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Autism Agenda



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD-Cascade Regional Autism Program

What Life Skills Do Our Kids With Autism Need to Succeed?

Maureen Bennie

At some point we all have to face our children growing up. For those of us with kids on the spectrum, this milestone can seem even more daunting. For some parents, even getting their kids into winter clothing can seem next to impossible, so teaching other life skills can seem overwhelming. Even the word "succeed" might be misleading. Each child with autism will have a different measure of success. For some, putting on clothing, remembering to eat, or simply being able to navigate daily tasks will be the goal. For others, it will be remembering to get to class, or performing tasks at their jobs. Now that my children are in their teens, I am starting to see some of the early work on life skills paying off in certain areas. In some areas, they might always need support (don't we all?). Below is a helpful list of categories for the basic skills necessary to meet individual levels of success.

THE SEVEN CATEGORIES OF LIFE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH ASD

1. **Executive Functioning Skills:** These are organizational skills that are needed to plan the day, break down a task, create a "to do" list, and plan ahead for chores, outings etc...It will be an on-going process to build this skill, as it is something that is challenging for most of those with ASD. Michelle Garcia Winner, SLP, offers excellent advice and exercises to build executive functioning skills for high-functioning individuals through her [Social Thinking Program](#). We are also hosting a conference with Joyce Cooper-Kahn in Halifax in 2016 to help youth build better executive functioning skills. Can't make it to the conference? Her book: [Late, Lost, and Unprepared: A Parents' Guide to Helping Children with Executive Functioning](#), is a must have for any parent or caregiver for a child with autism.

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WHAT LIFE SKILLS DO OUR KIDS... CONTINUED....

2. **Practical Living Skills:** These skills encompass finding information (internet, books, newspapers etc.), money skills (budgeting, bank accounts, credit cards, making change), travel (reading a map, using transportation, planning a trip), clothing (care, laundering, organizing), home care (garbage day, housecleaning, doing dishes) cooking, and shopping. One of the best ways to teach these skills is through involving your child in your daily routine, rather than doing everything for them. The earlier you include your child in activities such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry, the longer they have to develop comfort and routines in these important areas. Superstore offers a cooking/shopping program for people with disabilities in Edmonton, AB. The program involves choosing a recipe, shopping for the groceries, then preparing the food. Check with your local grocery store, or kitchen shop to see if they offer (or are interested in offering) such a program. There are many resources available for segments of this kind of learning, please check our [resources page](#) for classes, courses, or support in your area.
3. **Personal Care:** This would involve personal daily hygiene, exercise, nutrition, dealing with an illness such as a cold, and coping with stress. Create and rehearse relaxation routines, make task breakdown lists for showering, toileting or tooth brushing if steps are missed without prompting. Some of my favorite resources for teaching hygiene to youth is are: [101 Tips for the Parents of Boys with Autism](#) or [101 Tips for the Parents of Girls with Autism](#) . If these don't sound like what you are looking for, we have many many resources in our Life Skills Section of our store to check out. There is something for everyone.
4. **Job Skills:** How do you look for a job? Create a resume? Get work experience? Be a good employee? A good place to start to gain job experience may be through volunteer work. If parents volunteer for an organization, take the child along too to gain some experience. My two children have shadowed me in the past at my volunteer position at our local farmer's market. They will get to know the vendors which could perhaps lead to a job later on. Other volunteer avenues to try are through churches, sports clubs, Guides or Scouts, museums, parks and recreation, the library – the list is endless. Try to find a good fit with the child's interests.
5. **Personal Safety:** A tough topic to teach! Many children will memorize rules like don't talk to strangers, but will not know when to break those rules if necessary. Under stress, some people lose their ability to speak. It may be a good idea to carry around a card with a few statements on it for those stressful moments when it can be hard to gather one's thoughts. Teach what risks are, and how to avoid unsafe situations. For example, one rule may be not to use public transportation after dark if in a big city. Another may be not to do favours for an unfamiliar person. An excellent book to start off the topic with younger children is [*An Exceptional Children's Guide to Touch: Teaching Social and Physical Boundaries to Kids*](#). It has a number of short stories that illustrate different kinds of touch from accidental to friendly to harmful, and helps to illustrate appropriate boundaries.
6. **People Skills** – This would fall under the topic of social skills. Areas that need to be developed are working in a group, making friends, asking for help, dealing with family relationships, communicating over the phone, conversation etc. Social skills is a broad topic. Although social rules and etiquette can be taught, if the child is high functioning enough, think about teaching flexibility in thinking and perspective taking. Good books for this are [*Teaching Your Child the Language of Social Success*](#), [*Thinking About You, Thinking About Me*](#), and [*Teaching Children with Autism to Mind Read*](#).
7. **Self-Advocacy** : A topic which is often forgotten, children need to be taught how to get their needs met effectively. They need to know how and when to ask questions, who to approach for help, when to give their opinion, and how to say no. I just wrote a blog post about how Judy Endow – one of my favorite authors on the spectrum – opened my eyes to what seems like an implicit problem of class for those with disabilities, that makes teaching self-advocacy more important than ever. Two books that do a great job of outlining how to provide your child with self-advocacy skills are: [*Ask And Tell*](#), and [*Autism Life Skills: From Communication and Safety to Self-Esteem and More*](#) .
<https://autismawarenesscentre.com/looking-aheadlife-skills-what-do-our-asd-kids-need-to-succeed/>

