

# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025



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We are still looking  
for an attorney to  
sit on our  
board of trustees.



**Fiber The Nutrient You  
Aren't Getting Enough Of**

[\(click link\)](#)

Reminder

Attention Early Intervention Families If you have a parent fee, please remember to pay it each month.

Your bill will come by the method you selected. Either in an email from [no\\_reply@utah.gov](mailto:no_reply@utah.gov) or as a letter.

We love serving you and your family!

# Happy Birthday

## NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

Head Start just works. Since 1965, Head Start has impacted the life circumstances of more than 40 million children and families: better health, better preparation for kindergarten, greater likelihood of graduating high school and going on to post-secondary education.

DDI Vantage Early Head Start is proudly celebrating Head Start's 60th birthday by spreading the word about the monumental impact Head Start has had on children, their families, their communities, and the country.

Early Head Start is crucial because it provides young children, particularly those from low-income families, with the foundation they need for future success. By offering comprehensive early education, health services, and family support, it ensures that children enter school ready to learn and thrive. Early Head Start helps close the achievement gap by fostering cognitive, social, and emotional development in the critical first years of life. This year, as we celebrate its birthday, we honor the positive impact it has had on countless families and communities, empowering the next generation to reach their full potential. Join us in celebrating this milestone and the continued importance of early childhood education by signing this virtual birthday card for Head Start.



Click The Link Below Or Scan QR Code To Sign The Birthday Card

<https://birthday.nhsa.org/birthday-sign-form/?code=REF564567b4fbda004d3>

# April is Autism Awareness Month

## How Does ASD Affect Communication

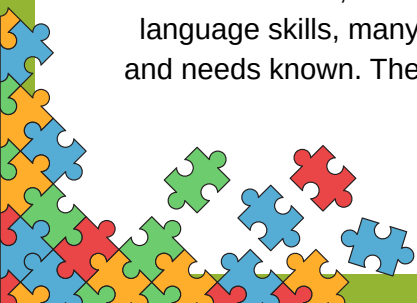
The word “autism” has its origin in the Greek word “autos,” which means “self.” Children with ASD are often self-absorbed and seem to exist in a private world in which they have limited ability to successfully communicate and interact with others. Children with ASD may have difficulty developing language skills and understanding what others say to them. They also often have difficulty communicating nonverbally, such as through hand gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions.

The ability of children with ASD to communicate and use language depends on their intellectual and social development. Some children with ASD may not be able to communicate using speech or language, and some may have very limited speaking skills. Others may have rich vocabularies and be able to talk about specific subjects in great detail. Many have problems with the meaning and rhythm of words and sentences. They also may be unable to understand body language and the meanings of different vocal tones. Taken together, these difficulties affect the ability of children with ASD to interact with others, especially people their own age.

Below are some patterns of language use and behaviors that are often found in children with ASD.

- Repetitive or rigid language. Often, children with ASD who can speak will say things that have no meaning or that do not relate to the conversations they are having with others. For example, a child may count from one to five repeatedly amid a conversation that is not related to numbers. Or a child may continuously repeat words he or she has heard—a condition called echolalia. Immediate echolalia occurs when the child repeats words someone has just said. For example, the child may respond to a question by asking the same question. In delayed echolalia, the child repeats words heard at an earlier time. The child may say “Do you want something to drink?” whenever he or she asks for a drink. Some children with ASD speak in a high-pitched or sing-song voice or use robot-like speech. Other children may use stock phrases to start a conversation. For example, a child may say, “My name is Tom,” even when he talks with friends or family. Still others may repeat what they hear on television programs or commercials.
- Narrow interests and exceptional abilities. Some children may be able to deliver an in-depth monologue about a topic that holds their interest, even though they may not be able to carry on a two-way conversation about the same topic. Others may have musical talents or an advanced ability to count and do math calculations. Approximately 10 percent of children with ASD show “savant” skills, or extremely high abilities in specific areas, such as memorization, calendar calculation, music, or math.
- Uneven language development. Many children with ASD develop some speech and language skills, but not to a normal level of ability, and their progress is usually uneven. For example, they may develop a strong vocabulary in a particular area of interest very quickly. Many children have good memories for information just heard or seen. Some may be able to read words before age five, but may not comprehend what they have read. They often do not respond to the speech of others and may not respond to their own names. As a result, these children are sometimes mistakenly thought to have a hearing problem.
- Poor nonverbal conversation skills. Children with ASD are often unable to use gestures—such as pointing to an object—to give meaning to their speech. They often avoid eye contact, which can make them seem rude, uninterested, or inattentive. Without meaningful gestures or other nonverbal skills to enhance their oral language skills, many children with ASD become frustrated in their attempts to make their feelings, thoughts, and needs known. They may act out their frustrations through vocal outbursts or other inappropriate behaviors.

<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/autism-spectrum-disorder-communication-problems-children>



# Sensory Activities to Support Attention and Participation



Sensory activities play a crucial role in early childhood development. By providing appropriate sensory experiences, these activities help children improve focus, engagement, and participation in daily routines while supporting self-regulation and overall development.

## Why Are Sensory Activities Important?

Children experience and process sensory information through their senses—touch, sight, sound, taste, smell, movement, and body awareness. Some children may be over-responsive or under-responsive to sensory input, making it difficult for them to engage in daily activities such as mealtime, play, or sleep. Imagine your child as a cup. In order to feel regulated they need to be filled with meaningful sensory activities. Some children are like tea cups and only need a little input to feel regulated and may be easily overstimulated. Others are like buckets and require a lot more input to fill their cup. A filled cup supports physical and emotional regulation, attention, behavior, and participation in their environment.



