

UF Health Center for Autism and Related Disabilities

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The UF-JAX CARD program provides support and assistance with the goal of optimizing the potential of people with autism spectrum disorders and related disabilities. Services are provided at no cost. The UF-JAX CARD program provides services to Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns counties.

Power Struggles and How to Avoid Them

By Diego Castillo, M.S., RMHCI

Power struggles come in all shapes and sizes, and they can be avoided.

Use the words, behaviors, and tone that **you expect from your child**. Yelling at your child "don't yell at me" is unhelpful. Snatching something back from your child and saying "we don't grab from people" is unhelpful. Whining to your child "stop whining" is unhelpful. There is a difference between holding your child accountable and disrespecting them because you feel disrespected. In all three situations, you are modeling the opposite of what you are saying. It is a mixed message and can lead to power struggles.

Negative attention is easier and more predictable to get than positive attention from your child's perspective (example: your child knows you will react if they bother you while you're on the phone; they don't know if you will react if they do something helpful like wash a dish). Teach your child what to do instead of just not what to do (example: "do this" instead of "stop"). Moreover, using the word "pause" instead of "stop" can be helpful because it is not as harsh of a demand or transition.

Praise your child for appropriate behaviors genuinely and immediately (example: "good job using your words"). Offer

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Upcoming Events

April 10 2025 UF Health Spring Fling

April 16 PEPSA Regional Training: The General Rules of Discipline of Students with Disabilities and their Practical Application

Join the CARD Weekly Update Email Newsletter.
To sign up please email Anthony.Rhodes@jax.ufl.edu.

CARD's Mission

To educate and empower individuals and families throughout the lifespan by providing support, assistance, and awareness within the community; with the goal of optimizing the potential of all individuals with autism and related disabilities.

choices to reduce noncompliance and the possibility of a power struggle (example: you can take the trash out now or at 4pm—choose). The demand is still expected to be met; the difference is that you have given your child some power of their own to make a choice. Your child does not want to take your power; they only want some of their own. This helps avoid power struggles and builds autonomy, responsibility, and accountability.

Discipline is teaching. Teach them.

Catch your child doing good behavior instead of bad behavior. Don't ignore them in the house until you hear something bad. You will find the behavior you focus on. Focus on positive behavior. If a child who cannot perform to a parent's expectation is removed because of it (example: sent to their room), the child may learn that the world functions better without them in it. It does not teach. Build bridges instead of barriers—instead of assessing who is at fault. It's not about winning. When you don't want to be compassionate or kind to your child, that is when they need it most. It is easy to be kind when someone else is being kind.

Power struggles are inevitable, and they vary by your child's age and temperament, as well as your own. Remember that you are both human beings. Remember that **being in the same situation does not mean you and your child are having the same experience. Both experiences are valid.** Anger tells us something is not right, but if you destroy when you are angry, then you also go down with that cause. Develop impulse and self-control. Whining is anger coming out of a very small hole.



CARD Adult Events & Support Groups



CARD Adult Resources and Support Group

1st Wednesday of each month. Adults with autism spectrum disorder will have the opportunity to engage in facilitated social conversations via Zoom. We will be having a varying rotation of topic discussions, that include adaptive, life and social skills. For additional information on how to register, please contact bernardo.cuadra@jax.ufl.edu or gwenivere.mauro@jax.ufl.edu.

CARD Retro Diner Hour

A support group for adults on the autism spectrum. The focus of Retro Diner remains on building social skills and fostering independence. Participants will be fully responsible for ordering, requesting, paying, and socializing for themselves. Location changes from event to event. Parents or transportation providers must be present and remain on-site during Retro Diner unless the adult participant is responsible for their own transportation. Parents can use this time to connect with other parents and enjoy themselves while the group is in session. If you have any further questions, please contact Gwenivere Mauro at gwenivere.mauro@jax.ufl.edu.

