

Monthly WMLC Perspectives Highlights - April 2014



WEST METRO
LEARNING CONNECTIONS, INC.
Developing Social Understanding & Skills Since 2001
Locations in Edina & Excelsior

Relocating When It Really Matters: Making Moves for the Sake of Your Children

Written by: **Mary Z. McGrath, Ph.D.**

As a special education teacher, it was always interesting to meet new students. This was common for me when they moved to the city where I taught and enrolled in our school. What was unusual was when a family moved from a Hawaii to Minnesota, not for our delightful climate, but for the educational benefit of their children.

These parents cared deeply and were finding that their children with special learning disabilities were not succeeding in their area school. Thus they began a search. As I recall, the search included not only the correct programming, but also a location with available programming designed to ensure that their children received the instruction that best matched their needs.

Imagine the effort and energy they had to have to tap into the educational network, learn about educational methodology, sift and sort it out and then determine what would and would not work for their children. Imagine then, doing an extensive search to find a school district somewhere that offers that special instruction. Then imagine reviewing the schools in that district until you discover the right educational fit for both children. Then, imagine deciding to leave your jobs and social life, sell your home, move to a completely new place and rebuild your lives so the young people can make it. How many parents will go that far so that their children have a solid start in life?

I will always remember the courage and care of these parents. They found us, relocated, came to our school and our staff worked hard so these children could learn the way their children learn best. I commend them for their sacrifice.

Does relocation always mean going to this great extent to make changes for a child or are there other ways to make moves for children? Following are five ideas on ways to relocate and move in order to bring the best benefit to you child.

1. Changing Schools – We live in a time when there are many educational options. Parents can relocate their children to schools that provide emphasis on science or languages or place them in a school that provides religious instruction.
2. Finding Supportive Social Systems- Sometimes a family lives in a neighborhood where there are few potential playmates of their child's age. Or they live in an area where the children in the neighborhood could lead them in directions that vary with the family's vision for role models and friends for their children. If this is the case, parents may choose to find after school programs, scouting groups, classes in music, the arts and environmental studies that suit their interests. Some opt to enroll their children in special church groups so they can build social relationships to reinforce what they are taught in the home.
3. Creating Special Times with Extended Family- Some parents make an effort to gather with their own brothers and sisters, near and far, so that their children can develop friendships with their cousins, aunts and uncles. Being part of a family brings security and identity and they believe that playing together and celebrating special occasions such as birthdays, Baptisms and Bar Mitzvahs is well worth it.
4. Vacations- A great way to relocate for a brief period is taking the traditional family vacation. With the price of gas this need not mean going far. What matters is setting aside time for relaxation, recreation and new experiences. Vacation refreshment can then spill over into family life and build lifetime memories that reinforce the family bond for years to come.
5. Community Service- Serving others helps us relocate our focus from self to others. Take time out to not only model assisting others, but also offering your children opportunities to engage in activities that benefit others. This can mean doing things nearby such as picking up roadside litter to visiting those in care centers.

Certainly parental decisions impact the life of a child forever. They may be drastic such as the one made by the family who left the distant state for Minnesota or local and simple moves for the betterment of the family and others. The important thing is that families relocate to the groups and situations that best benefit them and others in the community.

Mary Z. McGrath, Ph.D., speaker, author and caregiver, works with organizations, schools and parents to reflect on and improve the quality of career, relationships, and life transitions.

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SOCIAL SKILLS THERAPY
HELPING KIDS FIT IN & SHINE

**Summer Term &
Camp Connections**

Save your spot now... There is still time to register! We are offering a wide selection of courses starting with preschool age all the way through young adulthood. Check out our Summer Term Course Offerings and Camp Connections Day Camp!

Summer Social Skills Term begins on Monday, June 16, 2014 and runs through Friday, August 15, 2014. Camp Connections runs from June 9 to August 21.

[Click here to view the Summer EDINA Registration Form](#)

[Click here to view the Summer EXCELSIOR Registration Form](#)

[Visit our website for course descriptions](#)

Click [here](#) to view the Summer Term Calendar

Contact Mary Wyatt for information regarding registration at mwyatt@wmlc.biz



Metro Friendship Foundation Gala

[Metro Friendship Foundation](#) (MFF) is a non-profit organization that provides scholarships to qualifying individuals on the Autism Spectrum who are seeking social skills development.

