

# Summer 2021 Newsletter

## *CARD Odenton Quarterly Newsletter*

*Welcome to the Center for Autism and Related Disorders' quarterly newsletter—summer edition (June–July–August). Our staff members are committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for you and your child as you visit our center for services. We continue to use personal protective equipment, practice social distancing, implement proper hand hygiene practices and complete health screenings to ensure a safe visit for your child and family. We thank you for your constant collaboration and flexibility as we continue to navigate the pandemic.*

- On page 1, clinical psychologist Dr. Tiffany Lin shares strategies for engaging children during the summer months by helping them develop their social skills.
- On pages 2–3, speech-language pathologist Martha Davis shares valuable resources for engaging children during a book activity. Her list of recommended books is a treasure chest for fun summer reading with your child.
- On pages 4–7, we spotlight staff members who play significant roles in our center to ensure quality care for our patients and their families.

We hope you enjoy the warm weather and continue to celebrate the progress your child has been making this summer.

Biji Philip, PhD, CCC-SLP  
Site Clinical Director



# Social Skills



Summer is a time full of opportunities (e.g., camp, play dates, get-togethers) for socialization with peers. Here are some tips to help strengthen your child’s social interaction skills:

- **Practice and model desired communication skills.**

Your child will imitate you, and this is a natural way for them to acquire social skills.

- Greet familiar people with a smile.
- Follow social rules (e.g., wait your turn to talk, stay on topic, ask questions, make comments).

- **Prepare a list of social rules.**

- Say “hi” when you see someone.
- Say “goodbye” when you are leaving.
- Take turns in a conversation—do not interrupt.
- Give a compliment (e.g., “I like your shoes.”).
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship.

- **Provide structured social interactions.**

- Use visual aids:
  - a. Activity schedule or choice board
  - b. Social story: <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/>
- Set the environment for success (e.g., small social gatherings, but consider sensory sensitivities).
- Role-play possible social scenarios and discuss how to respond appropriately.

- **Provide feedback and celebrate success.**

Provide plenty of praise and encouragement when you see your child interact positively with others.

# Summer Book Share

It's still summer! The weather is hot, and there are still so many fun activities to engage in with your family. One such activity is to read books with your child about summertime. It is a great way to help your child learn about summer and interact with the world around them—and summer is the perfect time to do it!

In honor of this wonderful time of year, we wanted to share some helpful tips and tricks to keep in mind when reading books with your children.

- **Take a “book walk”:** Before reading a book with your child, flip through the pages and look at the pictures. Talk about what you see, make predictions on what you think will happen, and discuss who the characters are.
- **Identify vocabulary:** What pictures come up multiple times? What themes do you see? What words are repeated throughout the book? What actions are most prominent? Focus on these words when reading the book with your child. The more times you repeat a word, the more chances they have to learn it!
- **Keep your language simple:** Many children’s books have lots of excess words and/or focus too much on making words rhyme. When reading with your child, keep your language simple. Talk about what is happening within the picture of the book. If there is a clear sequence of events, walk your child through them. For example, in a book about camping, talk about the steps the characters go through to get ready to camp and while they’re camping.
- **Don’t be afraid to skip pages:** If a page doesn’t make sense to you in the sequence of the book, skip it! This is also helpful for books that are too long to hold our younger children’s attention.
- **HAVE FUN!** This is the most important part! Change it up each time you read it to keep your child engaged! Use props to act out parts of the book! For example: use spray bottles filled with water when talking about water in books! This will surely cause a “splash.”

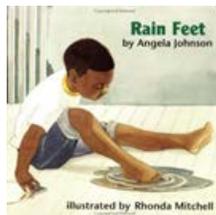
- ❖ I Love Bugs by Philemon Sturges: With the cicadas still fresh in our memory, this is the perfect book for summer 2021.



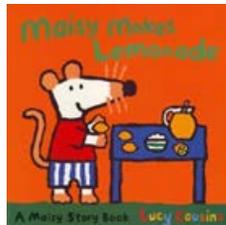
- ❖ And Then Comes Summer by Tom Brenner: A great book about many different activities we experience during the summer, especially the heat!



- ❖ Rain Feet by Angela Johnson: Summer storms make for some great puddles! This is the book for spring AND summer!



- ❖ Maisy Makes Lemonade by Lucy Cousins: A classic book about the steps Maisy and her friends take to make some refreshing lemonade.



- ❖ The Wonders of Summer by Kealy Connor Lonning: A lovely book about spending summer with family.



- ❖ Day at the Beach by Tom Booth: A fun book about one of the best activities to do at the beach...build sandcastles!



# Staff Spotlight Corner



**Hilary May, MS, CCC-SLP**, is a speech-language pathologist who has spent her entire career at CARD. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology and anthropology from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and her master's degree in speech-language pathology from Towson University. She completed her graduate externship and clinical fellowship before being hired as a licensed SLP at CARD. She worked at CARD's Greenspring campus until transferring to Odenton in fall 2018.

While at CARD, Hilary has been part of the Achievements, Early Achievements and Achievements for Little Learners programs; provided individual therapy and parent training; and performed diagnostic evaluations. Her passions are early intervention and enhancing children's engagement with their families. She is also passionate about neurodiversity and incorporates neurodiversity-affirming care in her interventions so children can reach their full potential.

