

IT'S A SENSORY THING...

My friend Lori is at her wit's end. Her son Jordan exhibits baffling behaviors. Nobody seems to understand what's going on, not teachers, extended family, nor family friends. It's to the point where it's difficult to take him to the grocery, to the movies, to birthday parties, and even interferes with vacations. And school...well, school's a daily challenge for everyone involved.

Lori received another phone call today from Jordan's school. That makes the third call this week! He's had another meltdown on the playground and is crying. The teachers don't know how to help him. He hates school. He covers his ears in class because it's too noisy. He shields his eyes from the fluorescent lights above his desk because there's too much glare. He never stays in line on the way to library or art class because someone's bound to bump into him...and it hurts. He's eight years old, and still struggles with handwriting. He needs extra time on tests because his processing speed is slower than his peers. And - with kids they way they are - Jordan's being teased and bullied because of these differences. But he's so smart, and so funny. And, sadly, his poor grades don't demonstrate his true academic abilities.

Jordan seems to be a complete mystery to everyone. Well, almost everyone. There's an often misunderstood disorder called Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), formerly referred to as Sensory Integration Dysfunction. **Those with SPD have difficulty perceiving sensations accurately and responding appropriately.** The sensory input comes in as tactile, visual, auditory, olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), vestibular (movement) and proprioceptive (from muscles and joints). But the brain has difficulty knowing what to do with that information. It's a 'hidden' disorder because you can't see it, like the cast on a broken leg. You only see the baffling behaviors.

When Jordan sits under those fluorescent lights for a long time and is not allowed to move to a window for more natural lighting, then his nervous system begins to overload from the offensive lighting. After a while, Jordan can't take the glare and runs out of the room without asking the teacher. His response to the overload is, "GET ME OUT OF HERE" and can't stop to think about an appropriate response. Many children react this way to fluorescent lighting...and this could be one reason for children to go ballistic in supermarkets.

Background sounds in the classroom are very distracting to Jordan. The sounds that most brains can ignore aren't by Jordan: sounds like the humming of those fluorescent light fixtures, the teachers chatting outside the classroom, the classmates whispering in the row behind him. These sounds, filtered out and forgotten by most of us, are not classified simply as 'background noise' by Jordan's brain and compete for his attention.

Because it is painful to be touched, Jordan retaliates when other kids touch or bump into him, usually by pushing, kicking, hitting, screaming. This fight-or-flight response is considered 'over the edge' and no one can understand why he'd react that violently to an honest mistake. It's not that simple for Jordan. This is why Jordan won't line up when it's time for the class to go to the library, and why he wants his desk to be away from everyone else. He's not being oppositional, or anti-social. It just looks that way. He's really protecting himself from the potential of being touched and bumped and the resulting pain. Wouldn't you?

MAIN STREET TOWER GOLF TO BENEFIT PATHFINDERS

MAIN STREET TOWER 6TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT AND SILENT AUCTION FRIDAY, JUNE 26TH – WETLANDS GOLF CLUB, ABERDEEN

Proceeds benefit Pathfinders for Autism. Win a car for a hole-in-one, courtesy of Bob Davidson Ford Lincoln Mercury! Other prizes will be awarded for closest to the pin, longest drive, and worst golfer.

Entry Fee: \$100 per person. Registration: 7:00 am - 7:45 am, Shotgun Start: Promptly at 8:00 am

Price includes:

-All you can drink while golfing -18 holes -Best Ball Scramble -Bucket of range balls
-Dinner and drinks at The Main Street Tower, 29 S Main Street, Bel Air
Entertainment by: Relicoustic.

For More Information, contact: Kevin Jasper, 410-838-8007
www.mainstreettower.com

Shelly McLaughlin, 443.330.5370
www.pathfindersforautism.org

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Most people think it's just bad behavior. Adults tend to assume these kids aren't cooperating because they're spoiled, feel they don't have to, or are just plain oppositional. **The problem is that children with SPD are so overwhelmed with dealing with the sensory world around them; they often can't also consider how other people perceive their behavior.**

I recommended to Lori that she discuss Sensory Processing Disorder with Jordan's pediatrician, find an Occupational Therapist who's been trained in sensory processing/integration theory and techniques, and read Carol Kranowitz's "Out of Sync Child," I also suggested she visit: www.SPDFoundation.net.

The occupational therapist will help diagnose Jordan's sensory challenges and start therapy to help Jordan's brain and body interpret the world around him. Through challenging play during therapy, and a 'sensory diet' of activities Lori can do with her son at home, I know that Jordan will learn to feel more comfortable in the world around him, and show everyone what an amazing boy he is.

It's also important for Jordan's teachers to understand the challenges this sensational child faces every day. And I recommended that Lori discuss some professional development sessions with the school principal, to help the staff and faculty know what it feels like to be Jordan, and to learn strategies that the teachers can use to help him be more comfortable. Sessions like this would actually benefit all students, because everyone has their own unique sensory needs.

And most importantly, I invited Lori to join my online support group in Yahoo!, called Sensory Street. It's a safe place for parents like Lori to learn about Sensory Processing Disorder, share their experiences and know - really know - that they are not alone in this journey.