Imagine yourself walking into the Plaza Hotel in New York City, November 28, 1966, and "dancing holes in your soles" with the "grooviest" celebrities of the decade. Join us as we re-live one of the 60's greatest social spectacles while **empowering kids with Autism to lead fulfilling and productive lives.**

Dress:

Black or White Attire

Masks are optional...but encouraged!

Click [here](#) to order your tickets today!

To find more specific information regarding the gala click [here](#).

Not able to attend the Gala but you are still



The puzzle pattern of this ribbon reflects the mystery and complexity of autism. The different colors and shapes represent the diversity of the people and families living with this disorder.

The brightness of this ribbon signals hope... hope that through research and increasing awareness of autism, and through early intervention and appropriate treatments, people with autism will lead fuller, more complete lives.

According to the Autism Society,

- Prevalence is estimated at 1 in 68 births.
- 1 to 1.5 million Americans live with an autism spectrum disorder.
- Fastest-growing developmental disability; 1,148% growth rate.
- \$60 billion annual cost.
- 60% of costs are in adult services.
- Cost of lifelong care can be reduced by 2/3 with early diagnosis and intervention.
- In 10 years, the annual cost will be \$200-400 billion.
- The cost of autism over the lifespan is 3.2 million dollars per person.
- Only 56% of students with autism finish high school.
- The average per-pupil expenditure for educating a child with autism was estimated by SEEP to be over \$18,000 in the 1999-2000 school year. This estimate was nearly three times the expenditure for a typical regular education student who did not receive special education services.
- The unemployment rate for people with

interested in helping individuals on the Autism Spectrum? Click [here](#) for a Silent Auction Donation form.



Register for Therapeutic Recreation Activities ONLINE

We have now added the capability for our clients to register for therapeutic recreation activities online. This includes, Friday Open Socials, Sleepovers, Bold Connections, and Strategy Central. You can now click on the direct link to register or you can visit our website at www.wmlc.biz to register.



disabilities was at 14%, compared with 9% for people without a disability. Additionally, during the same period, only 21% of all adults with disabilities participated in the labor force as compared with 69% of the non-disabled population.

Other information and the information above can be found at <http://www.autism-society.org/about-autism/facts-and-statistics.html>



WMLC Prom

This year on Saturday, May 24, 2014 from 7:00pm to 10:00pm we will be holding our second annual WMLC Prom at our Edina location!

Registration Deadline: Thursday, May 22, 2014
by 4:30pm

[Click here to check out the flyer.](#)

[Click here to register](#)



MN Parent Magazine

This article put out by MN Parent Magazine gives helpful advice in regards to what to do

Monthly WMLC Sleepover

Drop-off: Saturday, April 26th at 5:00pm
Pickup: Sunday, April 27th at 10:00am

Join us for a sleepover at **WMLC Edina**! This is a great opportunity to enjoy some free time to hang out with friends. At about 6:30, we will eat dinner together as a group. After dinner, we will have more free time for board games, video games, or a movie before lights out. In the morning, staff will prepare breakfast and we will have even more time to hang out with friends after we pack up our things! (Ages 8+)

Outing Goals: Cooperative play skills and sportsmanlike conduct, verbal support to peers, reciprocal conversations relevant to activities, independence and responsibility.

Sleepover Cost: \$160

Items to Bring: Sleeping Bag, Pillow, Toothbrush

Optional Items to Bring: Games (electronic games are okay)

Registration Deadline: Thursday, April 24, 2014 by 4:30pm

[Click here to check out the flyer.](#)

[Click here to register](#)

after your child's developmental, neurobiological, or mental health diagnosis.

WMLC is mentioned in the article. Click below to check it out.

<http://www.mnparent.com/features/what-next>



Sensory Strategy

There are a variety of names for these helpful cushions, often called wobble cushions. We have found them to be very helpful for many of our WMLC clients. We call them, "bubble seats." These cushions are great for children with sensory processing issues and focus challenges as they allow them to enjoy just the right amount of movement to maximize their focus without needing to get up from their spot.

These cushions can be used with young children all the way up through adulthood. Most cushions contain both a smooth side and a side with slightly raised bumps in order to provide more tactile input. These cushions can be purchased from many different websites by Googling the words "wobble cushion."



App of the Month

Understanding Inferences Fun Deck is an easy to use app which includes 52 illustrated picture flash cards with audio text on each card. This app is meant to help boost your child's inferencing and reasoning skills by having them answer questions or completing sentences. Prompts include questions like, "Who might live here?" and sentences like, "Bill is sick. His mom is taking him to..."