Currently, Hilary serves as a fidelity mentor in the Achievements program and clinical mentor in CARD's individual therapy programs at the Odenton location. She enjoys working on fidelity with the Achievements team to ensure that all children receive high-quality services, and to get to meet all of the children we serve in Achievements! She also enjoys mentoring new staff members in the clinic, as she constantly learns new ideas and techniques while teaching others.

Hilary lives in Baltimore with her husband and their very vocal hound dog, Pebbles. They love exploring new parks, farmers markets and restaurants around the city. They are excited to safely travel and go to concerts again this summer and fall!

# Staff Spotlight Corner



**Brittany Gordon** is a therapeutic assistant II with five years of experience working with children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder and related disorders. Brittany received her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology with a focus in neuroscience from Pennsylvania State University in 2015. She has also received her 90-hour childcare certification from the Maryland State Department of Education and has taught pre-kindergarten.

At Odenton, Brittany works in the classroom with speech-language pathologists by supporting groups, documenting data and creating therapeutic materials. She also serves as our office of childcare coordinator (OCC). She works with our licensing specialist and our site director to help maintain our compliance as a childcare center, and is responsible for collecting, filing and maintaining all student and staff paperwork and training materials for the Achievements program.

In her free time, Brittany enjoys crafting, reading, watching movies, spending time with her family and friends, and playing with her puppies.

# Staff Spotlight Corner



**Teresa Anderson, MS, OTR/L**, has been an occupational therapist at CARD since October 2002. Before working at CARD, Teresa worked for four years at a nonpublic school serving children with autism spectrum disorder, developmental delays and learning disabilities. Teresa's clinical specialty is in working with toddlers, focusing on developmental milestones, play, sensory integration, self-care skills and parent coaching, and she was part of CARD's first toddler team, which formed in 2005. Also in that year, Teresa created the Play With Me program, a parent coaching treatment model that focuses on play as a means of enhancing a child's skill development.

Teresa lives in Howard County with her husband and three daughters and their puppy, Penny. Teresa and her family enjoy hiking, biking, running, skiing and traveling. Their favorite place to vacation is Smith Mountain Lake, Virginia, where they enjoy water skiing, wakeboarding, tubing, paddle boarding, kayaking and watching the sun set from the water.



# Staff Spotlight Corner



**Kelly Olanoff, MS, CCC-SLP**, is a speech-language pathologist with eight years of experience working primarily with individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and complex communication needs. She received her undergraduate degree in speech-language pathology and audiology from Loyola University Maryland and her graduate degree in communication sciences and disorders from James Madison University.

Before working at CARD, Kelly served on the staff of the Delaware Autism Program for four years, working with individuals with ASD ages 2–21 and specializing in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). She also worked part time with infants and toddlers as an early intervention SLP, and on an as-needed basis as an SLP for older adults at a skilled nursing facility.

In 2017, Kelly accepted a position at CARD and moved from Delaware to Maryland. During her time at CARD, Kelly has been active in the Achievements program and has continued her passion for working with individuals with complex communication needs through the use of AAC. She has trained extensively in AAC evaluations, in which she evaluates children who experience difficulty with functional communication, including communicating their basic wants and needs as well as psychosocial and medical needs. In addition to providing AAC evaluations at Odenton, Kelly is also active in the Functional Clinic, in which she works with individuals and their families who have recently received a new AAC device.

Kelly lives in Anne Arundel County and loves spending time with her dog, Jackson. In her spare time, she enjoys running and taking Pure Barre classes.

# Staff Spotlight Corner



**Alexandra Bridges, MS, CCC-SLP**, is a speech-language pathologist with four years of pediatric experience working primarily with children who have developmental, neurological and intellectual disabilities. Alex received her bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology and audiology and her master's degree in speech-language pathology from Towson University. In 2019, Alex accepted a yearlong position as a clinical fellow at CARD's Odenton location. After completing her fellowship, she continued her career at Odenton as a fully certified SLP. During her time at CARD, Alex has worked in the Achievements program and has provided individual and group-based services within the CARD clinic.

Since summer 2020, Alex has been training in the Connecting Language Using Books (CLUB) program at CARD, providing group speech-language therapy addressing reading comprehension, narrative language, executive function, self-advocacy and classroom-based social skills. Her goal is to expand CLUB groups to Odenton to provide opportunities for group-based narrative language intervention for patients ages 5–18.

Alex has also received training through CARD's Executive Function Boot Camp, founded by Sharon Conty, MS, CCC-SLP, with whom Alex will present about the boot camp at the 2021 ASHA Convention in November. Alex is passionate about providing patients and their families with tools and accommodations to advocate for their individualized needs. She takes a family-centered approach to therapy by supporting the whole child and honoring the culture and values of their family. Alex is passionate about providing neurodiversity-affirming services and celebrating patients' special interests to build on their strengths.

In her spare time, Alex enjoys spending time with family and friends, going to her family's cabin, trying new restaurants and unwinding by watching her favorite TV shows and movies. She lives in Baltimore County with her fiancé and playful rescue dog, Tito.