

READ ONLINE



Dear Friends,

I hope you are enjoying your summer and getting a little time to relax. We are still busy at work, but trying to enjoy the somewhat slower pace. This newsletter is full of topics we thought might be helpful during the summer, including: airplane travel, play and communication, preparing for your child's IEP, and summer cooking ideas for picky eaters. You will also find recaps of our 6th Annual Soccer Clinic and our 2023 Summer Training Institute on Autism. In April we had our biggest *Kickin' It for Autism* event ever with over 235 participants and 500 attendees who came out for this inclusive community event! In June we had our *2023 Summer Training Institute on Autism* that consisted of three information-packed days via Zoom that attracted over 1,100 total participants across the 3 days from all over Florida, the United States, and the world!

We have several upcoming training opportunities for parents of elementary, middle, and high school students as well as our Meet-Up Mondays and Walk It Out Wednesdays for our

adult clients. Our colleagues at the Autism Navigator continue to offer outstanding webinars for all audiences. The *About Autism in Toddlers* is on the first Friday of every month, and a new 6-week series of the *Autism Navigator Classroom Success for PreK to 2nd Grade* webinar will begin in August. For a full list of the webinars offered, go to: <https://autismnavigator.com/webinars>. We are offering a 6-week book study for educators on *The Behavior Code* by Jessica Minahan in collaboration with the Partnership for Effective Programs for Students with Autism (PEPSA) starting in September.

Finally, don't miss the list of links at the bottom of the newsletter that can help you contact FSU CARD and ask for our assistance. We rely on our clients and community members to reach out to us when they need our help. Remember, CARD services do not stop at age 22. We serve the entire lifespan, however we need you to let us know when you need us!

Enjoy the rest of your summer. Please stay safe, wear your sunscreen, and drink plenty of water!

Sincerely,

Catherine Zenko





# About Autism in Toddlers

## Autism Navigator: About Autism in Toddlers Webinar- First Friday of Every Month

Attention anyone interested in learning more about the early signs of autism. Check out this free webinar from our colleagues at Autism Navigator on

**Friday, July 7th from 12:00 - 1:00 pm ET**

This webinar series will help you learn about the core diagnostic features and early signs of autism in toddlers and see early intervention in action.

[Learn More & Register Here](#)

**CARD** CENTER FOR AUTISM &  
RELATED DISABILITIES  
FSU AUTISM INSTITUTE  
FSUCARD.COM

**AUTISM***Fits*  
A BUSINESS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



## Autism Friendly Business: Get Up and Go Kayaking

By: Audra Burch, MA, CCC-SLP

Get Up and Go Kayaking at Meritt's Mill in Marianna, Florida, is our newest Autism Friendly Business! They provide clear kayak tours of Meritt's Mill which is fed from Blue Springs. The fantastic brother and sister team of Luke and Brooke O'Dowd run this branch of Get Up and Go Kayaking. Their knowledgeable and friendly tour guides have been trained by the FSU CARD staff to create an autism-friendly kayaking experience. Their website will soon showcase a what-to-expect video which will walk customers through the kayak tour before their scheduled time, and information on available accommodations as well.

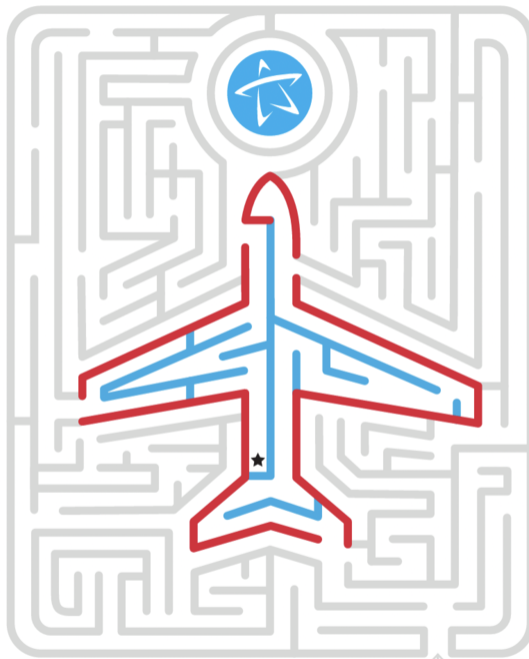
The Autism-Friendly Business Initiative aims to increase the number of places individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families feel welcome in the community and encourage conversation with local businesses about hiring individuals with ASD.

