

weap: The People

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Rise & Shine: Working Through the Morning Routine

By Sara Gibbs & Kally Angell

Wisconsin Early Autism Project, Inc.



One of the hardest tasks for families to deal with are morning routines. This task may pose more difficulty for families who have a child (or more than one child) with Autism. It adds an entirely different dimension to the morning routine that most would never consider. This article will address some of the problems that some families may deal with during the morning routine, such as getting the child up, having too much to do in a small time frame, the complexity of the routine for some children, finding motivation for your child, adding other children into the mix, as well as solutions for each of these issues.

Getting your child up and out of bed may be at times the most difficult part of the morning routine. Children may be frustrated with the person who is waking them up, and in turn place the blame on that individual, for being tired. A possible

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WEAP Is Moving

By Justin Sallows

Wisconsin Early Autism Project, Inc.

On June 23rd, we will be moving our Madison clinic to 1210 Fourier Drive on Madison's west side between Old Sauk Rd. and Greenway Blvd. We reached the decision to move in the past several months as our current space became too small to schedule all the activities that were planned. A larger space would also allow us to offer a center based program as well as preschool services.

Dr. Sallows has many years experience running a center based program for children on the spectrum and Tammy has similar experience as a preschool teacher and director, training teachers as well as rebuilding and running preschools. Our own Brenda Boehm has returned from Malaysia, where she directed a WEAP clinic and started a successful center based program for children on the spectrum.

The center based program will be called the Friendship Tree, and will be staffed by trained WEAP line staff with Senior Therapists and a Lead on site. Speech and occupational therapy will also be available.

We will be able to provide intensive 1:1 intervention as well as small group (2 or 3 children) and large group interaction as well as mainstream experiences with children in the preschool program, which will be called the Pheasant Branch Children's Center because of the location of the building along side the South Branch of the Pheasant Branch Watershed.

The layout of the Friendship Tree includes eight treatment rooms, a larger area for group activities, a living room and kitchen for generalizing skills to a home like setting, a gym, outside play yard and

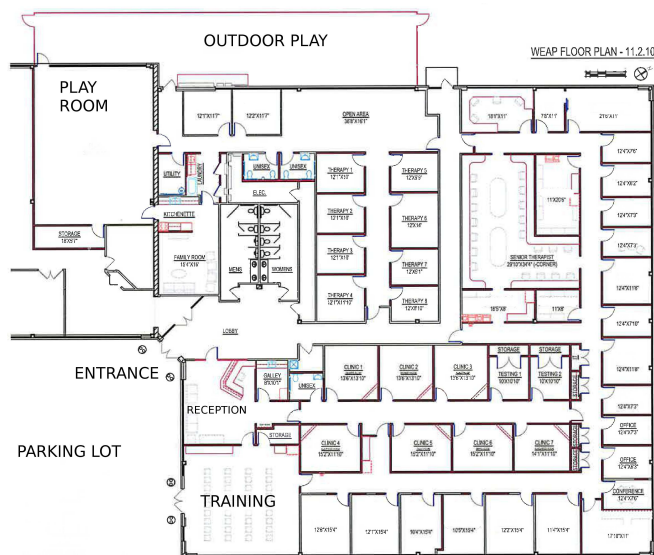
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its own bathroom and laundry. In addition to building cognitive, language and social skills as with our in-home program, we will also be able to address food tolerance, eating skills, clean up, and participation in food preparation. The gym and play yard will be used to teach motor and game skills, assertiveness, joining others in play, group cooperation, appropriate playground behavior and negotiation.

Parental participation in your child's improvement is essential for long term maintenance of skills, and parents will be able to receive training and experience in building cognitive, language, social, self-help and appropriate behavioral skills either at home or at the Friendship Tree. In addition to providing up to six hours per day of treatment, we can also provide therapeutic day care services for families who wish to use a high quality service staffed by Weap line staff. The Day Care program will follow an enriched curriculum emphasizing language development, social interaction skills, and building appropriate behavioral responses to stressors. Parents can also elect to have their child participate in a variety of "specials" including swimming, Yoga, Music, Art, and field trips.