Ida Zelaya, President of Sensory Street, Inc., is an educator as well as an advocate for children with SPD. For more information about SPS, the support group, or Sensory Street's consulting services, visit www.SensoryStreet.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SENSORY FRIENDLY MOVIE: UP

Saturday, June 13th 10 – 11:30 am; AMC Theaters at Columbia Mall & White Marsh Mall

AMC Entertainment® and the Autism Society of America have teamed up to bring families affected by autism a special opportunity to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment on a monthly basis. With Sensory Friendly Films, the movie auditoriums will have their lights brought up and the sound turned down. For tickets, please visit the theatre's box office the day of the event.

For More Information, contact: 410.423.0520 (Columbia) or 410.933.9428 (White Marsh).

1st Spanish Language Conference for Parents of Children with Disabilities in Maryland PADRE, TU PUEDES

Saturday, June 13th 8:30 am – 3pm; Holiday Inn, College Park

Topics will include how to advocate for your child, rights and the law for children with special needs, managing behavior issues, etc.

For More Information, or to register: 410-768-9100 x 105, www.ppm2.org

CHADD Linthicum Support Group Meeting for Adults with ADHD

Monday June 15th, 7-9pm; St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 116 Marydel Rd, Linthicum Heights

For More Information, contact: Kerch McConlogue: 410.233.3274

CHADD MONTGOMERY COUNTY ADULT WORKPLACE SUPPORT GROUP

Monday, June 15th, 7:30 – 9:30 pm; La Madeline Café, 11858 Rockville Pike, Rockville

The ADHD workplace support group provides adults opportunity to discuss work-related concerns and information dealing with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in the workplace.

Fee and open to the public. This is a monthly meeting, but does not take place in July or August.

For More Information, contact: 301.251.8722

HARFORD COUNTY ASPERGER SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesday, June 24th, 7 – 8:30 pm; Churchville Presbyterian, 2844 Churchville Rd, Churchville

Parent support group meets the last Wednesday of each month.

For More Information, email Cindy Cochran: cindy.cochran@comcast.net

AVOID ADDITIVES LINKED TO ADHD & AUTISM SEMINAR

Thursday, June 25th, 7 – 8:30pm; Marriott SpringHill Suites, 899 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum

A free seminar hosted by the Feingold Association

Seminar features dietary options for ADHD, ASD and other learning/behavior problems. Guests will be introduced to the low-additive Feingold Diet, which eliminates petroleum-based food dyes, artificial flavors, and certain preservatives that have been shown by scientific studies to cause hyperactivity, impulsivity, short attention spans, and other problems.

For More Information, contact: www.adhddiet.org

INSPIRATION CORNER

**“Experience is not what happens to you.
It is what you do with what happens to you.”**

-ALDOUS HUXLEY-

RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Each year, millions of people volunteer to participate in clinical research studies. Without volunteers, there would be no new therapies for diseases and disorders. A clinical research study is a project carefully designed to test a medical treatment in people, under the supervision of a qualified investigator, usually a physician. The medical treatment could be a procedure, drug or device. We are fortunate to have so many researchers working diligently on groundbreaking studies right here in Baltimore. Taking part in these studies is a wonderful way to be involved in, and supportive of, the advancement of quality care for all.

HERE IS A PARTIAL LISTING OF STUDIES CURRENTLY RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS IN THE AREA:**Children With and Without ADHD - 4th - 8th Grades**

Researchers at the Kennedy Krieger Institute are recruiting children in grades four through eight to participate in a study of processing speed and memory. We are recruiting children to participate in a study to learn if there are differences in the way children with and without ADHD learn to read and remember what they have read. The study involves paper and pencil tasks, computer activities, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and electrophysiological (EEG) studies of the brain. Parents will also complete questionnaires, rating scales, and a structured interview. None of these tests are harmful or painful. The study involves two to three days of assessment, about three to five hours each day. Participants will receive \$50.00 and a picture of their brain. Parents will receive a report of the tests administered to their child. All testing is done free of charge. There are no medical benefits or significant risks to participating. E. Mark Mahone, Ph.D. is the principal investigator. For more information about this study, please contact Matthew Ryan at (443) 923-9272 or by email ryanm@kennedykrieger.org. (IRB Protocol #NA_00001350)

Children With and Without ADHD - Ages 8 -12

Dr. Stewart Mostofsky and colleagues at the Kennedy Krieger Institute are recruiting children between the ages of 8 and 12 years to participate in a research study of attention, response planning and inhibitory control. This study is examining the brain basis of ADHD in children. We are looking for boys and girls with ADHD as well as children who do not have ADHD to participate as “comparison subjects”. The study involves paper and pencil tasks, computer activities and a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of the brain. None of these tests are harmful or painful. There are no direct medical benefits from taking part in the study. The study involves two days of testing and MRI. Participants will receive \$50.00 and a picture of their brain. Parents will receive a report of the tests administered to their child. All testing is done free of charge. For more information about this study, please contact Jessica O'Brien at (443) 923-9254 or by email obrienj@kennedykrieger.org. (IRB protocol #02-11-25-01)

