



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MAINE**

Maine Autism Institute for  
Education and Research

# Pathways

Fall 2016

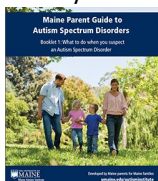
The **Maine Autism Institute for Education and Research** (MAIER) is a partnership between the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development and the Maine Department of Education.

MAIER is dedicated to building state-wide capacity to improve outcomes for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

- Leadership
- Training
- Professional Development
- Technical Assistance
- Consultation
- Research

## Help us with your feedback

Have you been using the *Maine Parent*



*Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorders*? Help us by taking this quick survey ([umaine.qualtrics.com/SE/?](http://umaine.qualtrics.com/SE/?))

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Haven't received a copy of the *Maine Parent Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorders* yet? Contact us by email ([maineautisminstitute@maine.edu](mailto:maineautisminstitute@maine.edu)) or phone (207-581-2352) to request your copy.

## Contact Us

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## Welcome to the fall edition of Pathways



autism centers.

In this edition you will find helpful resources and information useful to both families and professionals. Be sure to check out our Professional Development Series for 2016-17 and learn more about new Maine Autism Leader Team training in the coming year. Check out the Family Focus and links to interesting resources available from other national

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of assistance. Contact us by email ([maineautisminstitute@maine.edu](mailto:maineautisminstitute@maine.edu)) or phone (207-581-2352)

Best regards,

*Deborah L. Rooks-Ellis*, Ph.D. Director, Maine Autism Institute for Education and Research



## Family Focus

Welcome to *Pathways Fall Family Focus*. MAIER's Maine Family Partnership (MFP) provides outreach to individuals and families affected by ASD across the state, and in the section of *Pathways*, we bring news and information with families in mind.

Read about our Fall MFP outing, and learn about our upcoming family event and a new MFP project being planned for 2017. Recognizing the holiday season will soon be upon us, we are including a few helpful resources developed especially for families that include a child with ASD.

As the year comes to a close we ask that you consider making a donation to help support MAIER's outreach efforts to serve Maine families impacted by ASD. Learn more about our MFP efforts and view our website FMI on donating ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/donate-to-maier/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/donate-to-maier/))

We welcome your participation in the MFP and would love to hear from you. If you are not yet on our mailing list to receive our news and announcements, or know someone who would like to be, just send along an email to Donna Doherty, MAIER Family Partnership Director ([donna.doherty@maine.edu](mailto:donna.doherty@maine.edu)) To learn more about MAIER's MFP, visit our webpages ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/maine-family-partnership/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/maine-family-partnership/))

And be sure to check out our Community Calendar ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/events/category/community-events/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/events/category/community-events/)) to find out about other family events taking place around the state.

Hope to see you at one of our family events!

Donna Doherty, MFP Director

## Save the Date

### Professional Development

- November 10, 2016 Keeley's Banquet Ctr, Portland
- December 1, 2016 Jeff's Catering, Brewer
- February 2, 2017 Thomas College, Waterville
- March 2, 2017 Keeley Banquet Ctr, Portland
- March 23, 2017 Thomas College, Waterville
- April 13, 2017 Keeley's Banquet Ctr, Portland
- May 4, 2017 Jeff's Catering, Brewer
- May 18, 2017 Thomas College, Waterville

FMI and to see all MAIER Professional Development ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/trainings/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/trainings/))

### Maine Family Partnership Events

Sunday Dec. 4, 4:00-6pm My Day to Play at the Maine Discovery Museum, Bangor

FMI see MAIER MFP pages on our website ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/maine-family-partnership/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/maine-family-partnership/))

## Donate to MAIER

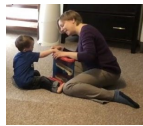
Help support MAIER's outreach to Maine families through our educational and social events. It's easy using our online donation page. FMI or to make a donation, visit our website ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/donate-to-maier/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/donate-to-maier/))



**Maine Autism Institute for Education and Research 2016-17 Professional Development Series** is off to a great start! While attending our PD workshops in person is optimal, for those unable to travel, we now offer Livestream and Archive options. [See page 3]



**Become a Maine Autism Leader Team (MALT)** in your district! School-based and Early Intervention teams are invited to apply to receive extensive training to serve young children and students with autism. Learn more about this opportunity on page 3.



**Early Start Maine** is an initiative of the Maine Autism Institute for Education and Research designed to deliver the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) intervention to young children with autism spectrum disorders. [See page 4]



**Spotlight on Evidence-based practice: Social Stories for Success.** Social stories are one of the most widely used EBP to help individuals with autism understand and navigate daily life. [See page 5]

## Maine Family Partnership



**Are you stressing over the upcoming holidays?** Wondering how you can help your child manage, even enjoy, the additional sensory experiences and stimulation that often accompany this time of year? Check out these resources for helpful hints and practical suggestions for families.