Along with the move to the new building we are changing our telephone number, an unfortunate necessity. At the time of our transition, and I will update you on this, our new number will be 608-662-WEAP (9327). All of our email contacts as well as our website will remain the same.☀



A blue print of the new Madison Office and Clinic.

solution to this may be using an alarm clock to wake the child up every morning. This way, it is a "neutral party" waking them up instead of another person. This also helps to keep consistency in the morning routine if they're up at the same time each morning. Along with a consistent wake up time, parents need to make sure that there is consistency in when the child goes to bed as well.

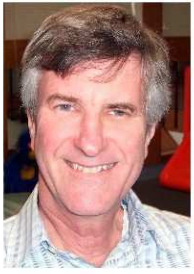
Another setback parents run into with morning routines is having too much to do in too little time. It may seem overwhelming in the morning when a parent not only has to get themselves ready, but the rest of their family ready as well. Getting the child (children) prepared the night before can be very helpful. They can take their showers and baths at this time, lay their clothing out on their bed, prepare their bag lunch, and even have them choose a breakfast. This helps speed up the process, save time and relieve any possible frustration.

Another possible solution is for the parent to get up beforehand and get themselves ready, then get the kids up to start their routine. If the child needs more time to work through their morning routine, you may want to get them up before everyone else. We realize that this may not all work out perfectly every morning, but with a consistent schedule and routine, it can assist you and your child through those morning routines in the long run.

Two techniques that are used frequently throughout the Autism community to help make transitions smoother are visual schedules and social stories. Writing a social story to help your child prepare for the morning routine and practicing (role playing) that routine at other times throughout the day, will let them know the schedule for the next morning. Along with a social story, you can make a simple visual schedule. This will display in pictures and/or words, what the morning routine will consist of. You can make your own visual schedule by taking pictures of the child doing each part of the routine. Programs such as Boardmaker, have templates already made that will help you to create a visual schedule individualized for your child. Going through the schedule the night before is beneficial as well.

Finding motivation and reinforcement for your child's morning routine are very important. It is best to keep it simple and quick, so as to not interrupt the flow of the routine. Making a reinforcement chart, in which the child earns stickers for each task they complete independently is one way to start out. Having the visual schedule coincide with this would be a great way to keep the child on track with what they have completed and what they have left to do on their schedule. When the child completes all of their tasks or earns a set amount of stickers, they get a prize. These prizes can vary anywhere from a piece of candy or small toy to sitting in a special spot in the car or bus on the way to school. Finding a motivator for your child can also consist of finding an object, toy, or activity they like to do, making sure it is a favorite to keep their focus on the routine at hand. Positive verbal reinforcement can and should be used throughout the routine, to assure the child of your approval.

Though each routine will be individualized, depending on your child(ren), these tasks and solutions may help your morning routine to run a little smoother each day. Your WEAP team is here as well as your resource, to assist in making this process a more positive experience.♦



Ask Dr. Sallows

You can submit more questions to Dr. Sallows by putting "Ask Dr. Sallows" in the subject line of an email to:

jsallows@wiautism.com

My child has meltdowns. What can be done?

Like most children, those with ASD have meltdowns or tantrums when repeatedly placed in situations where they anticipate failure, including unfamiliar situations, or when denied something they really want. For children with ASD, tantrums may continue into adolescence. An approach to reducing tantrums includes the following components: 1) reduce rigidity through gradual exposure to new, unfamiliar or changed situations; 2) use visual strategies and rules to clarify what to do; 3) adjust task difficulty and demands so the child can succeed; 4) provide a means of communicating requests or when needing help; 5) reward effort as well as success; 6) let the child choose the rewards.

What can we do "in the moment" when my child has an outburst or aggresses?