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5 AUTISM SUCCESS STORIES

5 Autism Success Stories

Everybody in the ABA community has heard that Jerry Seinfeld sometimes says he thinks he might have Aspergers ... E! and TMZ won't let you forget that American Idol finalist James Durbin is on the spectrum... and there's even no shortage of speculation about great historical scientific personages like Einstein, Newton and Tesla.

But there are plenty of other success stories that don't involve the ultra-famous, uber-rich or hyperintelligent.

For many parents with kids newly diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, it can feel good to learn that it's completely possible for people on the spectrum to have full and meaningful lives. Of course, this doesn't necessarily mean hitting the big time or being a titan of industry ... but it couldn't hurt.

So here are five success stories of individuals with ASD – a couple you'll recognize from the headlines, others you probably won't. But one thing for sure is that they're all recognized for a lot more than just their disability.

Stephen Wiltshire – Acclaimed Artist

Stephen Wiltshire was born in London in 1974 and quickly showed many of the typical symptoms of ASD—he was mute and appeared to live almost entirely in his own world, obsessing over esoteric subjects like American automobiles. He was diagnosed at age three, and remained unable to speak until he was eight.

But one thing he could do was draw. He began to sketch the buildings of London and the drawings were extraordinarily detailed—accurate down to the finest architectural detail, even after only a glance. He sold his first drawing at eight, and the Prime Minister commissioned him to draw Salisbury Cathedral.

By the time he was 32, Wiltshire's skills had been recognized as a Member of the Order of the British Empire, and he was given a permanent gallery on the Royal Opera Arcade in London to exhibit his works.

Justin Hansen – Football Star

Justin *hated* football at first. Hated that his dad made him start playing in grade school. Hated being around the other players. Hated the coaches, who didn't want him there in the first place, a lumbering kid with Aspergers who they saw as a charity case.

But he was *good* at it. Being bullied, even though he was the biggest kid on his block, resulted in a lot of pent-up emotions – easy to take out in a game, exploding across the line, unleashing himself on some unsuspecting offensive lineman or running back.

It didn't matter that he didn't like to make eye contact with anyone. It didn't matter that he didn't like to leave his room, preferred to play games of strategy and imagination instead of going out with friends—he didn't have many friends anyway.

But life in the locker room changed that. By the time he was a senior, Justin wasn't just the odd man out—he was the exceptional defensive lineman that colleges were trying to recruit. He landed a Division I scholarship at Colorado State university, became part of the team, one of the guys. Along the way, he learned to socialize. Teammates took him along to hang out. He learned to laugh, make small-talk.

Today Justin dreams of landing a roster spot in the National Football League. It's a long way for the kid with ASD who hated football.



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5 AUTISM SUCCESS STORIES CONTINUED....

Temple Grandin – Animal Behaviorist

Temple Grandin is one of the most well-known autism success stories talked about in the ABA community. What's she's known for is something that would be impressive to anyone – from animal lovers to industry innovators to neurodiversity rights advocates: Not only has she contributed groundbreaking work to the field of animal science, she moonlights as a speaker and advocate for people on the autism spectrum. But the science came first—although Grandin showed all the classic signs of high-functioning autism at a young age, she was not formally diagnosed with ASD until she was 64, already with a long and distinguished career behind her. She was an early proponent of the humane treatment of livestock and has published more than sixty papers on livestock handling.

But in the ASD advocacy and ABA community she's best known for inventing the “hug machine,” a device that applies the kind of evenly distributed head-to-toe deep pressure throughout the body that has been shown to mitigate anxiety and help hypersensitive individuals with ASD relax. Many variations of the hug machine are now widely available, from off-the-shelf inflatable products for kids and wearable items, to commercial squeeze machines for clinical use.

Susan Boyle – Singer

Susan Boyle was 47 when her singing career was launched, but she made up for the late start with a big splash. After a jaw-dropping premiere on the talent-search show *Britain's Got Talent*, Boyle went on to release a debut album that smashed records for first week sales and went on to become the best-selling album of all time in the United Kingdom.

