



**AUTISM ALLIANCE**  
*Empowering Families for 30 Years*



a program of  **Advocates**

## July Newsletter

**A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS**

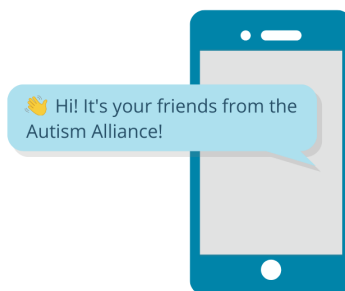


*Thank you for making this summer safer and more fun!*

With your help, we awarded grants to **52 families** totaling more than \$17,000!



**Join Autism Alliance NEW text messaging!**



We are thinking about ways to improve our communication with families and caregivers. If you would like to receive text messages from the Autism Alliance, please click the below button to sign-up and opt-in. Sign Up for Texts:

[CLICK HERE](#)

## Happy 4th of July

For many American's, July 4th is a fun holiday to spend with friends and family at picnics, parades, and firework shows. For kids with autism or sensory sensitivities, July 4th can sometimes be over-stimulating or challenging. Here are some tips and tools to make this holiday more enjoyable for the whole family.



### Keep Sensory Overload to a Minimum

Sudden loud noises can easily cause a person on the spectrum to go into sensory overload. Make sure they know ahead of time that the fireworks will be loud. It's nice to have some noise reduction headphones. Make sure to instruct them ahead of time on when and how to use them. Bright lights can also cause discomfort for the sensory sensitive. Make sure to instruct your child to look away if the fireworks are too bright or have some sunglasses available.

Deep pressure is very calming. Remember to bring your weighted blanket or weighted vest to the event to provide some soothing deep pressure if needed.



### Social Stories

Social stories are used to teach a child what to expect in the future, decrease worry and anxiety, and teach rules and social skills through simple stories and pictures. Here is a social story specifically for The Fourth of July, which you can download and print at the link.

[Download Social Story](#)



### Summer fireworks season has arrived in Massachusetts!

Shows are scheduled to occur from mid-June through September -- with most planned around the 4th of July holiday.

Click below for some of the state's most popular fireworks shows, followed by a list based on permits filed with the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Please be advised, some shows may have their dates and times adjusted without notice.

[2023 Massachusetts Fireworks Schedule](#)

## Parent Support

**AUTISM ALLIANCE**  
**SUMMER PARENT SERIES**  
*Language & Play*

Cailien Harvey M.A., CCC-SLP  
from Boston Speech and OT Specialists

**BOSTON SOS**

Language and Play Project  
Boston Speech and OT  
Tuesday, July 25  
Tuesday, August 29  
6:30pm-7:30pm (virtual)

We will discuss how to create an accurate profile for your child to understand where they are currently functioning and how to best meet them there. For parents who attend all sessions, you will qualify for a raffle to receive a scholarship for 2 FREE private additional sessions including specific support to your child. There will be time for Q & A at the end of each class. For more details: [CLICK HERE](#)

If you missed the June 27th training, hop on the [Autism Alliance YouTube Channel](#) and you can watch in its entirety.

## *"Let's Build a Village" Mom's Self-Care Group Summer Edition*



**NEW Mom's Self-Care Group**  
Thursday July 20th

**Thursday August 17th**  
**12noon to 1pm | Virtual**

Our virtual, monthly "Let's Build a Village" program is for MetroWest moms who would like to grow their "village" by connecting with other moms. This program is fun, fabulous, and free and is sponsored by the Autism Alliance. It is an opportunity for moms of children with autism within the MetroWest area to bond with other moms by sharing laughs while lifting each other up. To sign up, [CLICK HERE](#)

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## Summer Living



### Water Safety

Being a parent to a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is very challenging when it comes to water safety. Not only are children with autism more likely to wander, but they are also often attracted to the soothing and sensory qualities of water - it's constant and fluid movement, reflective properties, and the way it shimmers in sunlight almost beckons them towards it. On top of that, some individuals with autism do not have the spatial awareness while in the water. For these reasons, it is understandable why some chose to stay clear of the beach or pool. However, *ALL* children should still be made aware of water safety drowning in case of wandering and accidental slips or falls into a lake, river, or pool. The fact remains that drowning is a leading cause of death for those living with autism. [Read More](#)

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## Local Resources for Swim Lessons

[Gold Fish Swim School](#) | [Autism Alliance](#)

[Little Flippers Swim School](#) | [Autism Alliance](#)

[Swim Angelfish](#) | [Autism Alliance](#)

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## 10 Summer-Themed DIY Sensory Activities