**Tips for reducing holiday stress** ([autismspeaks.org/docs/holidaytips.pdf](http://autismspeaks.org/docs/holidaytips.pdf))

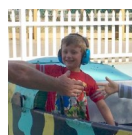
**Tools you can use: A teaching story to help prepare your child for Thanksgiving** ([autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/docs/thanksgiving\\_social\\_story.pdf](http://autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/docs/thanksgiving_social_story.pdf))

**"Autism and the Holidays: Sensory Overload"** ([bradleyhospital.org/parenting-resources/autism-and-the-holidays.html](http://bradleyhospital.org/parenting-resources/autism-and-the-holidays.html))



**Interested in participating in a new Maine Family Partnership project?**

The Maine Family Partnership is looking for volunteers to work on a new project, "Places and Spaces." [See page 6]



**"My best day ever!" was how one child described MAIER's MFP Fall 2016**

**Our Day to Play** at York's Wild Kingdom. Families from 13 of the 16 Maine counties gathered for a day of fun on a beautiful warm and sunny day in September. [See page 6]

**Save the Date!** Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm, MAIER's Family Partnership will be hosting a FREE "My Day to Play" in collaboration with the Maine Discovery Museum in Bangor. [See page 7]



## MAIER Professional Development Series 2016-17

Over 200 educators and professionals attended MAIER's Professional Development Kickoff session, "Social Stories" with Carol Gray. Attendees immersed themselves in social stories and hands-on activities throughout the daylong workshop (noting there never seems to be quite enough time!). One attendee told us, "Carol Gray was an amazing presenter, her stories and teaching were so engaging, and [the] information will be very useful in my Early Intervention work." For more information about Social Stories and Carol Gray, visit her website ([carolgraysocialstories.com/](http://carolgraysocialstories.com/))

Also, be sure to check out our "*Spotlight on Evidence Based Practice*" elsewhere in this issue; this fall we focus on Social Stories.

If you missed Carol's workshop, there is still time to register and view it in our Archives. Register online at our secure registration site ([secure.touchnet.com/C22921\\_ustores/web/store\\_main.jsp?STOREID=64&SINGLESTORE=true](http://secure.touchnet.com/C22921_ustores/web/store_main.jsp?STOREID=64&SINGLESTORE=true)).

MAIER's Professional Development workshops are offered throughout the school year, and are open to families as well. So be sure to check our PD calendar for other offerings ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/events/category/professional-development/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/events/category/professional-development/)).

Unable to attend in person? This year we are fortunate to be able to offer Livestreaming to those who cannot attend in person, and will post them to our Archives after the event. You will still need to register for these options, but our hope is to make our offerings accessible to many more across the state. Register online at our secure registration site ([secure.touchnet.com/C22921\\_ustores/web/store\\_main.jsp?STOREID=64&SINGLESTORE=true](http://secure.touchnet.com/C22921_ustores/web/store_main.jsp?STOREID=64&SINGLESTORE=true))

## MALT Team Updates and Training

Forty-two educational teams across the state have already been trained as Maine Autism Leader Teams (MALT), thanks to a partnership of the Maine Autism Institute for Education and Research and the Maine Department of Education (see our website for listing of MALT teams: [umaine.edu/autisminstitute/pathways/fall-2016/malt-update-2016/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/pathways/fall-2016/malt-update-2016/))

These school-based and early intervention teams include general and special educators, related services staff, and general and special education administrators. With a focus on students in their own district, teams received training and ongoing support in implementing evidence-based practices (EBPs) with fidelity and collecting data, with a focus on measuring student outcomes.

The *Evidence-Based practices* that are used have been part of the National Professional Development Center in Autism Spectrum Disorders project and the National Standards Project, and have been supported through documented research. Specific topics addressed included the following: Overview of ASD, Functional Behavioral Assessment, Social Skills Instruction, Communication Programming, Visual Supports, Educational Approaches and Building a Comprehensive Plan, which included the appropriate and adequate training and supports for paraprofessionals working with children with autism spectrum disorder in the least restrictive environment.

**We are now seeking applications from interested districts and early intervention teams for the 2017-18 academic year MALT training.** To learn more about this opportunity and to apply, visit our website ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/trainings/2017-18-malt-application-agreement/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/trainings/2017-18-malt-application-agreement/))

Only 12 school-based or agency-based teams will be chosen for the 2017-18 academic year, so apply early!