[Click Here to Check Out Get Up and Go Kayaking in Merrit's Mill's Website](#)

[Click Here if Interested in Becoming an Autism-Friendly Business](#)

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## MY FIRST SKY GUIDE



AN ACTIVITY BOOK FOR NEW FLIERS  
CITY OF TALLAHASSEE



## Traveling This Summer?

By: Cathy Zenko, MS, CCC-SLP

Planning a trip that requires airplane travel? Take a look at these 2 resources developed by CARD to help make your experience better. *My First Sky Guide* was developed by FSU CARD as part of our Autism-Friendly Business collaboration with the Tallahassee International Airport. *The Airports, Airplanes, & Autism* brochure was developed by our colleagues at the USF CARD and is available on our website. Click the buttons below to access these helpful travel resources.

[My First Sky Guide](#)

[Airports, Airplanes, & Autism](#)



## 6th Annual Kickin' It For Autism Recap

The **6th Annual Kickin' It for Autism** soccer clinic in partnership with the **FSU Soccer Team and Coaches** was a huge success! We had over 235 participants on the field and over 500 total attendees at the event. We are so grateful to Coach Pensky and his staff for continuing to support this amazing community event that raised over \$2,800 for the FSU CARD/FSU Autism Institute. We appreciate the tremendous support from our generous event sponsors, the FSU Soccer Team/Coaches/Staff, and all of the participants and their families who made this our biggest year yet.

*Photo Credit: FSU Soccer*

[Click Here for a Video Recap of Kickin' It for Autism](#)

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# FSU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities Walk It Out Wednesdays Tallahassee



Join us each Wednesday, June 14th to September 13th, for information, conversation, and a walk inside Governors Square Mall.

Each Wednesday will feature a fitness or social skill mini-lessons, conversation practice, and a 30-minute walk throughout the mall. A filled water bottle is suggested.

This weekly event is for adults (18+) who are registered with FSU CARD.



FSU CARD is dedicated to providing individuals with autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them, free consultation, resources, and educational support to build knowledge, confidence, infrastructure, and sustainability within the community.

**Every Wednesday Evening  
From June 14th to September 13th**

**6:00- 7:00 PM EDT**

Governors Square Mall (2nd level, near old Sears entrance)

1500 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee, FL 32301

Questions? Contact: Allison Leatzow, [aleatzow@fsu.edu](mailto:aleatzow@fsu.edu)

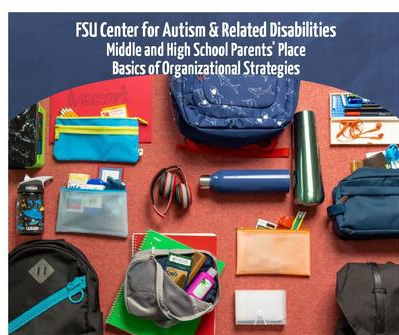
Registration: <https://bit.ly/3lFFSiK>

## Walk It Out Wednesdays

There's still time to sign up and join us for our Walk It Out Wednesdays!

This is for adults (18+) registered with FSU CARD.

[Click to Register for Walk It Out](#)



Join us as we discuss the basics of middle and high school organization, including planner usage, checklists, and backpacks.



**August 9, 2023**

4:30- 5:30 PM CDT / 5:30-6:30 PM EST  
Zoom Video Conference

Email Crystal at [crystal.grey-hewett@med.fsu.edu](mailto:crystal.grey-hewett@med.fsu.edu)  
Register <https://bit.ly/3Ceqxw>

FSU CARD is dedicated to providing individuals with autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them, free consultation, resources, and educational support to build knowledge, confidence, infrastructure, and sustainability within the community.



