, especially those in preschool, have big anxieties about meeting the Easter bunny. It's difficult for them to separate fantasy from reality. Never force your child to meet that giant furry thing with ears if he doesn't want to. On the opposite side are children who still believe in the Easter bunny well beyond other children their age. It is a delicate task to break the news about the Easter bunny. And the day you do should also be the day you tackle Santa and the tooth fairy. Here is an article on [breaking the news](#) with your child along with a social story on passing traditions.

More info at [oneplaceforspecialneeds.com](http://oneplaceforspecialneeds.com)