Girls Night In/Out Social Group

This group is a way for girls to meet other girls while engaging in a “girls’ night out.” This group will meet the needs of girls ages 16-25 years old who seek friendships with other girls. The girls will learn how to build and foster friendships with other girls, learn and practice social skills and interactions with one another and others in the community, and learn situational / environmental social skills in the community. Participants need a level of communication that allows them to express their wants/needs/challenges. Parent and caregivers are required to stay on site (both in clinic and community.) For additional information on how to register, please contact jamie.park@jax.ufl.edu or gwenivere.mauro@jax.ufl.edu.

Manswers: Men on the Spectrum

Men’s 17+ group for men on the spectrum – (This is a Virtual group) Join our men’s group, a supportive space where we discuss male-specific challenges, share experiences, and connect with others. Whether it’s navigating relationships, work, or personal growth, this group offers a safe, understanding environment to explore issues unique to men on the spectrum. For more information contact elan.santiago@jax.ufl.edu.

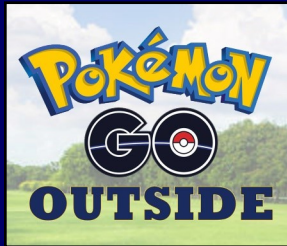


CARD Social Events & Support Groups



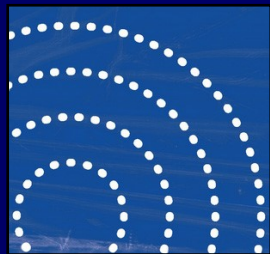
Walking to the Beat of Our Own Drum-line

A support group for adults on the autism spectrum. The focus of Retro Diner remains on building social skills and fostering independence. Participants will be fully responsible for ordering, requesting, paying, and socializing for themselves. Location changes from event to event. Parents or transportation providers must be present and remain on-site during Retro Diner unless the adult participant is responsible for their own transportation. Parents can use this time to connect with other parents and enjoy themselves while the group is in session. If you have any further questions, please contact Gwenivere Mauro at gwenivere.mauro@jax.ufl.edu.



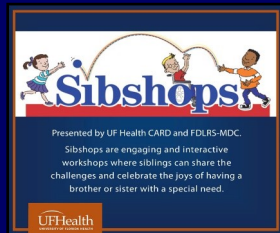
Pokémon GO Outside

UF CARD Jacksonville is using Pokémon Go to get your child(ren) to GO Outside. Using the game they love and the app you may be tired of hearing about, we hope to bring individuals on the spectrum as well as siblings of individuals on the spectrum, and of other special needs to play together on Community Days set by the game. This group focuses on children on the Autism Spectrum ages 10+ years old; and siblings ages 10 – 17; with the purpose of them having a day of fun out in the community. Using the app, we will create positive friendships, work on social skills, habituate out of the home experiences for those on the Spectrum; while siblings can build support and share in activities together; all while enjoying the outside and being active. Parents MUST remain on the premises, though they do not need to participate. For more information please contact brett.walden@jax.ufl.edu.



Creating Circles with CARD

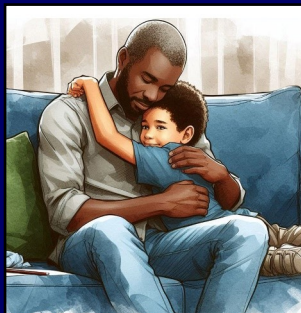
Taking place the 1st Tuesday of each month. Creating Circles with CARD is a group that will help individuals with autism and related disabilities navigate relationships while learning and understanding social boundaries and interpersonal skills. A group for individuals with ASD, ages 16 to 21. Parents must remain on the premises for the duration of the group. Participants must be able to have back and forth conversations. For more information please contact jamie.park@jax.ufl.edu.



Sibshops: Online Sibling Support Group

Sibshop is a gathering of siblings across the ages to create community, build support and share in the stories that make us unique as the sibling of individuals with developmental, intellectual, social-emotional, and medical disabilities. Siblings will be able to join virtually at link provided. Ages 12 to 17 years of age. For more information please contact chanel.baldwin@jax.ufl.edu.