*Please join us as we discuss friendship skills and how social skills impact academic functioning in the middle and high school setting.*



**September 13, 2023**

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm CDT/5:30 pm - 6:30 pm EST

Online via Zoom Video Communications  
Crystal Grey-Hewett, [crystal.grey-hewett@med.fsu.edu](mailto:crystal.grey-hewett@med.fsu.edu)  
Register: <https://bit.ly/42vFW1Q>

FSU CARD is dedicated to providing individuals with autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them, free consultation, resources, and educational support to build knowledge, confidence, infrastructure, and sustainability within the community.



Social Skills are important in the lives of all children, yet can be a challenge for those with autism. Join us for this two-part series to learn how to build and support your child's social skills for improved interactions and stronger relationships!



**September 5th & 19th, 2023**

12:30 pm-1:30 pm EST / 11:30 am-12:30 pm CST

Online via Zoom

Register: <https://bit.ly/3JzFV8t>

Presented by:  
Aulis Berch, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Bryan Morris, M.Ed., CCC-SLP

FSU CARD is dedicated to providing individuals with autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them, free consultation, resources, and educational support to build knowledge, confidence, infrastructure, and sustainability within the community.

## Parents' Place for Elementary, Middle, and High School

We are proud to be bringing back our Parents' Place series for the fall, focusing on topics most relevant to our families according to their feedback. We have the flyers listed for August and September, with further dates already posted on our [website](#) calendar.

[Register Here For Parents' Place Elementary School](#)

[Register Here For Parents' Place Middle and High School Organizational Strategies](#)

[Register Here For Parents' Place Middle and High School Social Skills](#)



# FSU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities

## Meet-Up Mondays

### Discussion and Strategies for Adult CARD Clients



Join CARD Consultants for weekly one hour virtual meet-ups to discuss topics affecting adults with autism. Participants will also have a chance to chat with other adults on the spectrum about their successes and challenges. This series is for adults (18 and up) who are registered with FSU CARD.

#### Topic Schedule

**November**-Mental Health (7th, 14th, 28th)    **May**- Maintaining a Household/Financial Literacy (1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd)  
**January**-Social Media (9th, 23rd, 30th)  
**March**- Interviews/Job Skills (6th, 13th, 20th, 27th)    **July**- Nutrition (10th, 17th, 24th, 31st)  
**September**- Dating/Friendships (11th, 18th, 25th)



FSU CARD is dedicated to providing individuals with autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them, free consultation, resources, and educational support to build knowledge, confidence, infrastructure, and sustainability within the community.

## Mondays

### Beginning November 7th

6:30 p.m. EST / 5:30 p.m. CST



Zoom Video Conference

Email Allison at [aleatzow@fsu.edu](mailto:aleatzow@fsu.edu)

Register <https://bit.ly/3TmbbT3>

## Meet-Up Mondays

Join CARD Consultants for weekly one hour virtual meet-ups to discuss topics affecting adults with autism. Participants will also have a chance to chat with other adults on the spectrum about their successes and challenges.

This series is for adults (18 and up) who are registered with FSU CARD.

[Register Here for Meet-up Mondays](#)

# Surveys: Understanding the Behavior Therapist Shortage in Florida and Charting a Path Forward



Drs. Kerri Peters, Yanerys León, and Nicole Gravina, are conducting a study, funded by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC) to investigate the behavior therapist shortage in the state of Florida.

We are seeking participation from parents or caregivers of individuals currently receiving or seeking behavioral services in the state of Florida. The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete.



<https://bit.ly/FLCaregiversSurvey>

## FDDC Caregiver Survey

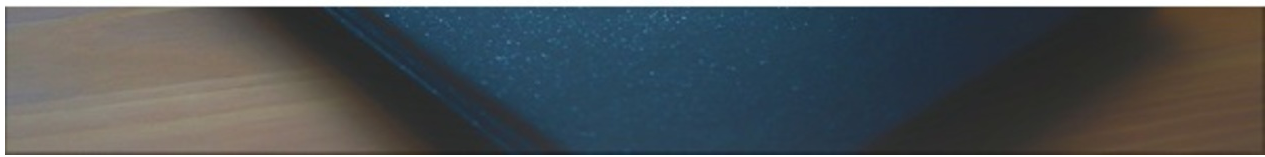
The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council is looking for input from Florida families that are either seeking or receiving behavioral therapies regarding the therapist shortage in the state.

