

# Autism Monthly NJ

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Welcome to the Autism Monthly. We're dedicated to providing our readers with informative, exciting and interesting news regarding NJ, autism and events, so if you know of something you'd like posted, or if you're hosting an event that you'd like included, please respond to this email and let us know!



**Autism Family  
Services of  
New Jersey**

## Quick Links

- [Autism Family Services of New Jersey](#)
- [The Family Support Center of New Jersey](#)
- [The Family Resource Network](#)

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## The Family Support Center of NJ presents....Sibshops!

Sibshops are for kids between the ages of 8-12 years old who have a sibling with special needs. FSCNJ will host Sibshop meetings once a month on Saturday from 10am-2pm. Each session costs \$25 per child.

### 2011 Meeting Dates

- February 19, 2011
- March 19, 2011
- April 16, 2011
- May 21, 2011
- June 18, 2011
- July 16, 2011
- August 20, 2011
- September 17, 2011
- October 15, 2011
- November 19, 2011
- December 17, 2011

Sibshops will take place at:  
The Family Resource Network-Shore Office  
Lions Head Office Park  
35 Beaverson Blvd. Bldg. 11  
Brick, NJ 08723

Please call the Family Support Center of NJ to register: 1-800-372-6510.

\*\*\*Space is limited. Please register as soon as possible\*\*\*

## Sibshops Coming to North Jersey!!

FSCNJ is excited to announce that we are in the final planning stages of launching Sibshops in North Jersey. We will be hosting the session at the Family Resource Network North Jersey office in Parsippany. Sibshops are monthly sessions held from 10AM-2PM on a Saturday, and are for siblings of special needs children between the ages of 8 and 12. There is a nominal fee of \$25 per session. If you have a child that maybe interested in these sessions please call Laura Kay at 1-800-372-6510.

## Brain Scans Accurate at Spotting Autism (Reuters)

U.S. researchers are closing in on an accurate test for autism, a finding that could lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment. The test, which uses conventional magnetic resonance imaging or MRI machines, detected 94 percent of individuals with high-functioning form of autism.

"These results are the best yet in the search for a biological basis in terms of being able to distinguish those with and without the disease," said Nicholas Lange of Harvard Medical School, who directs the Neurostatistics Laboratory at McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts.

He said the findings, published in the journal Autism Research, were very preliminary, but if confirmed in several more and larger studies, they might replace current subjective test now used to diagnose the disorder.

And, he said, they might also lead to better management and treatment of people with autism, a complex and mysterious brain disorder usually first diagnosed in early childhood.

Autism is characterized by difficulties in social interaction, communication, and understanding other people's emotions and behavior.

For the study researchers at McLean and a team lead by Dr. Janet Laninhart the University of Utah used an MRI that was tuned to pick up microscopic features of the brain's wiring a technique known as diffusion tensor imaging.

"You don't need any fancy equipment. This is performed around the world," Lange said.

The team did scans of this type on brains of 30 people with autism and 30 people without.

They found that the brain circuitry is significantly different in those with autism compared to people with normal brain function, specifically in areas of the brain that are engaged in language and social and emotional functioning.

By measuring six aspects of the brain's circuitry, the test was able to correctly pick out people who had been diagnosed with autism with 94 percent accuracy.

A repeat study using two different sets of subjects showed the same high level of performance.

Lange said the findings should help make the process of diagnosing autism more scientific because it would rely on a test rather than a subjective assessment.

And it may also offer an early diagnosis, which could help affected children get earlier intervention, when it is most likely to do some good.

"The basis of autism in the brain is very deep. There may be very little that one can actually change about the disorder for an individual with a severe case," Lange said.

"However, it has been shown that in the early stages of development, individuals have been aided by intense one-on-one caring to help them with language, social function with their peers and also with emotional problems," he said.

Autism disorders are diagnosed in one in 110 children in the U.S. and affect four times as many boys then girls.

## Study Linking Vaccines to Autism is "Fraudulent" (Time.com)

It's unfortunate but true that sometimes the hard facts of science don't turn out to be so grounded in reality after all. Scientific fraud is certainly not new, but manipulation of medical data is always troubling, and potentially deadly, for the public. That's the case with a controversial 1998 paper published in the Lancet by Andrew Wakefield, a former intestinal specialist at Royal Free Hospital in London. This week, the editors of the British Medical Journal (BMJ) penned a commentary calling the study "an elaborate fraud," and accompanied the charge with an in-depth study exposing apparent manipulations of the data by Wakefield to bolster his argument that the mumps, measles and rubella vaccine was linked to autism. (More on Time.com: [Vaccination Rates Drop in Wealthier Kids: The Autism Rumors Take a Toll](#)) Summarizing nearly eight years of investigation into Wakefield's assertions that the vaccine caused intestinal disorders that correlated with symptoms of autism, journalist Brian Deer of the Sunday Times of London was able to compare the scientist's descriptions of the vaccinated children in the paper to the government's National Health Service medical records of the youngsters requisitioned by England's medical watch-dogs, the General Medical Council. What Deer and a panel of regulators found was fraud. "No case was free of misreporting or alteration," writes Deer in the BMJ. "Taken together, NHS records cannot be reconciled with what was published, to such devastating effect, in the journal [in 1998]."

[Read More](#)

## The Training Calendar Offers a Clearinghouse of Community Events

In an effort to spread awareness about workshops, conferences and other training opportunities the Family Support Center of New Jersey has launched The Training Calendar. We invite professionals to post information on activities, lectures, trainings, or other events for caregivers and the people they are caring for on [www.thetrainingcalendar.org](http://www.thetrainingcalendar.org). We also invite families and caregivers to view the trainings available in their area.

Previously The Training Calendar had been administered by the Progressive Center for Independent Living. We applaud their foresight in developing this clearinghouse program.

## Autism and Epilepsy Brochures

The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation, Autism Family Services of NJ and the Epilepsy Foundation of NJ have completed a brochure to assist families and professionals in identifying and responding to the potential for seizure disorders in children and adults with autism and epilepsy. The brochure has received wide distribution in its first weeks of release and has been featured in a workshop at the recent Autism NJ Annual Conference and on the Web sites of Autism Speaks and POAC. Downloadable copies are available on our website ([www.autismfamilyservicesnj.org](http://www.autismfamilyservicesnj.org)) or by contacting us at 800-376-2345. The Foundation's Director, Linda Walder Fiddle, serves on the Advisory Board of AFSNJ.



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Thank you for reading Autism Monthly NJ! If you have any information you would like included in our e-zine, or know of anyone that would like to be added to our list, please email me at [msmith@familyresourcenetwork.org](mailto:msmith@familyresourcenetwork.org) or click the "Join Our Mailing List" button on the top right side of the newsletter.

Sincerely,

Michelle Smith  
Autism Family Services of NJ  
and The Family Resource Network

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