[Calming Epsom Salt Sensory Play](#) | Source: Fireflies and Mud Pies

[Edible Sand & Sensory Activities for Babies](#) | Source: Happily Ever Mom

[Fizzing Hidden Ocean World](#) | Source: Fun at Home With Kids

[Mini Sandbox](#) | Source: Ashley Pichea

[Ocean Slime](#) | Source: Buggy and Buddy

[Pink Lemonade Playdough](#) | Source: Fireflies and Mud Pies

[Squishy Ocean Sensory Bag](#) | Source: In the Playroom

[Summer Sensory Bin](#) | Source: The Chaos and the Clutter

[Watercolors and Cornstarch Sensory Play](#) | Source: Mama Smiles

[Watermelon Volcano Science and Sensory Play](#) | Source: Natural Beach Living

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**NEW! Announcing Our Newest Autism Welcoming Partner**

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## MetroWest Regional Transit Authority

We are so happy to announce the MWRTA has recently been certified as Autism Welcoming! Travel Training is a free-to-the-public service open to anyone 12 years of age or older who would like to learn how to use the MWRTA Fixed Routes to increase access to employment, personal, social, and/or recreational opportunities in the 16 cities and towns the MWRTA serves in the MetroWest area. The MWRTA travel training program is designed to fit each individual's interests, abilities, needs, and travel goals.

[Learn More](#)

## Places To Go This Summer Autism Welcoming Businesses Sensory-Friendly Hours

**APEX**  
ENTERTAINMENT®  
FOOD • ATTRACTIONS • EVENTS

**Apex in Marlboro** hosts a sensory-friendly hour on the **first Sunday of every month** before regular business hours.

Sunday July 2nd  
Sunday August 6th  
**10:00am - 11:00am**



Enjoy reduced crowds, noise, and dimmer lighting during this time. Stress balls/squishy toys, sunglasses, water toys/timers, and access to quiet rooms will be available.

Though the sensory-friendly time is not advertised on Apex website, they are open, and you may pay for attractions upon arrival.

[For More Information](#)

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**Burtons in Shrewsbury** hosts a sensory-friendly dining time on the **second Tuesday of every month.**

Tuesday July 11th  
Tuesday August 8th  
3:00pm - 6:00pm

During this time, customer traffic will be light, music will be off, and Burton's staff will apply their knowledge acquired from their Autism Welcoming training and certification process. We have provided them supports to help make visitor experiences more enjoyable. When visiting, ask for a sensory toolkit or a [visual menu](#).

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[Dave and Busters of Braintree](#) now offers a sensory-friendly hour the **first Sunday of every month** before regular business hours.

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Sunday July 2nd  
Sunday August 6th  
9:00am to 10:00am

The large screen TV's will be turned off, there will be a reduced number of people, and a designated "quiet area" with sensory kits will be made available. Be sure to speak to a staff member if you have any questions or need help.

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[Dave and Buster's of Natick](#) now offers a sensory-friendly hour the **first Saturday of every month** before regular business hours.

Saturday July 1st  
Saturday August 5th  
9:30am to 10:30am

The large screen TV's will be turned off, there will be a reduced number of people, and a designated "quiet area" with sensory kits will be made available. Be sure to speak to a staff member if you have any questions or need help.

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**PLASTER FUN TIME**  
The Plaster Painting Place Where Kids Do It Their Way

796 Boston Post Road  
East Marlborough MA 01752  
Ph: (508) 251-1592

Meet New Owner, Maria Melo

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**Plaster Fun Time Marlborough** is under new management and now offers a sensory-friendly hour including [visual support](#) the **second Saturday of every month before** regular business hours as well as **EVERY** Monday morning and Tuesday afternoon:

*Saturday July 8th  
Saturday August 12th  
9:00am to 10:00am*

*Mondays beginning June 12th 10am to 11am.  
Tuesdays beginning June 13th 1pm to 2pm.*

Creativity is fun for all ages. Plaster Fun Time prides themselves on being positive and supportive of everything that kids create there, regardless of what it looks like or how “right” it is. Adults can also get in on the creativity and enjoy the relaxing benefits of painting.

[Plaster Fun Time Marlborough](#)

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[Putts & More](#) is a great Family Fun Center for all. Set on 3 acres, Putts & More features a beautifully designed 18-hole miniature golf course, jumping pillow, and splash pad. Be sure to stop by the snack bar where they serve ice cream, snacks, hot dogs and more.