Children aggress or have outbursts when they lack the skills to succeed in a situation or they are highly motivated to avoid failure or to get something they want. Building the skills to succeed requires treatment. However, there are several strategies you can use "in the moment": 1) ignoring; not looking, changing expression, or commenting, while continuing the current activity; 2) redirecting to a preferred activity; 3) directing the child to select a preferred activity using PECS, voice output, sign, or speech, eventually prompting this before the child becomes upset so that communicating a preferred activity replaces the outburst.

My child was diagnosed with ASD. Is it necessary to get an MRI or additional tests?

Children with autism do not typically have other treatable medical problems and MRIs, which can identify major brain abnormalities, are usually negative. However, a full physical plus tests for hearing loss, allergies and blood nutrients performed by your pediatrician or hospital-based specialists can identify treatable problems, possibly resulting in resolution of bowel and sleep problems and increased attention and concentration. An extended EEG (24 hours) can detect seizures, which if treated may result in improved learning. Chromosome analysis can identify some treatable inherited conditions and provide parents with information regarding genetic risks for future pregnancies.

How can I tell when my child is ready for school?

Several studies have reported that autistic children are typically ignored or picked on by more able classmates, and that teachers often lack the time to build the many skills

autistic children need to be able to interact with peers. Children with autism may also show limited progress in cognitive, academic and language areas due to insufficient individual work and lack of school readiness skills such as staying seated, attending to the teacher, processing auditory instructions and working independently. Based on these findings, researchers have recommended that behavior problems be minimized and that social interaction and school readiness skills be addressed prior to school enrollment.

My child was diagnosed with autism at age 7. Is there effective treatment available for older children?

Although treatment research has focused on children under 5, a few studies have described significant gains with older children. However, working with them is often more difficult because: 1) they may show more inappropriate behavior in more settings; 2) they may be farther behind peers; 3) full time school reduces hours available for treatment. Outcome is therefore more affected by skills present prior to treatment, especially language. Children over the age of 6 can improve behavior and acquire many skills, but vocal speech may remain limited. Older children with fluent speech are more able to acquire approximately normal social and cognitive skills.

Q: Why do kids with Autism love to stack things? My son stacks things and also lines things up, then stand back and look at them. My son is 4 years old and has been diagnosed in between PPDOS and Aspergers.

Stacking objects and lining them up is considered a self stimulatory activity. It is not clear why children do this, but they tend to do it more or revert to it when anxious, so it may be comforting. This type of self stimulation may be related to the sameness obsession common to many children with autism. These children develop a strong sense that things need to be in a certain order, get upset if the items are moved, seem highly motivated to put them back in the preferred arrangement, and may tantrum if not allowed to do so. Changing this behavior can be accomplished by first finding someone who already has a strong positive relationship with the child or building one yourself prior to intervening. Having a strong relationship increases the child's desire to please you and helps the child trust that you will not do something that will be scary or hard, thereby making it easier for you to implement a strategy to change a strongly ingrained habit. One strategy is to build another activity to the point that it is a preferred one and then redirect the child to the new activity. Another strategy is to gradually intrude, showing the child another way to play with the objects, allowing the child to replace them in the line when you are done. This introduces flexibility and the idea that the objects can be fun when played with in more than one way. Finally, the objects can be "lost" for awhile (removed when the child is not around; Tell him "They are gone. We will have to get new ones."). During this break, new independent play activities can be built with other toys, so that when the objects are eventually returned to the room, the child has several other activities that he can enjoy with other objects in the same environment. Once the child has acquired several new ways to play, it is easier to redirect him away from the ritualistic play without

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

We are recognizing Alex Jeske as our Line Therapist of the month for February. He has worked with us since 2008. His Seniors state "Alex has done a great job handling behaviors and redirecting the child to more appropriate behaviors. He has strong clinical skills and has a great rapport with the child." Alex was recommended by Senior Therapists Nichole Van Rite and Linda Klotz.

Upcoming Events

Promoting Good Behaviors in Daily Life

Clinicians will present on proactive strategies and encouraging positive behavior. They will also discuss why a child might exhibit challenging behavior and approaches to decrease the behavior.

