

# Autism Spectrum Disorders

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## A MINDSET SHIFT

Taken from Laura Vanderkam's "Just A Minute" and Kari Leibowitz's research on the Norwegian winter.



In parts of Norway, the sun never climbs above the horizon from late November to late January. Multiple hours a day can look like sunrise and sunset ~ with incredibly beautiful colors and soft, indirect light.

Multiple hours a day will also include cold temperatures and lots of snow to be endured with all the challenges that go along with frigid weather. But, according to Kari Leibowitz who went to Norway to study why the residents had a relatively low rate of seasonal blues, she found that the residents chose to enjoy that time of year rather than just

endure it.

The communities are close knit, festivals abound, and numerous activities bring people together. One native commented "There is no such things as bad weather, only bad clothing."

And so, during this busy time of year, what do we choose to enjoy rather than endure? How will we shift our mindset to appreciate the opportunities available to us and the people around us?

Can we take our crazy, busy schedules, active students, endless paperwork, shorter-

darker days, challenging weather, never ending "to do" lists, and excited children to find moments of joy?

And what about the students and staff we support? How can we help them find joy?

The Norwegians have a word, *koselig*, that means "a sense of coziness". During this hectic season, I wish you times of coziness and a small mindset shift as you look for moments to enjoy.

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- "But overall, mindset research is increasingly finding that it doesn't take much to shift one's thinking. It doesn't have to be this huge complicated thing, say Leibowitz. You can just consciously try to have a positive wintertime mindset and that might be enough to induce it."



The jolly

## Sensory Friendly Santa Events at Local Malls

(Thanks to Autism Society of Minnesota for these Resources)

man in the bright red suit is scheduled to make appearances at malls around the metro area this holiday season. For some, a Santa visit is exciting and the perfect opportunity to share gift wishes. For others, the very idea of approaching a strange man with a long white beard can be terrifying.

AuSM is partnering with several malls around the Twin Cities to offer "Sensitive Santa" events for families with autism and others with special sensory needs. **Southdale Center** and **Northtown Mall** will host sensory-friendly Santa visits on Dec. 6. Events will take place before from 8-10, before the malls open, and will feature reduced lighting, minimal crowds, and activities for children.

### Social Narrative - Going To Visit Santa

I am going to visit Santa!

We are going to see Santa. Santa will be in a special place in the mall.

There could be lots of people shopping in the mall and it might be noisy.

Santa is a nice man in a red suit with a soft white beard.

Santa may say something like “ho, ho, ho” in a voice that sounds loud to me.

I might have to wait in line for my turn to visit with Santa.

I should try to be patient while I wait in line.

When it is my turn to talk with Santa, I can sit on his lap or I can stand next to him.

If I am afraid, I can ask my mom or dad to sit with me or to wait close by.

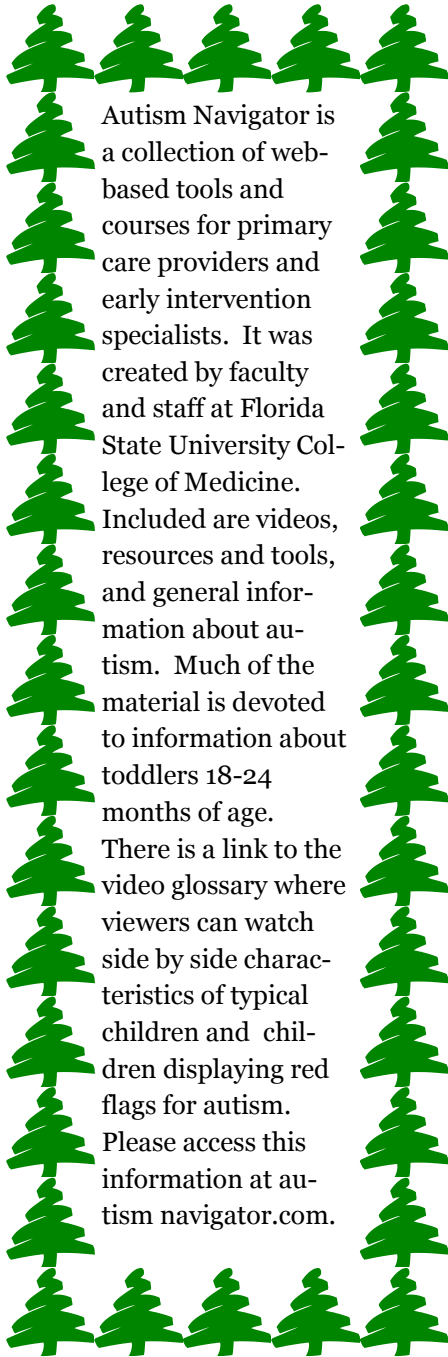
I will have a chance to tell Santa what I would like for Christmas.