*All staff have received Autism Welcoming training designed to raise their awareness and understanding of children with autism.*

## **NEW Sensory Hours Just Announced**

Putts & More in Holliston NOW OFFERS a sensory-friendly hour **every Saturday before regular business hours.**

Every Saturday in July, beginning July 8th  
Every Saturday in August

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9:00am - 10:00am

*Special sensory toolkit and customized visual supports are available at the admission desk. . If needed, please be sure to ask for an "access pass" to expedite your waiting time.*

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Southwick's Zoo  
Galliford's Restaurant

2 Southwick St  
Mendon, MA 01756  
Ph: 800-258-9182

[Southwick's Zoo](#)

Southwick's Zoo is offering sensory-friendly times **one Friday every month** during the summer season for guests who would enjoy the quiet atmosphere and environment.

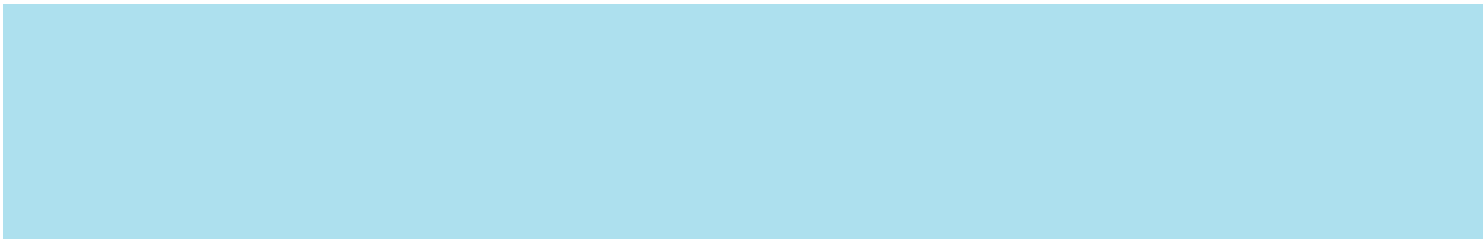
Friday July 7th  
Friday August 18th  
Doors Open at 9:00 am

This is an unadvertised event. You will not find this on their website. Tickets may be purchased at the door upon arrival beginning at 9am.

Should you be hungry after your walk through the zoo, feel free to stop by Galliford's restaurant as they will be opening at 11:00am on these sensory-friendly Fridays. The music will be turned down, there will be sensory kits and visual menus available.

[Accessibility & Sensory Information](#)

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[Homepage - The Sports Museum](#)

The Sports Museum (located at TD Garden, Boston) is happy to offer Free Sensory VIP times for the months of July, August, and September. These VIP tours are held before regular business hours and will provide 2- 3 families per month with an exclusive private tour guide through the museum. Sensory kits are available and tour guide can support sensory challenges by offering detours to part of the tour with louder sounds. Please email Nick Collins at The Sports Museum, [ncollins@sportsmuseum.org](mailto:ncollins@sportsmuseum.org), to request a slot. Please mention Autism Alliance VIP Tours in the subject line when scheduling.

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### **Sensory-Friendly Open Barnyard Series at Weir River Farm**



Saturdays, July 1st, July 15th, July 29th  
Saturday August 12th  
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

A dedicated hour with a reduced number of guests and quieter environment. Any family that would benefit from a limited capacity visit is welcome. You'll have the opportunity to experience life on one of the last working farms on the South Shore. See the ponies, llama, and potbellied pig, goats, sheep, and chickens. Enjoy the beautiful StoryWalk™ while you're there. Pre-registration is required. Children 2 and under are free.

**Weir River Farm**  
140 Turkey Hill Lane  
Hingham, MA 02043

### **Sensory-Friendly Sunset Picnic Hour at Weir River Farm**



Thursdays, July 6th and July 20th  
5:00 - 6:00pm

Come listen to live music at a decreased volume while enjoying delicious food and drinks from local food trucks and breweries. Pack your picnic blanket and chairs and relax with your friends and family while watching the sun set over the Boston skyline. At 6PM the Sunset Picnic will be open to additional guests and music will be played at a higher volume. Participants are welcome to stay past the sensory friendly hour to enjoy the Sunset Picnic longer! The event will conclude for all participants at sunset. Pre-registration is required for this event. Children 2 and under are free.

July 6th will feature Jessi Kenney, Vitamin Sea, and Mom on the Go food truck.

July 20th will feature Peter Mundt, Barrel House Z, and Lawless food truck.

**Weir River Farm**  
Turkey Hill Lane1341  
Hingham, MA 02043

**Sensory-Friendly Events Happening  
Within the Community**

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The first 500 people affected by autism who register will receive an exclusive, commemorative concert poster SIGNED by STARS of the Spectrum performers!

[Get Your Tickets Here](#)

## Stars of the Spectrum

The Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism is celebrating their 25th anniversary with **STARS of the SPECTRUM**, happening on August 24th at Fenway Park!