She sang for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee – the highest honor for a vocalist in Great Britain – and went on to a successful and enormously lucrative career. It's a little surprising that she wasn't discovered till she was almost 50. But the fact that she struggled with Aspergers Syndrome her whole life might have had something to do with it.

Press reports of erratic behavior in the wake of her televised appearance on BGT surfaced almost immediately, and rumors she was committed for a time to a psychiatric hospital swirled. The strain and pressure of fame are a lot for anyone to handle—but Boyle still didn't know she had Aspergers. As a child, she'd been told she had brain damage, but wasn't offered any treatment options.

After being officially diagnosed with Aspergers at 51, she went on to continue her career and receive the help and understanding she needed to cope with the demands of stardom.

Matt Cottle – Accomplished Baker

When Matt Cottle asked his supervisor at a Scottsdale grocery store if he could switch from being a bagger to working in the bakery, she told him he'd never do anything more than collect grocery carts in the parking lot of the store.

Cottle had fallen in love with cooking in high school during a culinary demonstration. With the stereotypical obsessiveness of someone with ASD, he thought about baking all the time. He thought about it through six years of working at the grocery store. He thought about it during multiple attempts at entering culinary school, even though he was rejected every time because of issues stemming from his autism.

Finally, Cottle decided to make his own way and do for himself what no one would help him with. He found a pastry chef willing to give him one-on-one lessons, and in time he refined his craft, bringing a new level of mastery and creativity to the art of baking.

Then he made the big leap toward realizing his dream and opened his own bakery. As homage to both his new profession and his disorder, he couldn't help but give it a name that would help remind the culinary world of what he had to overcome to get to where he was. He called it the Stuttering King Bakery.

Together with his mother, Cottle runs a catering business out of their home serving up delectable baked treats around the Phoenix metro area... Not bad for a guy people didn't think could do anything more than collect grocery carts.

<https://www.appliedbehavioranalysisedu.org/5-autism-success-stories/>

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FINDING WORK FOR THOSE WITH AUTISM

Finding Work For Those with Autism: Self Employment Success

Maureen Bennie

Many adults with autism have difficulty being accepted in, and carving a niche in the working world. While they may have troubles communicating verbally, they might still be able to, and want to contribute in a meaningful way through work. While most provinces in Canada have programs available to help those with autism find work, and there is a growing number of provincial databases, and companies who are open to the idea of hiring someone with autism. Some people find success breaking out on their own.

Self-employment can be a great way to provide meaningful work to someone with autism who has difficulty coping in a traditional work environment. Brad Fremmerlid, 25, is on the severe end of the spectrum. He can't read or write, but he can put things together by looking at diagrams. With the help of his parents, Brad launched his own company Made by Brad. Located in Edmonton, Brad is available for hire to put together any project that has blueprints or diagrams.

Through supported self-employment, a business can be created that suits the aptitudes and interests of a person with ASD. A support team can handle the contracts and daily administrative duties, leaving the person with autism to pursue what they love.

Calgarian Kevin Vo is another perfect example of supported employment in action. He makes greeting cards and uses his money to enhance his enjoyment in life. He loves to go out for fries, travel to Disneyland, and uses his income to buy more supplies to make his cards, an activity he loves to do.

BELOW ARE THREE MAIN POINTS TO HELP DECIDE IF SELF EMPLOYMENT IS THE RIGHT PATH.

1. **Is There Something You Love To Do?** Does your adult or youth with autism have something that they love to do? This should be something that they could spend days doing, and have no problems focusing on completing.
2. **Is There A Need For This Service/Product?** Is this a hobby that can be used to make a product, or be a service that could be sold on its own? A person with autism might love putting groceries into bags for instance, but that would be a service better suited to employment, rather than self-employment.
3. **Is There A Support Network?** Do they have the support they would need to help with areas that might be challenging? In particular: executive functioning and social skills. As we all know, there is a broad spectrum of abilities out there, but in the example above even though Brad can't read or write, he has the support he needs to round out his skill set and have a business.

If you are a person with autism, or are caring for a person with autism, and you can answer yes to those three questions then self employment might be a perfect fit. For an excellent article on [how to start a business "aspie style" please click here.](#)

You may also want to have a look at the following resources:

[How to Find Work that Works for People with Asperger Syndrome](#)

[Developing Talents: Careers for Individuals with Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism](#)
<https://autismawarenesscentre.com/finding-work-autism-self-employment-success/>

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EMPLOYING AUTISTIC STAFF, RISING TIDE CAR WASH...

Employing autistic staff, Rising Tide Car Wash plans third location

By Scott Luxor

Sun Sentinel Correspondent

Dec 30, 2020

The ripple started in Parkland. Then it became a wave in Margate. Now there's a [Rising Tide](#) coming to Coral Springs.