CARD Parent and Community Support Groups



After the Diagnosis: Social/Emotional Disorders

A Parent Support Group for families that have recently received a medical diagnosis for their child. This group will offer resources and guidance on “what to do next” and how to process your child’s diagnosis. Together, we’ll address the mixed emotions that often come with receiving a medical label. The more the family understands the characteristics of your child’s diagnosis, the better the family can support the child. For more information please contact lotoya.odom@jax.ufl.edu.



Teacher Strategy Hour (online)

Teachers, are you running into some challenging behaviors? If you said yes, then consider joining Teacher Strategy Hour - a group designed to help you learn new strategies from your peers. Before joining, teachers are requested to share a scenario they are struggling with. During the group session, these scenarios will be discussed collectively, allowing participants to “fish bowl” ideas and strategies for addressing challenging behaviors or working with specific students. All scenarios will be kept anonymous and won't include individual names. The group's purpose is to establish a community of educators that openly share strategies and resources within our communities. The group meets once per month virtually. For more information contact brett.walden@jax.ufl.edu.



Parent Support Group (online)

A Parent Support Group led by the UF Health Jacksonville CARD and FLDRS-MDC clinician. It’s conversation-based with the goal of helping strengthen the relationship between child and parent, while learning about resources and supports from other parents with professional support. Parents will be able to join virtually from the comfort of their home. For more information please contact chanel.baldwin@jax.ufl.edu.



Black Parent Outreach: An Initiative to Include & Inform

The purpose of this group is to help spread awareness of the characteristics and disparities of developmental, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social disorders /disabilities to practitioners and Black families. Parents will have to opportunity to hear from panelists, professionals in the community, and to sign-up for our mentorship program. For more information please contact lotoya.odom@jax.ufl.edu.



Audiobooks & Literacy

By Sarah Falls, M.S., CCC-SLP

Audiobooks offer an engaging, flexible, and unique way for children to enjoy stories, access information, and promote a love of reading. Hearing a book read aloud engages different cognitive processes compared to reading text alone. This can be beneficial for individuals with learning differences who have strengths in auditory learning. It is especially helpful for those with reading disabilities who struggle with decoding. The auditory input allows people to focus on understanding and interpreting the story, which can reinforce learning and memory. For those with attention deficits, audiobooks can also provide a less visually overwhelming way to engage with content, helping them to stay focused for longer periods of time.

Audiobooks can help listeners understand complex books by allowing them to process auditory input and information at their own pace. They can pause, rewind, and replay parts to support their comprehension of the text. If you listen to an audiobook with your child, talk about it together! Share who your favorite character is and why, retell what has happened so far, and predict what will happen next. Engaging in these conversations can help reinforce comprehension and allow children to express their own opinions about the book.

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When looking at audiobooks, consider your child's reading level and interests. Explore different authors and genres to find stories that will keep your child actively engaged. Regular exposure to audiobooks can help establish a love for stories and make reading an enjoyable part of your child's day.

Your family can access audiobooks and e-books at no cost on your phone, computer, or e-Reader through your local public library. All you need is a library card! To get a free library card, most public libraries require people to bring a government-issued photo ID and proof of Florida residency (e.g., valid Florida driver's license, voter registration card, utility bill, rent receipt, etc.). Children under 18 will need to be accompanied by an adult and also bring identification, such as a birth certificate, school ID, or government-issued photo ID. Contact or visit your local public library for more information.

Here are the links to access the digital libraries by county, but a library card is needed first!

- Jacksonville Public Library: <https://jaxpubliclibrary.org/digital-library>
- St. Johns County Public Library: <https://sjcpls.org/econtent/ebooks/>
- Clay County Public Library:
<https://www.claycountygov.com/community/library/digital-library>
- Nassau County Public Library: <https://nassaureads.com/ebooks/>
- Flagler County Public Library: <https://flaglerlibrary.org/ebooks/>
- Emily Taber Public Library (Baker County):
<https://neflin.overdrive.com/library/youth>

FDLRS-MDC/CARD Satisfaction Survey

Here at FDLRS-MDC we continue to look for creative ways to meet individual and family needs. Please consider taking a moment to complete a short survey. We hope to use the feedback to tailor our services, group offerings, and training opportunities to best meet our constituent's needs. We look forward to hearing from you.

