



ABA Consultation and Training at the Lurie Center



We are excited to announce to our patients, families and the autism community, a new role and set of services that are now being offered at the Lurie Center. Nicole Simon, EdM, BCBA, began working at the Lurie Center in Sept. 2015 as our Senior Behavioral Consultant. In this role, Nicole will provide ABA consultation and training to patients and their families, schools and community programs. Nicole got her start as a direct care staff and then manager of a group home for children with severe challenging behaviors. Nicole then completed her graduate training at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and became a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and a Licensed Applied Behavior Analyst in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She has over 17 years of experience in the fields of autism and ABA working in a variety of settings such as family homes, public and private day and residential schools and hospitals.

How to Prepare Your Child for a Visit to the Lurie Center

- You can find social narratives about different aspects of a medical appointment as well as a virtual “tour” of the Lurie Center on Luriecenter.org in the Patient Education section. You will also find photos of our providers.
- Common difficulties that we see in the clinic every day include transitioning into the building or exam room, waiting for the provider, getting vitals, participating in the appointment and leaving the clinic.
- Generally speaking, it’s always a good idea to bring a favorite play or activity item to help with wait times and lengthy appointments. These might include electronic devices (video, music), books, toys and snacks.
- We have toys and books located in our waiting rooms and exam rooms as well as bean bag chairs, weighted blankets and mats if needed.
- Our quiet room, located near the waiting room, is available to any patient who may benefit from a quieter, more contained environment at any point during the visit.
- We have a family resource room available to use as a workspace or if the waiting room becomes too crowded or loud.
- We ask that you come to your appointment with individuals who can safely manage any challenging behaviors that may occur during the appointment. Our safety team is always happy to help if needed.

Lurie Land Party

More than one hundred children (both young and old) and their families enjoyed our annual Lurie Land Holiday party on December 15. In an autism friendly environment we offered refreshments, games, dancing and even a visit from Santa himself. It was a wonderful and touching evening. We are grateful to all our helpers and thanks to everyone who came out to celebrate.



Ann Neumeyer, MD, Sworn in as New Member of the MA Autism Commission

We'd like to congratulate the Lurie Center's own Dr. Ann Neumeyer who was recently sworn into the Autism Commission at the Massachusetts State House. "It is an honor to work with the Autism Commission, to improve the care, treatment resources and insurance of those with ASD in Massachusetts", said Dr. Neumeyer.

Established as part of the landmark Autism Omnibus Legislation of 2014, the Commission develops recommendations on policies impacting individuals with ASD including Asperger's syndrome, high functioning autism, Smith-Magenis syndrome and pervasive development disorder. The Commission reviews all the supports necessary to help people with ASD attain education, and supported employment, live independently, participate in the community and access social, emotional and behavioral health services.



Medication Study for Anxiety and ASD

Children with Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDDs), including autistic disorder (autism) and Asperger's disorder, often experience symptoms of anxiety such as restlessness, difficulty concentrating, and distractibility. There is a need for an effective treatment to manage these symptoms. While the drug mirtazapine is currently approved to treat depression in adults, the pilot study entitled "Mirtazapine Treatment of Anxiety in Children and Adolescents with Pervasive Developmental Disorders" investigates the effects of mirtazapine on anxiety symptoms and evaluates its safety in children. The capsule form of mirtazapine will be compared to a placebo, or an inactive form of the medication that looks identical to mirtazapine. Thirty individuals with PDDs between the ages of 5 and 17 years will participate in the study at the Lurie Center of Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). The total time of participation ranges from 10-24 weeks. For additional information about this study, please contact Dr. McDougle's study staff at 781-860-1711 or LurieCenterResearch@partners.org.