Rising Tide Car Wash, which hires mostly people on the autism spectrum, has now found enough success in its business model to expand to a third location.

John D'Eri co-founded the car wash business with his son Thomas in Parkland back in 2013. His mission was to create a social enterprise to give people with autism an opportunity to have real opportunities and real jobs that would challenge them and give them skills.



"My son Andrew is on the spectrum," he said. "There were no opportunities for him whatsoever. I have always been a serial entrepreneur. So I decided that the best thing I could do was try to give him empowerment through employment versus some form of institutionalization like a group home."

The original Parkland car wash at 7201 N. State Road 7 was so successful that the family decided they should open a second location in Margate in 2017. Now, the success of Margate location at 2970 N. State Road 7 led them to pursue a third location in Coral Springs at 10340 Royal Palm Blvd., which is slated to open in late 2021 or early 2022.

"It took us two years to finally hone in on the Coral Springs spot to see if we could make it work," D'Eri said. "Coral Springs really showed their desire to be an inclusive community by getting involved in our social enterprise."

"In Coral Springs, we expect to hire between 20 and 25 people," he said. "Those are not all full-time positions. A lot of people with autism don't have the ability to work full time. There are transportation issues. There are school scheduling issues. Some of them are in the last year of school because school goes on longer for people on the spectrum."

Unlike his locations in Margate and Parkland, D'Eri has aspirations for hiring a team that is completely on the spectrum.

"Within the first two years of operation, we want to be 100% staffed with diversity, meaning employees on the spectrum. That includes the team leaders. That's our goal with Coral Springs, which would be the first of its kind."

Adapting to COVID-19

"You have to look for the silver linings in 2020," he said. "Rising Tide has been committed to our expansion into Coral Springs. We kept our head down and kept pushing through, even with all the bad news and everything going on with COVID."

D'Eri said that perseverance is a quality that has made a huge difference in getting things done, despite the health crisis.

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EMPLOYING AUTISTIC STAFF, RISING TIDE CAR WASH... CONTINUED...

"I always feel a sense of hope, like we always do at Rising Tide," he said. "The coronavirus, too, will pass. And when it passes, we don't want to be left behind. Even when it was challenging this last year, we kept calling the city of Coral Springs to get approval for the business. We never stopped."

The changes that have been made to help prevent the spread of the virus at the car wash are thorough, and D'Eri said many of them should be continued beyond the pandemic.

"When we opened up again in 2020, we developed a protocol whereby we would disinfect the car with fogging equipment so that nobody would enter a car unless it was already COVID-killed," he said.

"On the full-service side, people would stay in their car and they wouldn't get out. They wouldn't congregate in the lobby. When they did get out of their car, our team member would immediately fog the door handles and the dashboard and disinfect all the high touch areas along with them."

Procedures for customers weren't the only thing that worried D'Eri. He was also concerned about the way his teams would respond to the pandemic.

"Often our employees, who are on the spectrum, fixate on news and things going on in a fearful way during the pandemic," he said. "We were really concerned about how the team was going to react. Amazingly enough, they reacted like champions. And the idea of people with autism helping the community to limit the spread of the virus through a carwash ... that's pretty cool!"



Car wash as vehicle for change

Who would think that a car wash would be an important way of impacting the autistic community? D'Eri said that he and his son Thomas did a lot of research, and that's how they came up with a car wash as a high-impact model for a social enterprise for people on the spectrum.

"Thomas did a lot of research into socially-oriented businesses," he said. "We spent a year and a half in what we call 'thinking mode', researching many businesses to try to find out the one we wanted to try."

"The car wash was the most capital intensive, compared to anything we look at. But it had the highest upside of community impact, not only for the individuals that work there but for people in the surrounding community."

What made this model have its most impact was the visibility of the workforce for the customers. The car wash model also was good for workers who are on the spectrum since the tasks are sequential and are repeated throughout the day.

"People with autism, because of their social disconnect, have an affinity for repetitive function," D'Eri said. "That affinity is to feel comfortable that they're doing it correctly and then they move forward."

He said he had no interest in creating a business in which customers would patronize them simply because they're helping a part of the population.

"Having an effective, quality business is key versus relying on autism, and a 'feel sorry for' cause to drive the business," he said. "We don't do that at all."

"The fact is, that if customers don't get a good product, it's my fault," he said. "We really didn't emphasize the autism cause, except for a little publicity at the beginning. After that, we didn't even talk about the autism aspect of the business."

Continued on page 8.