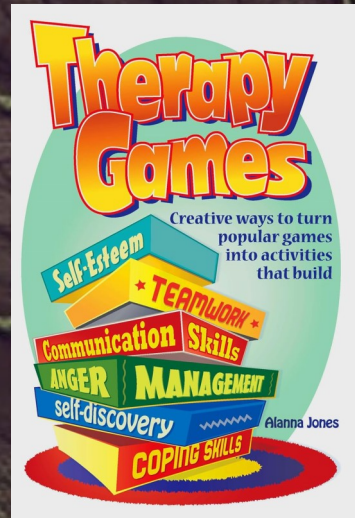
Use this QR Code to take our quick survey:



Now available in the CARD Lending Library:

Therapy Games by Alanna Jones

In this book you will find 102 new and exciting ways to turn ordinary games into Therapy Games. Each game used in the book comes with five or more ways to make simple changes that create a new and unique therapeutic experience. In addition to the 102 game options, there is also a section on how playing the game itself without any changes can have therapeutic value. Each game also comes with Discussion Prompts to add to the therapeutic experience of the game.



screen-smart parenting

How to Find Balance and Benefit
in Your Child's Use of Social Media,
Apps, and Digital Devices



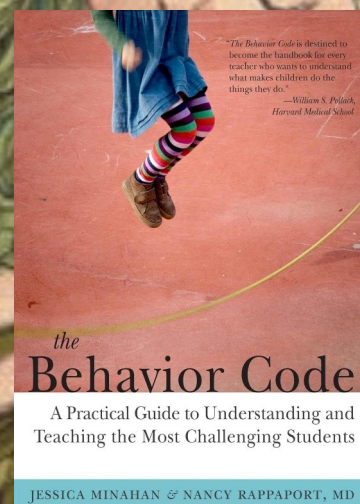
Jodi Gold, MD
Foreword by Tory Burch

Screen-smart Parenting by Jodi Gold, MD

Dr. Gold weaves together scientific knowledge and everyday practical advice to help you foster your child's healthy relationship to technology, from birth to the teen years. You'll learn: How much screen time is too much at different ages, How technology affects social, emotional, and cognitive development, How your own media habits influence your children, What you need to know about privacy concerns, cyberbullying, and other dangers, and more.

The Behavior Code: A Practical Guide to Understanding and Teaching the Most Challenging Students by Jessica Minahan & Nancy Rappaport, MD

The Behavior Code unlocks a wealth of proven practices to help teachers, counselors, and parents identify the messages underlying challenging student behaviors and respond in supportive ways. Drawing on developments in cognitive science and educational psychology, the authors begin with a simple premise: all behavior is communication. This thoughtful and empathetic approach can shift the balance from reactive to proactive classroom management, and more.



All items in the CARD Lending Library (including books, games, and movies) can be loaned out at no cost to the family or individual. Ask at the front desk for more information.

Spring Fling

for individuals with special needs

UF Health Neurodevelopmental Pediatric Center
An evening of fun and games at our annual Spring Fling event!

When: April 10, 2025

5:30 to 8:00 pm

Where:

**6271 St. Augustine Rd, Suite 1
Jacksonville, Florida 32217**

Use the QR Code to register online
Or visit our Facebook page at
facebook.com/AutismJacksonville



For more information email
Terry.Lee2@jax.ufl.edu
or call 904.633.0760

- ◆ Hunt for eggs
- ◆ Game Rooms & Prizes
- ◆ Dancing
- ◆ Crafts & Activities
- ◆ Face Painting



SPRING FLING



**Bring your camera for a photo
with a hopping good special guest.**