This concert will be **INCLUSIVE** and **ACCESSIBLE** for people and families with autism. Live music performances by autism self-advocates and special guests including [Kodi Lee](#), winner of [America's Got Talent](#), [Shawn Stockman](#) of [Boyz II Men](#), and of course - [Doug Flutie](#) and [The Flutie Brothers Band](#) AND MORE!

For the past 25 years, the Doug Flutie Foundation has been dedicated to helping families get critical support to care for a loved one with autism. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that all people and families affected by autism will receive **FREE** entry to this event - the largest concert in the nation for autism acceptance. You won't want to miss it!



[For Tickets and More Information](#)

## Immersive Disney Animation Boston

Brought to you by Lighthouse Immersive Studios. Surround Yourself in the Worlds, Music & Stories of Disney Animation. They offer sensory friendly viewings, creating a welcoming and comfortable space. At these special viewings, the sensory input of the show is reduced. **Adaptations include:**

- Reduced sound volume
- Reduced capacity
- Comfortable gallery lighting at all times and no blackouts
- Sensitivity warnings for content
- Quiet Areas outside the gallery

To purchase tickets for these viewings, look for timeslots marked “Sensory Show.”

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## Summer Reading 2023

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## Book of the Month Recommendation

Our **"Let's Build A Village"** mom's group enjoyed our first virtual book club meeting in June. Each attendee recommended a book and explained why they loved it. The diversity was amazing, exposing everyone to different genres, authors, and perspectives.

Awesome mom Christy recommended a rom-com called "Perfectly Adequate" by Jewel E. Ann. Thank you Christy!  
[Available on Amazon.](#)

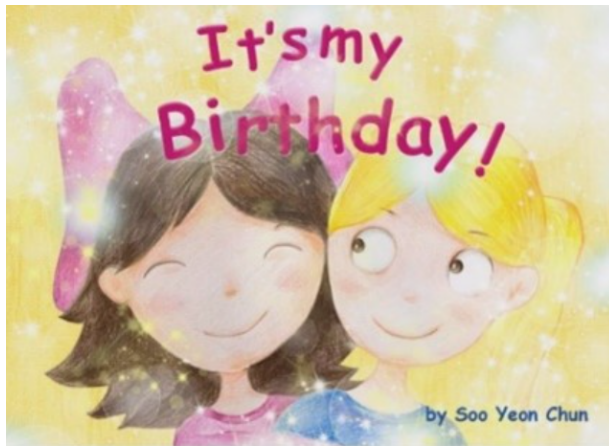
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## Grapevine Minds

Grapevine Minds is a website that provides literary resources for children on the spectrum and their caregivers. It consists of an interactive online book and a metaphor-learning program, both geared toward elementary-aged children.

[Learn More](#)

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## Additional Reading Resources

[Summer Reading Ideas](#)

[4th of July Social Story](#)

[Best Books on Autism in 2023 for Children](#)

[Sensory World](#)

[Future Horizons](#)

**Advocates Adults 16+ Summer Recreation**



RSVP now as this event will fill up quickly!

[For More Information & to Register](#)

## Fun, Friends, & Family Summer Dance Party

Grab your flip-flops, shorts, and beach balls – summer is here! Celebrate the season at a fun dance party! with your friends at Advocates!

Advocates Main Office  
1881 Worcester Road  
Framingham, MA 01701

Friday July 14, 2023  
6:00 – 7:30 PM

Experienced DJ and instructor, Joanne Schmalenberger, will teach fun dance moves and help us dance the night away. All attendees must have a chaperone. You must RSVP to attend as space is limited.

Be sure to give us a call **before** you stop by the office this summer. We will be in the community running programs every Friday. If you would like to meet with any of our staff, please give us a call at 508-652-9900 to schedule an appointment.





Did you miss seeing one of our featured guest speakers? If so, click on the link and you will see the recordings on the Autism Alliance of MetroWest YouTube Channel.

YouTube

*Please submit requests for accommodations, including ASL interpreters, at least 2 weeks prior to the event date to [AutismAlliance@advocates.org](mailto:AutismAlliance@advocates.org) or call (508) 652-9900*

## Connect With Us



[www.AutismAlliance.org](http://www.AutismAlliance.org) | (508) 652-9900 | [AutismAlliance@Advocates.org](mailto:AutismAlliance@Advocates.org)

1881 Worcester Road, Suite 100A, Framingham, MA 01701

Donate

### Our Contact Information

\*{{Organization Name}}\*

\*{{Organization Address}}\*

\*{{Organization Phone}}\*

\*{{Organization Website}}\*

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