## Sensory Activities for Ages 0-3

Engaging young children in sensory activities can provide them with the necessary input to develop foundational skills. Here are a variety of fun and effective activities:



- **Water Play** – Allow infants to splash, pour, and squeeze sponges in warm water. Adding small floating toys can enhance engagement.
- **Soft Music & Rocking** – Playing soft music while gently rocking or bouncing your child can provide calming sensory input.
- **Gentle Massage & Deep Pressure Hugs** – Lightly massaging arms and legs or giving deep pressure hugs can promote relaxation and body awareness.
- **Oral Exploration** – Provide safe teething toys, silicone straws, or cold washcloths for chewing, blow bubbles or pinwheels, drink through a straw, or offer chewy/crunchy snacks to support oral sensory needs.
- **Texture Exploration** – Let toddlers feel different textures like soft fabrics, rough sponges, or squishy gel bags. Fill a shallow bin with dry rice or beans and hide small toys inside. Encourage your child to dig with their hands or use scoops to find the toys.
- **Rough House Play** – Toddler's benefit from jumping, climbing, and crashing into things. Build an obstacle course that incorporates crawling under and over, climbing, jumping, or hanging. Bonus points for having them “help” set it up by lifting/moving the heavy obstacles.
- **Blanket Swing Activity** – Have two adults hold the ends of a sturdy blanket and gently swing your child back and forth. This provides calming vestibular input and promotes body awareness.
- **Sensory Walks** – Let your child walk or crawl on different surfaces like carpet, grass, or foam mats for varied sensory input or try and imitate how different animals walk (bear crawl, starfish jumps, etc).

## Supporting Attention and Participation Through Sensory Play

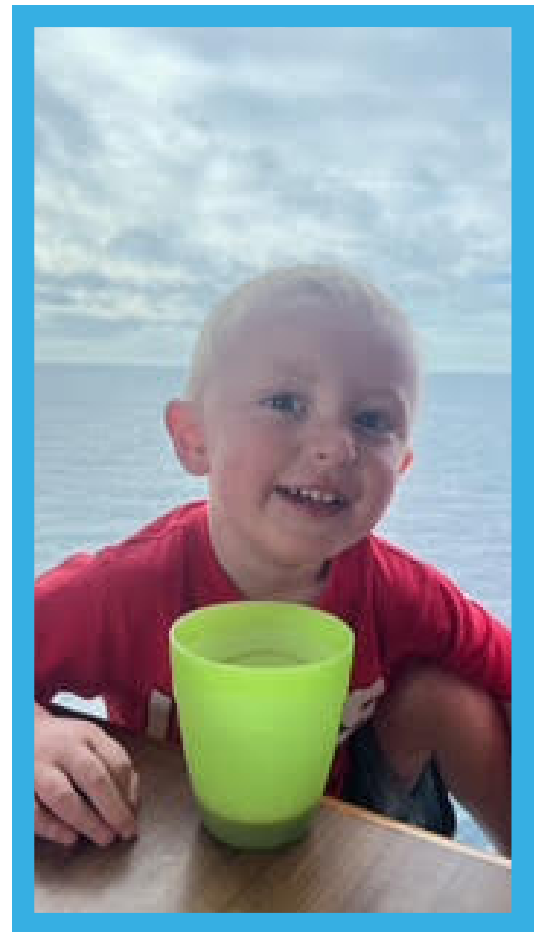
By incorporating sensory activities into your child's daily routine, you can help them develop focus and better regulate their responses to sensory input.

Every child responds differently to sensory input. Observe what works best for your child. If you have concerns about your child's sensory processing, consult an OT or reach out to early intervention services for support.






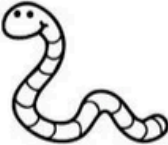





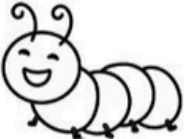
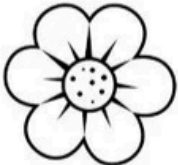




# Family Story

DDI Vantage has been an absolute dream to work with. As first-time parents, my husband and I were at a loss at how to help my son thrive and develop how we knew he could. My son was speaking about five words when we started working with DDI Vantage when he was two. The amount he has progressed in a few short months has been incredible to see and watch. We started with a basic evaluation and moved on to speech therapy. Everyone who we have worked with has given amazing information and reassurances. Any and every obstacle we have come across Sarah helped provide resources for us to use and would teach us how to deal with the issues as well. Whether it was from shy or aggressive behavior at daycare, to sensory issues with food, we were given the best advice, resources, and opportunities to work on it together. My son absolutely loves Sarah and talks about her every week and wants to know when she is coming next. I have never felt judged or like my concerns aren't valid. Even as we come to the end of our experience with DDI Vantage, they have made sure we know what resources we have and can utilize moving forward. I have loved every moment of working with DDI and will be forever grateful to Sarah and the rest of the team for making our experience so wonderful.





# SPRING SCAVENGER HUNT

 BEE	 SQUIRREL	 LEAF
 WORM	 DRAGONFLY	 BIKE
 LADY BUG	 BUTTERFLY	 BIRD'S NEST
 CATTERPILLAR	 FLOWER	 ANT
 RAINBOW	 RAIN	 CHIRPING BIRD

# HELLO SPRING

- Bubbles and sidewalk chalk
- Make mud pies
- Make a bird feeder
- Plant flowers
- Bug hunt
- Paint rocks
- Fairy garden
- Fly a kite

Instructions:  
Print this sheet and as you see these signs of spring, color it in!

Visit our site for more FREE printable activities! [PLBFUN.com](http://PLBFUN.com)  
Follow us on social media and share photos of your work!