One of Santa’s helpers might take my picture with Santa.

I will look at the camera and smile.

It will be fun to have a special photo with Santa.

After my visit, I will say “thank you” to Santa and let the next family start their visit.



Autism Navigator is a collection of web-based tools and courses for primary care providers and early intervention specialists. It was created by faculty and staff at Florida State University College of Medicine. Included are videos, resources and tools, and general information about autism. Much of the material is devoted to information about toddlers 18-24 months of age. There is a link to the video glossary where viewers can watch side by side characteristics of typical children and children displaying red flags for autism. Please access this information at [autismnavigator.com](http://autismnavigator.com).

AFIRM Modules are designed to help you learn the step-by-step process of planning for, using, and monitoring an EBP with learners with ASD from birth to 22 years of age. Supplemental materials and handouts are available for download.

These modules are similar to the AIM Modules, but simplified and have the ability to let you get to working with the student in a more timely fashion.

Available modules are Time Delay, Reinforcement, Exercise, Functional Behavior Assessment, Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention, Prompting, Social Narratives, Task Analysis and Visual Supports.

- Key components of an EBP including the various approaches that can be used with learners with ASD
  - Behaviors and skills that can be addressed using the practice
  - A step-by-step process for applying the practice
  - Specific resources that you can download and customize for your own use
- An option to earn a free certificate for professional development is available.

**“I don’t think I could have developed this at all if I were sitting in a bubble, having one paradigm and one view of the world.”**

**~Michelle Garcia Winner, from The ASHA Leader**



Michelle’s comment referring to Social Thinking, after being named the “Collective Thinker Leader” by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association.

# Statewide ASD License Update

## Summary of Results

Total Applications Received - 2,051

Approved applicants - 1,473; 93% of applicants

Declined Applicants - 104; 7% of applicants

Approved, now licensed - 1,236; 84% (as of 8/28/15)

If you are one of those people who received eligibility for the ASD license, the second step was to apply to MDE for that license. December 31st is the last date to send in that information. If you do not do send in your application by 12/31/15, you will not be able to receive the license and will have to go back to school to

receive the license. If you need any assistance with this final process please contact me. After all of your hard work please don't let this deadline escape you.

Once you receive the actual license, please get a copy to the appropriate person in your school district.



## ASD Cohort



The Goodhue County Education District ASD Cohort will meet 3 more times during the 2015-2016 school year. The

dates are:

January 12, 2016 - February 23, 2016 - and May 3, 2016.

We will gather at River Bluff Education Center. Our meeting time will be from 12 - 3, though the starting time is flexible as teachers have differing times that they can leave the classroom as well as some have extended driving times. Feel free to bring your lunch.

In January (rescheduled from December), Rene Arendt will come to chat with the group about community services available to families when their child has an ASD medical diagnosis. Katie Bystrom will also come to answer our questions about mandated reporting.

Until then, please let me know if there is any way that I can support you.

Lynne Petersen

## Upcoming Events



January 28 & 29 ~ Effective Interventions and Strategies.....aep connections.com

Feb. 8 ~ Solve Your Written Language Instructional Problems Region 10 website

April 24, 25, 26, 2016 ~ Charting the C's

April 27 – 30, 2016 ~ Autism Society of MN annual conference

June 20– 22 ~ Summer Institute (formerly Symposium) at Hamline