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May 27, 2011

# Because you asked special eblast on Leisure, Travel and Sports



Dear Lu,

Summer is here. The media tells us to relax. A vintage song calls it "the good old summertime!" Yet for our friends with autism, this change can be unnerving. Asking the brain to flex as we switch from long sleeves to short, cool weather to hot, dark to light, school structure to none, is asking a lot! People without autism have no idea how hard that is and may feel impatient or baffled at extreme responses to what society tells us should be a very happy time.

Spending free time in fitness and leisure activities can help handle that stress, and is critical for all of our health, relationships, and moods. Yet autism advice often focuses on therapies, medications and behavioral interventions; important in their own right, but certainly not joyful things that round out a quality life. Hiking, water sports, yoga, or making something new in crafts or cooking, also boost brain functioning and communication. People with autism need these rich experiences even though they cannot always express their importance. Finally, families living with disability deserve to enjoy "bonding" activities - and the great photos opportunities to remember them by.

We at ABOARD hope that the articles in this special e-blast will help you find ways to enjoy the longer and warmer days ahead, with your friends and families.

We all wish you the most pleasant days until

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fall!

Lu Randall  
Executive Director

## AUTISM OUTDOORS!

Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Rain or Shine! At Allegheny Commons Park next to Lake Elizabeth  
(behind the National Aviary) on Pittsburgh's North Side.

A FREE event provided by Venture Outdoors  
for people with autism and their families. Activities will include:

KAYAKING - CLIMBING WALL - BIKING - GEOCACHING (treasure hunting with GPS)



Snacks and drinks provided RSVP not required,  
but appreciated to help us arrange for enough supplies.

To register go to [www.aboard.org](http://www.aboard.org)

To volunteer or sponsor call ABOARD at 412.449.0165  
or email [autismnews@aboard.org](mailto:autismnews@aboard.org).

Presented by Venture Outdoors for the families  
of Advisory Board on Autism and Related Disorders (ABOARD)



Open to all with autism and their families or care givers!



## Resources for you and your family from The ABOARD Free Lending Library

Click here to see the [complete list](#) and contact ABOARD if you are interested in reviewing any of these publications.

### Resources on Leisure

- Activity Schedule for Children with Autism
- Autism and Play
- Developing Leisure Time Skills for Persons with Autism

### Resources on Activities

- Including the Special Needs Child (Activities to help all students grow and learn.)
- Inclusive Games - Movement Fun for Everyone!

### Resources on Fitness

- Physical Activities for Improving Children Learning & Behavior - Sensory Motor Development
- Beyond Boundaries: Fitness for the Young Autism Community.

### Have Some Fun Today! Recreation, Community Activities, Clubs and More

Recreation is about activities and experiences which produce feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction. They give all of us opportunities to express creativity, achieve and master new skills. Recreation can be particularly important for people with autism, drawing on opportunities to practice social skills, physical aptitude and increase motivation. These

### Activities for Adults with Autism

Like any other normal individuals, autistic adults too need some recreational activities so that they can channelize their energies and skills and ward off frustration. One of the biggest challenges faced by the family members is to arrange for leisure activities for adults with autism. The tastes, abilities and degree of abnormality would determine the choice of activities for an autistic person.

activities can provide the basis for increased self-confidence for your child. Participation in recreation and leisure activities allows individuals with autism to learn skills specific to a particular sport or activity. But more importantly, participation in these programs also helps improve more general skills that can be applied in settings like school and work. So progress can be seen not just in the specific programs, but in other areas of life as well.

<http://recreation.php>

### **Outdoor Environments for Children with Autism and Special Needs**

This article explores research and design considerations for creating outdoor, naturebased spaces that allow children with autism and other special needs to play and learn at their own comfort level, overcoming common challenges in a safe, fun environment that is equally engaging for any child.

[http://www.informedesign.org/\\_news/april\\_v09-p.pdf](http://www.informedesign.org/_news/april_v09-p.pdf)

<http://www.medinik.com/mental-disorders/activities-for-adults-with-autism>

### **Leisure Activities During Free Time Can Improve Communication and Social Skills in Autistic Adults.**

Free time is not always a fun time for people with [autism](#). Giving them the power to choose their own leisure activities during free time, however, can boost their enjoyment, as well as improve communication and social skills, according to an international team of researchers. "For many of us, we look at recreation as a time to spend on activities that are fun and that are designed for our enjoyment," said John Dattilo, professor, recreation, park and tourism management, Penn State. "But for some people with disabilities, particularly those who have [autism](#), these activities can be a source of frustration, simply because they didn't have a chance to make their own leisure choices."

<http://www.news-medical.net/news/20110301/Leisure-activities-during-free-time-can-improve-communication-social-skills-in-autistic-adults.aspx>

### **National Autism Society: Autism and Leisure Activities**

[http://www.ehow.com/way\\_5534831\\_autism-leisure-activities.html](http://www.ehow.com/way_5534831_autism-leisure-activities.html)

The National Autism Society has put together information for anyone working with children in sports, as play workers, or in leisure activities such as Cubs, Brownies, Scouts, Guides, Girls' Brigade, Sea Scouts or Woodcraft Folk. If you are a parent, you may like to share this information with the people leading your child's activities.