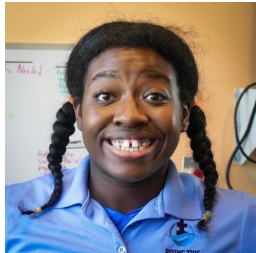
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KEMPLOYING AUTISTIC STAFF, RISING TIDE CAR WASH... CONTINUED...

Rising Tide is a model of a more recent trend in businesses that operate both for a profit, as well as for a cause.

"Our social enterprise is not a nonprofit. It's a social enterprise, just like B Corporations," D'Eri said. "We don't have a single dime of government money involved in our business. We don't even take contributions by individuals, even though people always ask if they can."

The team 'feels like family'



Breyana Marie Mathis, 22, of Coral Springs, is a member of the Rising Tide Car Wash team at the Margate location. She is on the spectrum and is an enthusiastic member of the crew. She started working at the company a year ago.

"I love it here," she said. "I love the whole family and I really, really enjoy it. Hopefully in the future, I will teach the new recruits about Rising Tide."

Her family has been supportive of her working with the company.

"My family found out about the opportunity and brought me to Rising Tide to interview," she said. "After I visited, I thought, 'Oh my God, I really want to apply here, because that's the job that I want to have'."

"When I met the work-family here, they treated me with respect," she said. "We say 'hi' and 'goodbye' to each other. We talk with each other. Now I always buy them treats. They're always supportive here. They're always cheering me on."

Frantz Francois, of Lauderdale Lakes, is also a team member with autism. He has been working with Rising Tide for the last three years, ever since the Margate location opened.

Frantz acknowledged that the 46-step process for learning how they clean a car was a bit challenging at first, but he learned to master it and that everyone there is helpful.

"It's like a family, working here," he said. "It's really great working for them."



Over 180 individuals with autism have been hired through Rising Tide with 80 current employees on staff with autism. There are over 75 Rising Tide alumni with autism working at new jobs in the community.

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/community/the-forum/fl-cn-new-rising-tide-car-wash-20201230-sv4uex2ue5hepjn3za57365gp4-story.html>

FLORIDA'S FIRST OPENLY AUTISTIC LAWYER....

Florida's first openly autistic lawyer is fighting stereotypes of women with disabilities

By Meera Jagannathan

Hailey Moss talks to MarketWatch ahead of World Autism Awareness Day

The woman widely recognized as likely the first openly autistic person admitted to the Florida Bar is laying down the law against harmful stereotypes.



Hailey Moss, 24, was sworn into the bar in January and now practices health-care and international law at the Miami law firm [Zumpano Patricios](#). But while the South Florida native agrees it's important to show that people with disabilities like autism can accomplish big things, she also welcomes a future in which their success isn't viewed as an anomaly.

"I want to see a day when it's really normal and not an exception to see people with disabilities doing great things," she told MarketWatch in an interview ahead of the U.N.-designated [World Autism Awareness Day](#) on Tuesday. "We tend to set the bar really low for people with disabilities, and I think that's a really big problem."

Moss was nonverbal for the first three years of her life, relying on screaming and crying to communicate. At the same time, she said, she was completing 100-piece jigsaw puzzles. When Moss was three years of age, doctors diagnosed her with autism — suggesting to her parents that she might never get her driver's license, hold down a job or even make friends.

"Back then, autism was not the 1 in 59 that you see today," she said. "The late '90s were a little bit of a different time with what we know." Indeed, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) estimate that 1 in 59 kids has autism spectrum disorder (ASD); a December study in the journal [Pediatrics](#) put that frequency at 1 in 40.

Autism includes a number of developmental and neurological conditions and varies in degree, [and is marked by](#) difficulties with social interaction and communication, like aversion to eye contact or trouble understanding nonverbal cues. Behavior patterns include repetitive movements and the adoption of specific routines.

Moss's family was able to access resources and services in Florida; she was speaking by the age of four and out of special education in time for pre-K. After eighth grade, she started writing, going on to publish two self-help books geared at young adults on the autism spectrum: "[Middle School: The Stuff Nobody Tells You About](#)" in 2010 and "[A Freshman Survival Guide for College Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: The Stuff Nobody Tells You About!](#)" in 2014.

Moss says she was willing to share the good, the bad and the ugly about experiences like making friends, enduring big transitions and even learning how to do laundry away from home. "Back then, there wasn't really a lot of resources written by autistic people, for autistic people," she said.

Another outlet was art, which served as an escape from school, stress and struggles to make friends. The anime-inspired pop art [displayed on her website](#) is peppered with pirates, poodles, newlyweds and the scales of justice; she often donates and auctions off her artwork to help organizations that serve people with disabilities.

Moss married her passions of writing, talking and helping others by pursuing a career in law. She earned a joint degree in criminology and law and psychology from the University of Florida before attending the University of Miami's law school.

