



# Parent Connection



HENRY FORD DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

**April 20, 2021**

*We know life may be challenging right now and we want you to know your Henry Ford pediatrician is still here for you. Below we have collected articles and resources we think you might find helpful. Information in our newsletters is yours to use when it is helpful to you and yours to disregard when it is not. We hope you and your family are staying safe during this pandemic.*

## April is Autism Acceptance Month

The month of April is Autism Acceptance Month. It used to be called Autism Awareness Month but recently organizations have shifted the focus to acceptance. The [Autism Society of America](#) has created a website specifically to help people “[Celebrate Differences](#)” and learn more about how to spread awareness, promote acceptance, and ignite change.

**Autism**  
**AWARENESS VS ACCEPTANCE**  
Neurodiversity is not just a conversation topic! Help build a community that welcomes Autistics into your world, into your, and your children's friendships, into your neighborhood gatherings, into your work-place, places of worship, schools and playgrounds!

- 1** Awareness means you know it exists  
Acceptance means you connect personally and learn more
- 2** Awareness means you can identify it  
Acceptance means you talk to people and gain understanding, compassion, and sensitivity
- 3** Awareness means you know something is happening  
Acceptance means you offer help and support without judgement
- 4** Awareness means you cope with it deal with it tolerate it  
Acceptance means you embrace it, grow from it, and build relationships with people who have it not only those who love someone with it!
- 5** Awareness Is Not Enough  
acceptance is the next step towards a truly inclusive and community driven society!

Amanda J Friedman  
AtlasForAutism.org

Sesame Street also has many resources available on their [Sesame Street and Autism](#) website. This includes tools for adults and children. Most of the videos, books and materials feature [Julia](#), Sesame Street’s first character with autism. Additionally, Daniel Tiger has added a new character this month. He is named [Max and he has autism](#). It can be a good idea to [talk to your child](#) about autism and [read books](#) with characters with autism to help them learn early how to better understand their peers.

## **The Benefits of Reading**

Reading can be a fun hobby for those of all ages. There are [many benefits to reading](#), especially for babies and young children. Reading each day can help introduce many new things, such as communication skills, listening, vocabulary, and concepts like number and letter recognition. [Looking at the illustrations](#) in a book can also be beneficial. Older children can make predictions about the story based on the pictures they see. There are so many books and it can sometimes be hard to pick just one! [This list of best books for newborns](#) can be a great place to start you and your child's reading journey.

## **Supporting Gay Straight Alliances in Schools**

A GSA, or [Gay-Straight Alliance](#), is a student led club that provides a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for students of all gender identities and sexual orientations. GSAs allow LGBTQ students and straight students to come together with a goal of supporting one another and educating others within the school. [Schools with GSAs](#) are found to [have less harassment and discrimination](#) and offer a safer environment for LGBTQ students. There are many ways to [support a GSA or even start one](#). If you are a teacher or administrator at a school that does not have a GSA, allowing your room to be a safe space can be a great way to start. You could also [volunteer to be the GSA advisor](#) if a group of students were interested in starting a GSA. Parents can also support a group of students by encouraging them to speak to administration and help advocate for starting a GSA. Asking other adults to support GSAs, providing awareness and education regarding laws and policies associated with LGBTQ rights are all ways to support GSAs in schools.

## **Crafting with Less Mess**

Crafts can be a whole lot of fun, but the mess may not be. The important thing is to set yourself up for fun and not frustration. Before starting a project, think about your child's ability to manage and contain mess, your tolerance level at the time of the activity, the type of mess, and how much you can protect the area you are in. Doing this will set a foundation for a happy activity. Here are [10 mess free crafts](#) for kids and then [5 more](#). Also consider the type of mess that might be made. [Homemade bubbles](#) may result in spills, but it's mostly water and soap, which is easier to clean. For things like [playdough](#), consider containing the mess with a drop cloth or old sheet. For messier crafts, here are some [tips](#) for making clean up easier.

## **Messy Crafts and Play**

If you have the space and tolerance, [messy crafts](#) can be a lot of fun, especially [outside](#). Some just get you or your kid messy and others require a mess containment plan. Doing something messy can be fun because it isn't always part of the normal routine. Getting elbow deep in slime or playing in the mud provides a tactile experience and can help improve both fine and gross motor skills. It's also a great way to incorporate [fun into science experiments](#). Messy play doesn't have to be a free for all. Here are some [tips for keeping things clean](#). Just remember to protect the play area, keep some old towels on hand and expect some messy fun.

## **Ramadan Kareem to our Muslim Families**

Ramadan started April 12. [Ramadan](#) is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. During this month, people who are Muslim fast during the day. Fasting is an act of worship, which enables Muslims to feel closer to God and strengthen their spiritual health and self-discipline. Even though young children do not fast during Ramadan there are still [ways to involve them](#) in the celebrations. There are also a [lot of books](#) to help children learn about Ramadan, whether they are Muslim or not. Here are some [fun activities](#) for kids during the month. If you aren't Muslim but want to support your friends or family, [these tips](#) could be helpful.

## **Has your child's behavior changed?**

Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior or emotions since the pandemic started? If you have any concerns or questions, please call (313) 451-0720. This is a Google Voice phone number that will call our Henry Ford coordinator who can help to connect you with a behavioral therapist for children.

*Are there other topics you are interested in and would like to learn more about? If yes, please e-mail us at [ParentConnection@hfhs.org](mailto:ParentConnection@hfhs.org) or to unsubscribe.*