### **Activity leaders and sports instructors: a guide to autism**

If you are a sports instructor or leader of an organized activity group, such as the Cubs or Brownies, you may be asked to include a child with autism in your class or group. Here is short guide to help you meet their needs.

<http://www.autism.org.uk/en-gb/working-with/sport-leisure-and-play/activity-leaders-and-sports-instructors-a-guide-to-autism.aspx>

### **Brownie and Cub leaders**

Download our worksheet for use in Brownie or Cub groups, which will help children to find out a bit more about autism.

<http://www.autism.org.uk/working-with/sport-leisure-and-play/brownie-and-cub-leaders.aspx>

### **Sports, leisure and play workers**

Information to help play workers who work with children with autism spectrum disorders.

**Ideas for toys and leisure activities:** The NAS EarlyBird team has compiled a list of toys, books and play equipment that many parents have found to be popular with children with autism.

<http://www.autism.org.uk/Living-with-autism/At-home/Toys-and-leisure-activities.aspx>

### **Autism Games**

This Site is Full of Games:

Games that young children with Autism Spectrum Disorders will play. Video models of games that parents can watch and learn from and young children can watch and imitate. Tips and strategies for making games and play more educational and more fun!

<http://sites.google.com/site/autismgames/>

### **How to Plan a Family Vacation with Your Autistic Loved One**

Vacations with a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder can be chaotic and nerve rattling but you can have a relaxing vacation with your autistic family member, even if that family member is you! It does take some planning and preparation, but the result can be a pleasant, relatively stress-free experience.

<http://autism.about.com>

### **Six Tips for Traveling with an Autistic Child**

Kids with autism require as much routine and structure as possible. But family vacations are still possible with this list of tips for traveling with autistic children.

<http://www.time.com/time>

### **Travel Tips for Individuals with Autism and Their Families**

School is out, the sun is shining, and it is the time of year when we all begin to think about planning some down time - maybe even a vacation!

[http://family\\_services\\_docs/chantal.pdf](http://family_services_docs/chantal.pdf)

### **3 Things to Know Before you Close Your Suitcase: Preparing for Traveling with a Child with Autism**

[http://Travel\\_Medicine.pdf](http://Travel_Medicine.pdf)

### **Airport Awareness - Travel advice for parents and caregivers of children on the Autistic Spectrum.**

<http://Airport+Awareness+book.pdf>

## **SPORTS AND AUTISM**

### **Sports and exercise for children with autism can improve social and cognitive skills**

While many children with autism may never reach similar athletic heights, McElwain and others like him give children and parents hope. Perhaps the most significant part of the story was the acceptance that "J-Mac" received from his peers.

Whether children who have autism are high functioning like McElwain or are less advanced, playing sports can improve several aspects of their lives.

<http://www.examiner.com/dc-in-national/sports-and-exercise-for-children-with-autism-can>

[improve-social-and-cognitive-skills](#)

## **Best Sports for Kids with Autism**

What's the best sport for a child with autism? As with every child, the best sport is the one your child enjoys and excels at. That said, though, autism does impair social and communication skills and may have a negative impact on gross motor coordination. That means "typical" team sports such as [soccer](#), basketball and hockey may be particularly tough. Individual sports, however, may be just the ticket.

<http://autism.about.com/od/childrenandautism/p/sportsideas.htm>

## **Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and Sports**

Autistic Spectrum Disorders Don't Rule Out Athletic Pursuits

Not all those with autistic spectrum disorders dislike sports, but those who do enjoy physical activities tend to prefer individual athletic pursuits to team sports.

: [Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and Sports: Autistic Spectrum Disorders Don't Rule Out Athletic Pursuits | Suite101.com](http://www.suite101.com/content/autism-aspergers-syndrome-and-sports-a91483#ixzz1MF0sCXt3)<http://www.suite101.com/content/autism-aspergers-syndrome-and-sports-a91483#ixzz1MF0sCXt3>

## **Athletes with Autistic Spectrum Disorders**

Sports Achievements of Those with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome

Contrary to popular belief, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) do not preclude athletic achievement, though athletes with ASD tend to prefer individual physical pursuits to team sports. Sports in which those with ASD have excelled include running, swimming, surfing, martial arts, and archery. The following examples indicate what can be achieved when an athletic activity becomes the special interest of an individual with an autistic spectrum disorder. Many credit the achievements of these athletes to the intense focus, penchant for routine, and in some cases, unique cognitive abilities that come with ASD.

Read more at Suite101: [Athletes with Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Sports Achievements of Those with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome | Suite101.com](http://www.suite101.com/content/athletes-with-autistic-spectrum-disorders-a91493#ixzz1MF1ewDHE)<http://www.suite101.com/content/athletes-with-autistic-spectrum-disorders-a91493#ixzz1MF1ewDHE>

## **How to Teach an Autistic Child to Swim**

Children with autism can usually do anything neurotypical children can as long as they have proper guidance. It helps to recognize how an activity like swimming can benefit kids on the spectrum.

The activity is great for children who may need help with sensory processing, gross motor development, and following directions.

[http://autism.lovetoknow.com/How\\_to\\_Teach\\_an\\_Autistic\\_Child\\_to\\_Swim](http://autism.lovetoknow.com/How_to_Teach_an_Autistic_Child_to_Swim)

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Advisory Board on Autism and Related Disorders | 35 Wilson Street, Suite 100 | Pittsburgh | PA | 15223