## Early Start Maine Initiative serves families of young children



The Early Start Maine team is comprised of five nationally certified Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) interventionists. In partnership with Maine Child Development Services, the Early Start Maine team provides training and supervision to Maine's early intervention providers to improve Maine's ability to deliver necessary and highly effective early intervention to young children, birth to age 3, with autism spectrum disorders.

Parents served by Early Start Maine have shared their experiences with us, noting the positive impact the intervention was having on their children. Here's a sample of what parents involved in the program are saying:

"This is a wonderful model and was very beneficial to our daughter's growth and development. It's almost scary to think about where she would be today if she hadn't been fortunate enough to receive these services. It truly made a difference."

"My son had many issues with social interaction and with language. In the year I was in the program he made a lot of positive progress; now playtime is very enjoyable, and he goes to preschool where he has made new friends."

"Our son has learned so much and we can see just how PROUD he is of himself with these newly acquired skills. We'd love him no matter what, but there's a new joy in his eyes that makes our hearts melt."

"This helped open up my child in so many areas that weren't open to him before, and they helped us learn and modify things to help him learn. This is a wonderful program and I'm happy with the results we got from this."

Since its inception in April 2015, *Early Start Maine* has served 90 children and their families across 9 CDS sites and 4 partner agencies; 28 primary service providers are implementing Early Start Maine statewide, and there are now 20 primary service providers with Maine recognized fidelity and certification.

To learn more about Early Start Maine, visit our website ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/about-us/early-start-maine/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/about-us/early-start-maine/)). Be sure to check out our [Parent Coaching Modules](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/parent-coaching-modules/) ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/parent-coaching-modules/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/parent-coaching-modules/)), also available on our website. These learning modules are based on the principles of the Early Start Denver Model and guide families in supporting their child's learning.

## Resources you can use

**Interested in reading Temple Grandin's perspectives** on how to more effectively support and interact with students and individuals with ASD? Visit the *Indiana Resource Center for Autism* ([iirc.indiana.edu/pages/ircaarticlesbytemplegrandin](http://iirc.indiana.edu/pages/ircaarticlesbytemplegrandin)) for a list of articles authored by Grandin, noted author, autism spokesperson, and Professor of Animal Science.

**Working with or raising an Adolescent on the Spectrum?** *Autism at a Glance* ([fpg.unc.edu/search/apachesolr\\_search/Autism%20at%20a%20glance?filters=type:resources](http://fpg.unc.edu/search/apachesolr_search/Autism%20at%20a%20glance?filters=type:resources)) is a series published by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at UNC, Chapel Hill designed for high school staff and family members in supporting adolescents on the autism spectrum. Each four page resource provides practical tips and resources on a variety of topics relevant to this age group.

**Check out MAIER's revised and updated Resource pages on our website** ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/resources/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/resources/))

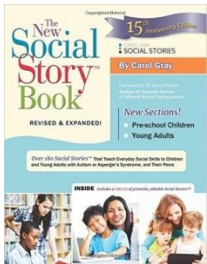
# Social Stories for Success

By Martha Gladstone, M.Ed., CAS  
Doctoral Student, Prevention and Intervention

As a kindergarten and first grade teacher, I welcomed children with ASD into my classroom for twenty years. To help my students navigate the often-confusing social world, I relied on the work of Carol Gray to help me design Social Stories. Parents of children with ASD also understand the importance of creating Stories not only for help in the moment, but also to prepare their child for an upcoming event that may cause anxiety, such as a trip to the dentist or attending a large family gathering.

Social Stories should be written in positive language from the first-person perspective for children ("I will try..."). Stories should be accurate, concise, appealing and appropriate for the age and understanding level of the person they are written for.

An online search lead me to many helpful websites:



Go to [www.carolgraysocialstories.com](http://www.carolgraysocialstories.com) for a Carol Gray Social Story Sampler that can be printed with colorful photographs in a picture book format or just read online with your child.

Check out [www.child-autism-parent-café.com](http://www.child-autism-parent-café.com) and Future Horizons, Inc. at [www.fhautism.com](http://www.fhautism.com) which has a bookstore full of resources.

Look for the new 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of *The New Social Story Book* by Carol Gray (about \$29 on Amazon).

Read this example of a Social Story *excerpted from* The New Social Story Book, 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition *by Carol Gray, Future Horizons, Inc.:*

*Sometimes my hands get dirty. My hands touch items with germs all day long. My hands touch doorknobs and pencils and many other things that have germs. I can't see or feel the germs on my hands. That's because germs are very, very tiny. Even though I can't see germs, soap and water sends them away.*

*This is a list of steps people follow when they wash their hands:*

- *Go to the sink.*
- *Turn the water on.*
- *Get hands wet.*
- *Put soap on hands.*
- *Rub hands together.*
- *Rinse hands with water.*
- *Turn the water off.*
- *Dry hands.*

*Washing my hands is a healthy habit. I will try to follow these steps to wash my hands.*

# Maine Family Partnership

The Maine Family Partnership (MFP) is launching a new project called “Places and Spaces” and we need your help! The idea for this new project comes from MFP parents who told us about the common misunderstandings and judgment they experience when out and about with their children in public and community places. They envisioned an educated community that understood both the challenges and benefits of welcoming families that include a child with autism into their businesses, recreational areas, and other public spaces. Hence, the goal of this project is to help transform our Maine communities into more informed, understanding, and welcoming places for *all* families to enjoy.