[Click Here to Take Survey](https://bit.ly/FLCaregiversSurvey)

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# PROFESSIONAL POINTS



## Summer Training Institute on Autism Recap

We are delighted to showcase some of the fantastic resources that were shared by the speakers at our 2023 Summer Training Institute on Autism.

We had over 1,100 total participants attend the three day event from all over Florida, the United States -- Georgia, Alabama, Ohio, Oregon, Michigan, Maine, Pennsylvania, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Minnesota, Arkansas, New Hampshire, Virginia, and the world -- Canada, Dubai, Fiji, Romania, Indonesia, Brazil, Trinidad, Ghana, Romania, and Bangladesh! This was truly an interdisciplinary, global learning experience.

[Access 2023 Summer Institute Resources](#)



## Autism Navigator for Classroom Success in PreK through 2nd Grade

### Autism Navigator for Classroom Success in Pre-K Through 2nd Grade

**Calling all regular education and special education teachers, district-level personnel, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, early interventionists, psychologists, behavior specialists, social workers, paraprofessionals, college students, and anyone else interested in learning about students with autism.**

**6-week webinar series begins**

**Wednesday, August 2, 2023**

**4:00- 5:30pm EST/ 3:00 – 4:30pm CST**

This webinar is a companion to Classroom Success course, but anyone interested can attend. Participants will learn about an evidence-based framework to prioritize goals using a **lens of active engagement** and a **layer cake of teaching strategies** to promote learning and positive behavior. To achieve the intensity needed and promote generalization for students with autism, the importance of teaching and learning across everyday classroom activities will be highlighted. Video examples and audience participation will be used to illustrate how to apply this model to both in-person and virtual classrooms, and to teach parents strategies to support their child's learning in everyday activities at home.

**Click here to register:**

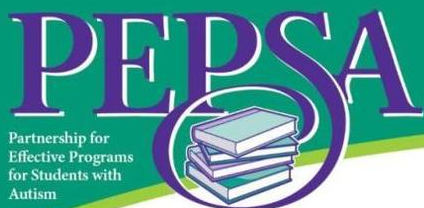
<https://autismnavigator.com/webinar-autism-navigator-for-classroom-success-in-prek-through-2nd-grade/>

## Autism Navigator for Classroom Success in PreK through 2nd Grade

Participants will learn about an evidence-based framework to prioritize goals using a lens of active engagement and a layer cake of teaching strategies to promote learning and positive behavior. To achieve the intensity needed and promote generalization for students with autism, the importance of teaching and learning across everyday classroom activities will be highlighted. Video examples and audience participation will be used to illustrate

how to apply this model to both in-person and virtual classrooms, and to teach parents strategies to support their child's learning in everyday activities at home.

[Click Here to Register](#)



## Professional Development



### Cracking the Behavior Code:

A Book Study for Educators on *The Behavior Code* by Jessica Minahan, M.Ed., BCBA

Hosted by: FSU CARD

Facilitated by: Crystal Grey-Hewett, Audra Burch & Tisha Melton

#### About the Author

**Jessica Minahan** is a licensed and board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA), author, special educator, and consultant to schools internationally. Since 2000 she has worked with students who struggle with mental health issues and challenging behavior in public school systems. She specializes in training staff and creating behavior intervention plans for students who demonstrate explosive and unsafe behavior. In *The Behavior Code*, she reveals a systematic approach for deciphering causes and patterns of difficult behaviors and how to match them with proven strategies for getting students back on track so they can learn effectively.

#### Facilitators: Crystal Grey-Hewett, Audra Burch and Tisha Melton

Crystal Grey-Hewett is an FSU CARD consultant trained as social worker, who has worked with people on the spectrum, their families, and professionals for over 14 years. Audra Burch is an FSU CARD consultant trained as a speech-language pathologist who has guided individuals with challenging behaviors, including those with autism, for 18 years. Tisha Melton is a BCBA and before coming to FSU CARD as a consultant, worked as an educator and behavior analyst, serving students with challenging behaviors within the public schools.

#### Training Description

**Target Audience:** This training is for special and general education teachers, administrators, related service providers, and paraprofessionals.