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FLORIDA'S FIRST OPENLY AUTISTIC LAWYER.... CONTINUED....

She then went on to intern with a Florida appeals-court judge during law school. Following a chance meeting before her second year with a lawyer who then worked at Zumpano Patricios, Moss landed a summer associate gig at the firm. She now works there full-time.

Many adults with autism are unemployed

Lawyers like Moss are rare. Women make up about 37% of lawyers in the country, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics — and while data on lawyers with disabilities at both the associate and partner levels are sparse, just 0.53% of all lawyers self-reported that they had a disability, according to the National Association for Law Placement. (Research also suggests autism remains under-diagnosed in females, who may exhibit different symptoms than males.)



In fact, just 14% of adults with autism who use state developmental-disability services hold a paying job in their community, according to Drexel University's 2017 National Autism Indicators Report. Labor-force participation among people with disabilities stands just below 21%, according to the Department of Labor, compared to about 69% among people without disabilities.

Joseph Zumpano, the co-founder of the firm where Moss works, said he believes Moss is the first “openly autistic” lawyer to be admitted to the Florida Bar. Moss gives his business an edge in complex areas of law, he told MarketWatch, because of her “extraordinary” capacity for analysis and information processing.

Zumpano, 49, who in his early career was a vocal critic of North Carolina's forced sterilization of people with mental disabilities, also understands autism on a personal level: His 16-year-old son is “on the severe side” of the autism spectrum, he said, and largely nonverbal.

Living with autism in his own house has sensitized Zumpano to appreciate “the wonders” of someone like Moss who is neurodiverse, he said. (Advocates for the idea of “neurodiversity” seek to frame neurological differences as human variations, instead of as diseases to be cured.)

“I could see the talent and the engagement and the intellect,” he recalled of meeting Moss. “Knowing that person is on the spectrum, it was joyful for me.”

Zumpano urged other employers to “get better at identifying, recognizing and aligning” to the strengths of neurodiverse people, arguing that their inclusion lends a competitive advantage.

“If you have an individual like Haley Moss that has a photographic memory, that can take in large amounts of information and assimilate them,” he said, “you may be able to align those extraordinary talents to achieve an extraordinary result.”

Many organizations appear to be on the same page. The German software company SAP's SAP, -1.32% Autism at Work program has tapped what it calls an “under-utilized talent source” since 2013, employing more than 140 workers in a dozen countries. JPMorgan Chase's JPM, +1.76% Autism at Work program, piloted in 2015 with just four people, now includes 85 employees.

Those companies, along with EY, Microsoft MSFT, -2.18%, Ford F, -0.47% and others, initiated an “Autism @ Work Employer Roundtable” in October 2017 to address autism unemployment and underemployment.

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FLORIDA'S FIRST OPENLY AUTISTIC LAWYER.... CONTINUED....

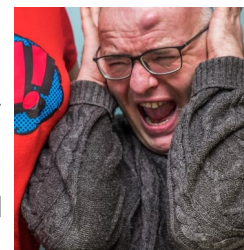
For Moss, being open about autism is a form of advocacy

But there remains an “educational disconnect” in people’s understanding of disability and there is a stigma around disabilities that needs to be broken, Moss said.

Misguided remarks directed at Moss have included, “You can’t be autistic, because you obviously are intelligent enough to go to law school,” “You can’t be on the spectrum; you’re verbal,” and, “You don’t look autistic,” she said. (Meanwhile, researchers have linked social stigma-related stress with negative mental-health outcomes among people on the autism spectrum.)

Moss says she wishes the public better understood that people with autism are an “incredibly diverse” group. “When you meet one person on the spectrum, you meet one person,” she said.

Moss herself is prone to sensory overload and avoids loud, crowded spaces. To her, hearing jazz music feels like being in a department store’s television section with every TV blaring a different channel at top volume.



Driving is a challenge — she gets around with ride-sharing apps and help from friends and family — as are executive-function abilities like staying organized, and starting and stopping things. (Executive function refers to cognitive processes that help with skills like time management and organization.)

She enjoys the independence of her own one-bedroom apartment, but struggles with tasks like cooking, cleaning and doing laundry.

Despite her own difficulties, Moss stressed that people with disabilities are “the experts on ourselves,” recalling the doubt some expressed over whether she could succeed at a large university and whether law school might be “too much.”

“I would like to try and then realize it’s not for me by my own conclusion, rather than someone telling me before I even make an attempt,” Moss said.

And while she understands those people are “usually coming from a good place,” she said, “I know myself better than anybody. So often, people with disabilities are trying to be as independent as possible — and being robbed of that independence in some way usually feels hurtful.”