Children With and Without Anxiety Disorders - Ages 8-12

We are conducting a research study that examines differences in brain function between children with anxiety disorders and children without anxiety disorders. The study involves a psychological assessment and a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan of the brain. Testing takes about six hours and can be done in two to three visits. There are no direct benefits of the study. There are no major risks associated with this study. All testing is free. The information will help us understand what causes anxiety in children. Children will receive \$100.00 for completing the study, a small gift, a free psychological evaluation, plus a picture of their brain! Parking at the Institute is free. For more information please contact Roma Vasa, M.D. at 443-923-2643 or vasa@kennedykrieger.org. (KKI Protocol Number: NA_00003215)

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www.confidentstudent.com

Research Volunteers Needed, Con't from p.4

Children With and Without ADHD - Ages 9-11.5

Dr. Mark Mahone and colleagues at the Kennedy Krieger Institute are recruiting children between the ages of 9 and 11½ years to participate in a research study of attention, response planning and inhibitory control. This study is examining the brain basis of ADHD in girls. We are looking for boys and girls with ADHD as well as children who do not have ADHD to participate as “comparison subjects”. The study involves paper and pencil tasks, computer activities and a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of the brain. None of these tests are harmful or painful. The study involves two days of testing and MRI. Participants will receive \$50.00 and a picture of their brain. Parents will receive a report of the tests administered to their child. All testing is done free of charge. For more information about this study, please contact Jessica O'Brien at (443) 923-9254 or by email obrienj@kennedykrieger.org. (IRB protocol #02-11-05-05)

Families with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

A team of researchers is studying the occurrence of OCD in families. We are now investigating genetic factors which may increase the susceptibility to OCD. Recent advances in molecular biology and statistical genetics make it possible to identify and describe specific genes that may cause complex diseases such as OCD. We are seeking families with OCD to help conduct these studies. Individuals with OCD are invited to participate in the study. Participants are given a confidential interview about their medical history and will be asked to provide a small sample of blood. Participants do NOT need to travel. Confidentiality of all information is assured. Families may be referred by a clinician or they may contact us directly. Gerald Nestadt, M.D., M.P.H. is the principal investigator. Call 410-614-4942. (Collect calls accepted.) or email jacks@jhmi.edu. (IRB Protocol # 91-11-20-02)

Genetics of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Families who are within a 100 mile radius of Baltimore, MD and who have a child with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) are invited to help scientists learn more about the causes of OCD. Participants will be given a confidential interview about their medical and psychiatric history and will be asked to provide a small sample of blood. Participants need not travel. Confidentiality of all information is assured. Marco Grados, M.D., M.P.H. is the principal investigator. Call 443-287-2292. (IRB Protocol # 02-10-17-09)

For More Information: www.hopkinsmedicine.org/Psychiatry/research/volunteers.html#purpose

BRAIN BYTE



Did You Know?

89.06% of people report they normally write with their right hand and 10.6% with their left. .34% can write with either hand!

AAHD LAUNCHES SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The AAHD (American Association on Health and Disability) Scholarship Fund will support students with disabilities who are pursuing undergraduate or graduate work in the field of disability research, disability policy, health promotion or public health. The scholarships will initially be funded by royalties from the Disability and Health Journal. Scholarships will be limited to under \$1,000 per student. Check AAHD's website for information about the application & selection process: www.aahd.us

**“MAGNIFICENT MIND AT ANY AGE” WITH DR. DANIEL AMEN
AIRING IN JUNE ON MPT**

In this powerful follow-up to his highly successful MPT pledge special **Change Your Brain, Change Your Life**, Dr. Daniel Amen’s **Magnificent Mind at Any Age** explores the many natural ways that we can keep our brains healthy and enhance our brain power. An improved brain allows us to be more effective, more successful, and happier in our personal and professional lives.

SHOW TIMES:

- Thursday, June 4th @ 4pm
- Friday, June 5th @ 12:30am
- Sunday, June 7th @ 8:30am
- Wednesday, June 10th @ 1pm

SIGNS OF SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER

**From www.SPDFoundation.net

Research by the SPD Foundation indicates that **1 in every 20 children** experiences symptoms of Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) that are significant enough to affect their ability to participate fully in everyday life. Symptoms of SPD occur within a broad spectrum of severity. While most of us have occasional difficulties processing sensory information, **for children and adults with SPD these difficulties are chronic and disrupt everyday life.**

SIGNS OF SPD INCLUDE:

Grade Schoolers

- Over-sensitive to touch, noise, smells, other people
- Easily distracted, fidgety, craves movement; aggressive
- Easily overwhelmed
- Difficulty with handwriting or motor activities
- Difficulty making friends
- Unaware of pain and/or other people

Adolescents and Adults

- Over-sensitive to touch, noise, smells, and other people
- Poor self-esteem; afraid of failing at new tasks
- Lethargic and slow
- Always on the go; impulsive; distractible
- Leaves tasks uncompleted
- Clumsy, slow, poor motor skills or handwriting
- Difficulty staying focused



CREATING LIFELONG LEARNERS

76 Cranbrook Road Cockeyville MD 21030 Office 410.692.6145 Fax 443.705.0227