This 6-week training series will provide educators with a forum to read *The Behavior Code*, learn about strategies to help with challenging behavior, and discuss ways to apply the concepts in their own classrooms. Topics include author Jessica Minahan's FAIR Plan system, anxiety-related behavior, oppositional behavior, withdrawn behavior, and problematic inappropriate behavior.

#### Training Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Understand and apply the FAIR Plan system.
- Identify patterns and causes of challenging behavior.
- Match appropriate strategies to the type of challenging behavior exhibited.
- Apply concepts and strategies from *The Behavior Code* to their own classrooms.

#### Save The Dates:

Tuesday Afternoons

**September 12–October 17, 2023**

4:30 – 6:00 pm EST/

3:30 – 5:00 pm CST

This is a 6-week series. Attendance is expected at every session.

**Location: online via ZOOM**

Limited to first **250 participants\***

#### Register Online:

Registration is mandatory.

**Click here to [Register](#)**

**\*The first 50 educators to register & participate from the state of Florida will receive a FREE e-book of *The Behavior Code* if you have not received one previously.**

**To preview & order book, click: [Here](#)**

**Each session is worth 1 contact hour.** Certificates of attendance will be provided for anyone who attends at least 72 of the 90 minutes.

*Be sure to contact your ESE District Staff or Staff Development Contact to determine the process for receiving in-service credits.*

#### For more information contact:

Lerena Fleck: [Lerena.Fleck@med.fsu.edu](mailto:Lerena.Fleck@med.fsu.edu) or  
Cathy Zenko: [czenko@fsu.edu](mailto:czenko@fsu.edu)



Regional Trainings are hosted by the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, through the Partnership for Effective Programs for Students with Autism (PEPSA), a program funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, K-12 Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.

[www.DOEpartnership.org](http://www.DOEpartnership.org)

## The Behavior Code Book Study

Please join us for an in-depth look at Jessica Minahan's book *The Behavior Code*.

We will be going chapter-by-chapter and looking at how to effectively implement the strategies outlined throughout the text.

[Click Here to Register](#)

[Click Here to Purchase the Book](#)



## Communication Corner

By: Audra Burch, M.S. CCC-SLP

### Increasing Communication Through Play

Did you know that play can be an important part of your child's development in communication? This is true for neurotypical and neurodivergent children. When looking at autism interventions, many therapies are based on social play and the development of social skills, language development, and communication skills, as these are often challenging areas for autistic children (Gibson, et al., 2021). Play provides a diverse framework for addressing these areas of need in a natural and engagingly interactive way.



*There are six main types of play (in order of development):*

**Exploratory play** - Children explore objects and toys, rather than playing with them, teaching them about their world.

**Cause-and-effect play** - Children play with toys that need an action to get a result, teaching them that their actions have an effect and gives them control.

**Toy play** - Children learn how to use toys how they were intended, developing processing, creativity, and problem solving.

**Constructive play** - Children build and create with toys toward an end product, developing motor skills and problem solving.

**Physical play** - Children use their whole body to run, jump, etc., developing gross motor skills.

### **Pretend play**

*(the most complex)* - Children use their imagination in role playing scenarios, developing social and language skills.

To encourage communication in play in autistic children, it may help to know some possible challenges that can affect play skills. For example, understanding how to play with toys, limited interests or increased focus on objects, imitation difficulties, and coordination abilities may be impactful (Marcus Autism Center, n.d.).

When playing with your child, you can encourage communication by:

- Talking about the items you're using.
- Providing choices for your child to play with.
- Observing their likes and following their lead.
- Narrating what your child is doing while they play.
- Showing your child how to play with specific items.
- Taking turns with toys/items.
- Role-playing pretend situations or favorite stories.
- Playing in different places with different people and friends.

So, take the time and play! Playing with your child with autism will not only help encourage communication and interaction, but it will help you learn about them to build a closer relationship together.

For more examples of how you can play with your child, sign up for the [\*\*\*Autism Navigator How-To Guide for Families\*\*\*](#) online course (free to Florida residents) and the corresponding [\*\*\*webinar\*\*\*](#) (*free to everyone*).