For Moss, being open about her autism is a form of advocacy. “It helps others understand, it helps me be honest, and also I think it gives other professionals and other autistic people the chance to know that it could be safe for them to be open,” she said.

Not every company, or social or professional situation may be a welcoming environment for someone with autism to be so open, she added. But, Moss added, there are many benefits: Talking openly can also help people with autism get whatever support they may need.

Employers need to focus on the strengths of people with autism rather than on their weaknesses, she added. “I want to see us being meaningfully included and have opportunities that are aligned with our skills,” she said, “as well as what we’re capable of.”

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/floridas-first-openly-autistic-lawyer-is-fighting-stereotypes-of-women-with-disabilities-2019-04-02#:~:text=The%20woman%20widely%20recognized%20as,Miami%20law%20firm%20Zumpano%20Patricios>

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PARENT & TRANSITION SUPPORTS

Parent Supports:

- Autism Society of Oregon: The Autism Society of Oregon is Oregon's leading organization providing resources, education, advocacy on policy matters and support for individuals and families living with autism. <https://autismsocietyoregon.org/>
-They offer "Take a Break on ASO" for parents to have a date night with a sitter or caregiver. <https://autismsocietyoregon.org/support/take-a-break-on-aso/> Or for parents of individuals with autism age 16+ they have "Take a Breather on ASO" <https://autismsocietyoregon.org/take-a-breather-on-aso/>

Transition to Adulthood Local Supports:

- Autism Speaks: Has a Transition Toolkit. <https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Transition%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>
- Vocational Rehabilitation: Oregon's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are available to any Oregonian with a disability who is having difficulty getting or keeping a job because of disability-related barriers. <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/employment/VR/Pages/Index.aspx>
- Work Unlimited: The mission of Work Unlimited is to provide **quality** residential, employment, and community living programs for individuals with unique and challenging disabilities. <http://www.workunlimited.org/>
- Cornerstone Associates: The Mission of Cornerstone Associates is to create meaningful employment and community involvement opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. <https://www.cornerstoneassociates.org/>
- Collaborative Employment Innovations: CEI works with local employers as community partners to create inclusive work environments and to find the right job for the right job seeker. <https://www.ceiworks.org/>
- Home Life: Home Life assists people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to enjoy active, productive and empowered lives. <http://homelifeinc.org/>
- Shangri-La: Serve individuals with disabilities or disadvantages so they may recognize and achieve their potential. <http://www.shangrilaoregon.org/>
- Mentor Oregon: MENTOR Oregon's range of services and supports help individuals of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other challenges build increasingly rich, independent lives in the communities they call home. <https://www.mentororegon.com/>
- Resource Connections of Oregon: Resource Connections of Oregon (RCO) is a non-profit known for its beneficial role in Oregon's service delivery system as well as for the talents and skills of its staff. We currently provide services to around 700 customers in Linn, Marion and Yamhill Counties. <https://www.rcoregon.org/albany>
- Integrated Services Network: The Integrated Services Network (ISN) Support Services Brokerage is a community organization formed by two nonprofit organizations: Catholic Community Services and Chehalem Youth and Family Services. <https://ccswv.org/isn-support-services-brokerage/>
- Supported Employment Services, Inc.: SES Inc is a locally owned business created in 1991 to offer employment and community-based services to people with disabilities. <https://supportedemploymentservices.net/>
- RISE: We have an amazing team of professionals who help adults with disabilities find and sustain meaningful employment throughout Oregon. <https://riseservicesinc.org/services/oregon/?tab=2>
- Partnerships in Community Living, Inc.: PCL's organizational vision is to create and continually evolve as an agency that is the most person centered provider of services to individuals with developmental disabilities. <https://www.pclpartnership.org/services/>