We are in the very early stages of this project, but envision an online resource where families can submit suggestions of places and spaces that are particularly welcoming and accepting already- outdoor places, businesses and public places, as well as special community events. A second strand will work toward developing resources to educate business and community members, as well those working as public places and spaces, in better understanding the needs of families that include someone with ASD.

Work on this project will require occasional meeting time (online or in-person), online communications, and individual tasks as we define the scope of the project and build our “Places and Spaces” community and online resources. Are you interested? Contact Donna Doherty, MFP Director, by email ([donna.doherty@maine.edu](mailto:donna.doherty@maine.edu)) or phone (207-581-2468) for FMI or to join our project group. Together, we can work toward creating more welcoming and accommodating places and spaces for Maine families.

## MAIER's MFP Fall 2016 Our Day to Play at York's Wild Kingdom.



**My best day ever!” was how one child described MAIER's MFP Fall 2016 Our Day to Play** at York's Wild Kingdom. Seventy families from across the state gathered at York's Wild Kingdom on September 17<sup>th</sup> for “Our Day to Play” hosted by MAIER's Family Partnership. Children with ASD of all ages, armed with their yellow “VIP” bracelets and their families, fanned out around the zoo and amusement park to enjoy the animals, test their courage on the amusement rides, and experiment with new foods.

Families attending the York Wild Kingdom event shared their experiences at the Park with us in the days after the event. Their words tell it best, so here's a sample of the feedback we received:

*“Our son, who is 12, just loved it- both the zoo and the amusement park. He was very excited to see the animals, especially the monkeys, and he tried several rides that were new to him, and did great!”*

*“We as a family were able to have time to spend together, which is sometimes very hard with our already busy routine. Between school and therapies alone, we sometimes have a hard time to gather as a family and just enjoy ourselves.”*

*“The kids and everyone had a wonderful time, and it was great to see all the other yellow [VIP] wristbands out and about.”*

*“The ride operators at YWK were very accommodating to our ‘special needs’ and we had such an enjoyable day.”*

A grandmother who attended the event with her grandson shared their experience, writing:

*“I accompanied my little grandson to the event and he could not stop telling people that it was his Best Day Ever! He's always been afraid of rides, but this day he couldn't get enough of them! He and I went on the Super Slide 4 times and I'm sure it would have been more if the line had been shorter! Another big favorite was the butterfly house. He was so excited to see the creatures land on me! (It must have been my floral Backpack!) We were at the park for over 5 hours and then I took him to the beach. He enjoyed the puddles and I had brought along sand toys so he was ecstatic! I got him home by 8pm, sound asleep!”*

Special thanks to York's Wild Kingdom for partnering with us for this fun MFP event and many thanks to all the volunteers and sponsors who made this day possible! To read more about this Maine Family Partnership event check out our website ([umaine.edu/autisminstitute/maine-family-partnership/mfp-events/](http://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/maine-family-partnership/mfp-events/)) and view our photo gallery on MAIER's FB page .

## Join us December 4th at the Maine Discovery Museum!

Join us at the Maine Discovery Museum on a day especially designed for children with autism spectrum disorder and their siblings and families. This is a safe, comfortable environment for children to explore the Museum during a time closed to other visitors. For more information on “My Day to Play” events, visit the Maine Discovery Museum website :

([www.mainediscoverymuseum.org/Programs/Special-Events/My-Day-To-Play.aspx](http://www.mainediscoverymuseum.org/Programs/Special-Events/My-Day-To-Play.aspx))



December’s “My Day to Play” will feature fun activities with the upcoming holidays in mind, an opportunity for families to meet MAIER staff and gather helpful resources, and other fun surprises. Come meet Connor Archer, a young man with ASD and founder of the *Courageous Steps Project*, a local initiative that works to raise awareness of the developmental challenges of living with ASD, and helps channel resources to enhance the success of children and teens.

**To Register for this event:** Please call the Maine Discovery Museum at (207) 262-7200. Advanced registration is not required but helps us plan our activities and refreshments. So join us for this free opportunity to play, gather information and resources, and enjoy time with other local families!