Madison

Saturday, June 11th

9AM-12PM

\$30

WEAP clinic 6402 Odana Rd.

Contact Elizabeth Janowski 608-288-9040

How to Get the Most out of Your Summer

Clinicians will present on how to run a successful peer play, how to establish a consistent daily routine and ideas for developing leisure skills.

Madison

Saturday, June 11th

9AM-12PM

\$30


WEAP clinic 6402 Odana Rd.

Contact Elizabeth Janowski 608-288-9040

Groups and Classes

Location	Group	Age/Level	Facilitator	Fee	Days	Time	Start Date
Madison	Teen Group	Ages 13-16	Matt S	\$30/class (register by June 3 rd)	Wednesdays	4:00-5:30PM	June 15 th - Aug. 3 rd
Madison	Social Skills: Lion Pride	ages 7-9	Stepanie W.	\$30/class (register by June 3 rd)	Fridays	9:30- 11:00AM	June 17 th - Aug. 5 th
Madison	Social Skills: Elephant Parade	Ages 10-12	Megan S.	\$30/class (register by June 3 rd)	Wednesdays	9:00- 10:30AM	June 14 th - Aug. 2 nd
Madison	Social Skills: Dolphin Pod	Ages 5-6	Megan Sass	\$30/class (register by June 3 rd)	Tuesdays	9:00- 10:30AM	June 14 th - Aug. 2 nd
Madison	Social Skills: Kangaroo Troop	Ages 3-4	Megan sass	\$30/class (register by June 3 rd)	Wednesdays	8:45- 10:15AM	June 15 th - August 3 rd
Madison	Speech Adventures	Ages 4-6	Caitlin K.	\$50/class (register by June 3 rd)	Tuesdays	10:30- 12:00PM	June 28 th - Aug. 16 th
Milwaukee	Friendship Club	Ages 11-15	Stephanie	\$30/class Cost includes outings	Thursdays (no group 6/30)	3:00-4:30PM	June 16 th - Aug. 18 th
Milwaukee	Perspective Taking Skills	Ages 5-8	Stephanie	\$30/class	Tuesdays	3:00-4:30PM	July 19 th - Aug. 16 th
Milwaukee	Monday Fun Day	Ages 5-9	Robin	\$30/class register	Mondays	4:30-6:00PM	June 13 th - Aug. 15 th
Milwaukee	The Girls Club	Ages 7-11	Stephanie	\$30/class	Tuesdays	3:00-4:30PM	June 14 th - July 12 th
Green Bay	Social skills	Ages 3-5	TBA	\$10.00 / class Choose # of classes (Register by June 10 th)	Mondays	9:30-11:00Am	June 20 th - Aug. 15 th
Green Bay	Social skills	Ages 6-9	TBA	\$10.00 / class Choose # of classes (Register by June 10 th)	Mondays	12:30-2:00PM	June 20 th - Aug. 15 th
Green Bay	Teen Group	Ages 10-13	TBA	\$10.00 / class Choose # of classes (Register by June 10 th)	Mondays	2:00-3:30PM	June 20 th - Aug. 15 th
Green Bay	Teen Group	14 & Up	TBA	\$10.00 / class Choose # of classes (Register by June 10 th)	Mondays	3:30-5:00PM	June 20 th - Aug. 15 th

Current Openings

<p>MADISON 608-288-9040 Beaver Dam Brodhead DeForest Fall River Madison New Lisbon Rewey</p>	<p>MILWAUKEE 262-432-5660 Greenfield Milwaukee Brookfield Brown Deer New Berlin Sussex Waukesha West Allis Wauwatosa</p>	<p>GREEN BAY 920-338-1610 Freedom Kaukauna Shawano Suamico</p>	<p>EAU CLAIRE 715-832-2233 Augusta Brantwood Camp Douglas Chetek Merrill Plover Shell Lake Westfield</p>	
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