Click [here](#) for more information.



QR Code ID

This is a great idea for loved ones who may wander. Each patch has an individual code that can be scanned by a smartphone or manually entered into the site to view contact and emergency information that you provide. These patches can be sewn onto your own clothing.

[Click here to visit the website.](#)



Strategy Central

Space is Limited - Register now to save your FREE spot



Calming Bottles

Calming bottles are used to help with emotional regulation. These bottles allow for the individual to bring their focus into one place. The individual can shake the bottle as hard as he/she wants, this provides calming proprioceptive input to her body while also serving as a physical outlet that is less destructive than hitting or kicking. While he/she holds the bottle and watches the glitter fall, his/her hands and eyes are brought to midline and this can help organize and center the nervous system as well. The slow fall of the shaken glitter can serve as a visual model that, often unconsciously, can slow his/her heart rate and respiration.

- Glitter glue
- Glitter
- Jewels
- Glue gun
- 16 oz water bottle with water

[Click here for the instructions](#)

We hope you will join us for ***Creating Positive Meal Times, One Bite at a Time***. This workshop FREE to you, will be put on by Family Speech & Therapy Services. Feeding difficulties and limited diets not only impact the child but also the whole family. When one of your most important jobs as a parent or caregiver is ensuring adequate nutrition for your child, mealtime battles can be exhausting.

"Creating Positive Mealtimes, One Bite at a Time" will focus on: Understanding how children learn to chew and swallow their foods efficiently. Identifying signs of delayed oral motor skills. Determining when picky eating becomes problem feeding. Learning how to encourage food exploration at home and restructuring family mealtimes to support your child.

This workshop will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2014 from 6:00-7:30 at our Edina location.

[Click here to register](#)



FAMILY SPEECH & THERAPY SERVICES

Family Speech & Therapy Services

Family Speech & Therapy Services provides [speech & language](#)



"Like" Us on Facebook

If you are interested in keeping up-to-date with all of the "goings on" at WMLC you can follow us on Facebook. You can find interesting stories, information about upcoming events and more. Click [here](#) to follow us!



Anxious Child Workshop

National speaker Rebecca Kajander presents
"How do I help my child who is anxious?"

Parents looking for ways to help their child who is experiencing anxiety should plan to attend the workshop, "How do I help my child who is anxious?" presented by dynamic national speaker Rebecca Kajander. This free workshop will be held on Thursday, April 24 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at PACER Center. Kajander, who is an award-winning nurse practitioner and author of numerous books, will share practical, take-home suggestions for parents. Advance registration is required. [Register online](#) or call (952) 838-9000.

[therapy](#) and [occupational therapy](#). They help children and adults with deficits in communication, self-help, gross motor, fine motor, sensory, or academic skills reach their fullest potential. They have three separate locations, one of the locations is located inside of WMLC Edina.

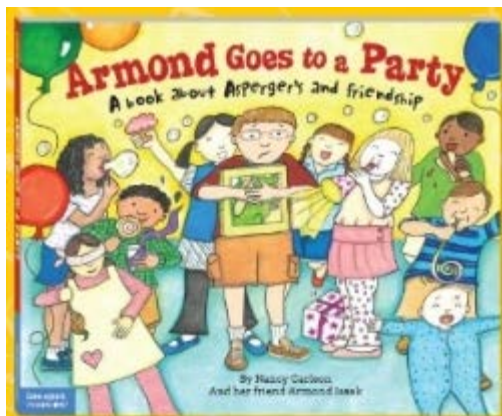
To find out more about Family Speech & Therapy Services click [here](#).

Check out their blog full of helpful information and ideas [here](#).



How to Talk to Your Special Needs Child About Sexual Health

[Click here to view the flyer](#)



Autism Awareness Book Launch Party

On Tuesday, April 15th, Free Spirit and the Red Balloon Bookshop in St. Paul are teaming up to throw an Autism Awareness Night/Book Launch

Party in honor of the publication of the new picture book from acclaimed children's author Nancy Carlson. The book ([Armond Goes to a Party: A book about Asperger's and friendship](#)) is co-authored by 14-year-old Armond Isaak, a boy from New Hope who has Asperger's syndrome. (Here's a [great clip](#) of Armond talking about his book on KARE 11 last week!)

[Click here to view the flyer](#)



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Better Business Bureau



BBB
Rating: A+

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