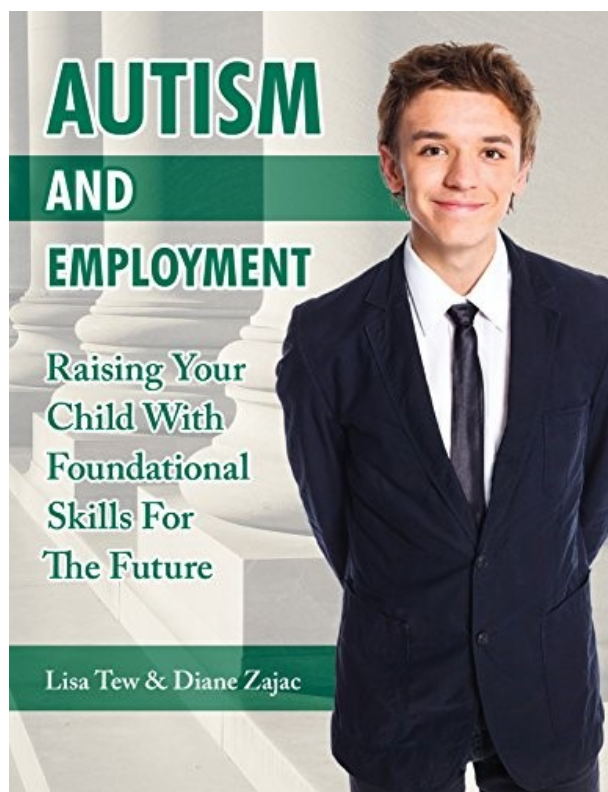
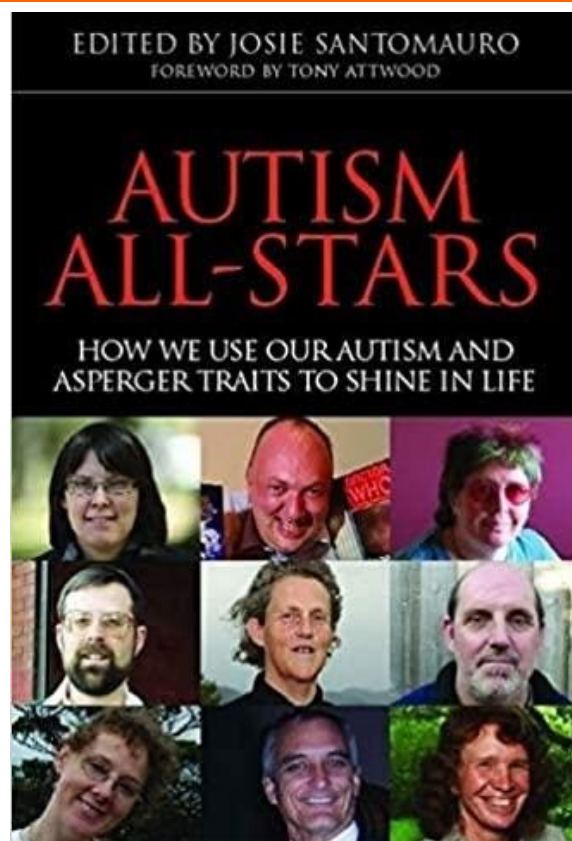
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BOOK REVIEWS

Autism All-Stars: How We Use Our Autism and Asperger Traits to Shine in Life

by Josie Santomauro (editor)

Writers from all over the world at different stages in their careers, and from very different backgrounds, share their experiences of creating a successful life on the autism spectrum. Each explains how it is possible to draw on autistic strengths not just to make your way in the world, overcoming challenges and obstacles, but also to make your life a real success. Education, the world of work, and relationships are the focus of the first part of the book, which then goes on to look at exceptional creativity, and the use of special interests. The autobiographical stories in this book are full of wisdom and humor, and will be an inspiration for anyone with high-functioning autism or Asperger Syndrome, their family and friends, and the professionals who work alongside them.



Autism and Employment: Raising Your Child With Foundational Skills for the Future

by Lisa Tew and Diane Zajac

According to an Easter Seals survey, parents of children who have ASD were most worried about their children having independence in adulthood. Quality of life, fitting into society, and employment were also top concerns. Your knowledge of your child, your devotion, and your many varied experiences with your child make you the ideal coach. This book was written to help you understand that academic success does not necessarily lead to employment success and independence; with the tools and strategies in this book, you can raise your child with the foundational “soft skills” he or she will need for the future. Also check out author Lisa Tew’s companion book for parents and educators, **101 Positive Steps Towards Employment with Autism: Social Skills for the Workplace.**

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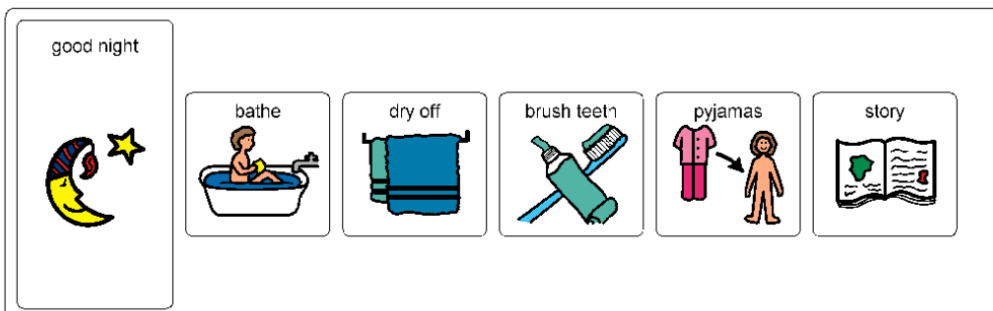
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VISUALS



AuTalkz

Expression



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