

The Virginia Institute of Autism's Guide to Autism: An Educational Series For Caregivers of Children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and Those Seeking Further Support

The Virginia Institute of Autism (VIA) is a non-profit organization providing day-school and other outreach and consultation services for families, educators and health professionals seeking services, training or information about autism and evidence-based interventions. The VIA organization is dedicated to providing comprehensive, outcome-based education to people with autism; supporting families coping with the challenges that come with autism; and developing and supporting primary research, advocacy and training in the education of people with autism.

The VIA Caregiver Education Series is a program designed to provide parents and other caregivers of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and those seeking more information and support about diagnosis, treatment, how to obtain services and resources, and how to address challenges at home. The series consists of 11 stand-alone sessions, with each session lasting approximately 75 min. (noon-1:15pm)

LOCATION: Albemarle County office building 401 McIntire Road Charlottesville 22902

Session 1: Understanding autism. (Wed. Sept. 24th, 2014) noon-1:15pm

This session provides a review of the features that comprise Autism Spectrum Disorders and the terms used to describe them. This session includes a discussion of diagnosis of the disorders, current research, and to some extent, what parents can expect in the future for their child.

Session 2: Making informed decisions about treatment. (Wed. Oct. 1, 2014) noon-1:15pm

The focus of this session is how participants can be informed consumers when searching for treatments for their child. This session will cover what types of treatments are available, how to decide which treatments to use, what types of treatments are available and helping parents identify how many hours of behavior analytic services they should seek for their child.

Session 3: Understanding IEP: (Wed. Oct. 8th, 2014) noon-1:15pm

The focus of this session is on what is an IEP document, how do I know if I need an IEP, rights surrounding the IEP and special education laws.

Session 4: Understanding Community Based Waivers: (Wed. Oct. 15th, 2014) noon-1:15pm

The focus of this session will be on what is community based waivers, why are waivers important when considering services for my child, and beginning steps when navigating the waiver system.

Session 5: Addressing challenging behavior (Part 1). (Wed. Oct 22, 2014) noon-1:15pm

This session is designed to help attendee's better understand problem behaviors. A discussion of some common types of problem behavior and what happens when one attempts to change these behaviors. Also discussed will be the different purposes of problem behaviors (e.g., why children do what they do), and what makes it likely that a child will or will not repeat the problem behavior in the future. A discussion of understanding principles of reinforcement will be addressed.

Session 6: Addressing challenging behavior (Part 2). Wed. Oct. 29th, 2014) Noon- 1:15pm
Change of location: Alb. County Office Building-1600 5th street extended- (ONLY FOR OCT. 29th) This session will include a discussion of basic behavior management strategies that caregivers can use at home with their children. Also covered will be what experts tell us are the best ways to tackle problem behavior exhibited by children on the autism spectrum, including how to come up with and use a behavior plan effectively. A discussion of understanding principles of reinforcement will be addressed.

Session 7: Strategies at home: How to address specific concerns around toileting. (Wed. Nov. 5th, 2014) Noon-1:15pm

This session covers common concerns and issues related to teaching children toileting skills and basic strategies for addressing them. Topics covered will include stages of development, signs of readiness, teaching children to independently initiate toileting, and positive reinforcement for staying dry or eliminating in the toilet.

Session 8: Strategies at home: How to address specific concerns around sleeping. (Wed. Nov. 12th, 2014) Noon-1:15pm

This session covers common concerns related to sleep and basic tips and strategies to address them. Topics covered will include delayed sleep onset, night waking, early awakenings, and sleeping in their own bed. Also discussed will be general recommendations for amount of sleep by age and how sleep impacts behavior.

Session 9: Strategies at home: How to address specific concerns around feeding. (Wed. Nov. 19th, 2014) Noon-1:15pm

This session covers common issues related to feeding. Among others, strategies and tips for teaching appropriate meal time behavior, addressing food selectivity, and food refusal will be discussed.

Session 10: Enhancing social development: Caregivers' role in treatment. (Wed. Dec. 3rd, 2014) Noon-1:15pm

This session covers what parents and other caregivers can do to make sure that their child is learning even when they are not in school or in therapy. Topics covered will include teaching techniques that can be used to improve skills development, and also ways to build social and play skills. Also discussed will be ways to introduce the diagnosis to your child and how to support siblings.

Session 11: Strategies to help manage behavior when in the community: (Wed. Dec. 11th, 2014) Noon-1:15pm

This session covers general strategies parents and caregivers can use with their child in the community to promote successful community outings. Topics covered will include strategies to help parents and caregivers prepare for outings so as to decrease the likelihood that problem behavior occurs in the community as well as strategies for safely and effectively managing problem behavior in the community, should it occur.