References: Gibson, J. L., Pritchard, E., & de Lemos, C. (2021). Play-based interventions to support social and communication development in autistic children aged 2-8 years: A scoping review. *Autism Dev Lang Impair, eCollection*. Jan-Dec. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36381525/>

Raisingchildren.net.au (n.d.). Play and Autistic Children. Retrieved June 7, 2023, from <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/school-play-work/play-learning/play-asd>

Marcus Autism Center (n.d.). Promoting Early Play Skills. Retrieved June 9, 2023, from <https://marcus.org/autism-resources/autism-tips-and-resources/promoting-early-play-skills>

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## IEP Tips and FAQs

By: Tisha Melton, MA, BCBA

The school year will be here before we know it, and summer is a good time for parents to familiarize ourselves with what to expect at upcoming IEP meetings. Remember, your CARD consultant is a good resource for IEP meeting questions and support.

### **What should I expect at my child's IEP meeting?**

There are different types of IEP meetings, and each has a different agenda.

#### **All IEP meetings should begin with the following:**

- Introductions
- Purpose of the meeting
- Review of procedural safeguards
- Excusals for anyone unable to attend (parent should be given notice before meeting)
- Team member concerns

Annual IEP meetings occur each year before the IEP expiration date. At these meetings the team will discuss the student's goals, services, present levels of performance and accommodations.

At an eligibility meeting recent evaluations will be reviewed and eligibilities will be discussed. This may include adding new eligibilities or dismissing eligibilities that the student no longer qualifies for.



An amendment IEP meeting may be called at any time during the year to discuss other issues or possible changes to the IEP.

Any of the above types of meetings may be combined to discuss multiple topics/agendas.

Source: [https://modernteacher.net/iep-meeting-agenda/#The\\_Main\\_Elements\\_of\\_an\\_IEP\\_Meeting](https://modernteacher.net/iep-meeting-agenda/#The_Main_Elements_of_an_IEP_Meeting)

### **Who are the participants at an IEP meeting?**

The members of a student's IEP team are dictated by law. They include a regular education teacher, special education teacher, school system representative, evaluation interpreter, parent(s) and the student (as appropriate). If the student is age 14 or older, someone should be present to assist with transition planning. Any related services providers participating in the child's education should also be in attendance at annual IEP meetings and others as necessary. If the parents need the assistance of a translator or interpreter, the school district will typically be able to arrange for one to be present.

Parents may bring/invite anyone of their choosing to an IEP meeting.

Source: <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html#team>

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## **How do I Request Assistance from FSU CARD?**

**Visit the [FAQs Section](#) on our website or  
click on the buttons below.**

**Intake/Referrals**

**School/Agency Request Form**

**Public Awareness Request**

**Training Request Form**

**Annual Update Form**

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# Baby NAVIGATOR™

What every parent needs to know

## Baby Navigator Website

The Executive Director of FSU CARD and Director of the College of Medicine's Autism Institute, Dr. Amy Wetherby, launched a new website, BabyNavigator.com, that walks parents through early childhood development and alerts them to early signs of autism.

Click on the button below for more information.

[Click Here for Baby Navigator Website](#)

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# nutrition

## Fun Cooking Activities for Extreme Picky Eaters

By: Jenny Friedman, RD

Summer is a great time to work on cooking and eating skills, and this article contains some fun and practical strategies for including a picky eater in prepping food and trying new things.

[Click Here for the Article from Jenny Friedman Nutrition](#)

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# Share with CARD

FSU CARD is continuously looking for clients who would like to share their art, writing pieces, or success stories in our quarterly newsletter. If you are interested in sharing for our next issue, please send a message and image electronically to FSU CARD ([autism@med.fsu.edu](mailto:autism@med.fsu.edu)). All art or writing pieces should be titled. Select submissions will be chosen for each edition of the newsletter; artists and authors will be notified if their article is chosen.

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2312 Killearn Center Blvd, Bldg. A  
Tallahassee, FL 32309  
850.644.4367  
toll-free: 800.769.7926  
fax: 850.644.3644  
Email: [autism@med.fsu.edu](mailto:autism@med.fsu.edu)

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