The APA has recently suggested a new possible route for treatment of autism. The study was based on the comparison of young boys with ASD taking part in a sensory-motor treatment, as opposed to traditional behavioral therapies. The idea behind this is that children with autism typically deal with sensory problems.

Previous research on animals has shown a sensory-motor or environmental enrichment treatment helped to alleviate some of these issues. The study involved 28 boys with ASD (ages 3 to 12). For six months the boys participated in standard behavior therapy, but half of the group also participated in daily environment enrichment exercises. A few of the items used in this second therapy included: oil fragrances (apple, lavender, vanilla, etc.) and various tactile materials (plastic doormat, smooth foam, aluminum, sponges, etc.). The idea was to use many typical household items. After 6 months, 42% of the children in the enrichment group had significantly improved behaviors (for example – responding to sights and sounds; and relating to people). Sixty-nine % of the parents in the enrichment group reported an overall improvement of autism symptoms in their children, while only 31% of the standard therapy group reported improvement. This is exciting news for the autism community because it seems to suggest a new, low-cost option for parents to help improve symptoms at home.
FEAT of WA: Ben’s Fund Grant

Ben’s Fund grant was established to create an opportunity for families in Washington to receive financial assistance for services related to autism spectrum disorder treatments.

Families have received grants for: integrated listening systems; therapies (occupational, speech, ABA, and developmental); iPads; weighted blankets; professional advocacy for IEP support; therapy swings; and music therapy.

For more information on how you and your family could receive financial assistance from this grant contact: Julia Rule: 425.223.5126, or Julia.rule@featwa.org

A company called STEPS located in Seattle is a global consulting company for families with children on the autism spectrum. They host social skills groups for an hour a week in 10 week sessions. The groups focus on promoting positive and appropriate social interactions. For more information visit: autismsteps.com/services/social_skills_groups/

Join us for the Initiative Speaker Series

Seattle Pacific University’s School of Psychology, Family, and Community and the Initiative for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities presents:

Heather Carmichael Olson, Ph.D.

Tuesday, April 15th, 7:00—8:30 pm

Seattle Pacific University, Otto Miller 109

“...he faced in social interaction and communication. Despite these challenges, Trevor was able to get his driver’s license, make friends, move to a new home, and go to college. He says that on his own none of these feats would have been possible; but through the support of his parents, teachers, and peers, he was able to make these seemingly impossible goals a reality.

Trevor says that while not everyone has access to a great public school, children with autism should seek out support groups or private counselors.

Trevor Pacelli is currently 20, attends college, and has written a book about the daily struggles of living with autism and raising an autistic child.

To read more about these parents’ efforts, visit: http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/09/28/autism-jobs-parents/2839027/

Growing up Autistic: My Story

At age 5, Trevor Pacelli was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS). In an interview with CNN, Trevor discusses the challenges he faced in social interaction and communication. Despite these challenges, Trevor was able to get his driver’s license, make friends, move to a new home, and go to college. He says that on his own none of these feats would have been possible; but through the support of his parents, teachers, and peers, he was able to make these seemingly impossible goals a reality.

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http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/02/health/iyw-growing-up-autistic/

Parents get creative to employ their adult children with autism

Parents like Lori Ireland recognized the employment rate for those with autism was lower than those with other disabilities. These parents were not satisfied with their kids sitting around. Ireland and several other parents began a non-profit called Extraordinary Ventures businesses. The non-profit employs in a variety of positions: cleaning city buses, making candles and gifts, etc.

And now, the parents are traveling across the country to spread stories about the success they’ve had—hoping that it will prompt similar efforts.

Researchers within Drexel University’s Autism Institute in Philadelphia have tried to look at why only about half of young adults with autism have worked for pay since leaving high school, whereas this number is nearly doubled for other disabilities.

To read more about these parents’ efforts, visit: http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/09/28/autism-jobs-parents/2839027/