

## Brought to you by...

NMTSA is a recent recipient of a community education grant through the **Sundt Foundation**. This wonderful grant will help us fund books and articles for our Parent Empowerment Center, evidence-based practice parent workshops, a vision therapy seminar, a nutrition seminar, a workshop devoted to speech therapy/functional communication, future newsletters, and a problem-solving seminar for parents and team members. Please help us in thanking the Sundt Foundation for their support!



### A Financial Foundation, One Yard at a Time

Thank you to all who donated their time, goods, ideas and positive energy to the first NMTSA yard sale fundraiser! It was a huge success, raising \$859.32!! If you are interested in volunteering at the next yard sale fundraiser, or hosting one of your own, please contact Jen Hempel at [jhempel@nmtsa.org](mailto:jhempel@nmtsa.org). Thank you to Jen Hempel for coordinating the sale!

Neurologic Music Therapy Services of AZ  
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Phoenix, AZ 85004

## NMTSA Supporters

NMTSA would like to thank our gracious donors from the last quarter!  
To find out how you can help NMTSA in 2010, visit [www.NMTSA.org/support](http://www.NMTSA.org/support).

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Thank you to the following staff for their contributions in this edition of *Functional Cadence*: Brendan Anderson, Bethany Jones, Melissa Lloyd, Sarah Studebaker.

# Functional Cadence

The Rhythm of NMTSA



Celebrating **28** Years of Serving the Phoenix Community!

### Upcoming Programs

**May 1st**  
*NMTSA: Philosophy and Practice*  
(formerly 'NMT Parent Training')

**June 12**  
*Competency-Based Communication Training Level 2*

Check out our website at [www.NMTSA.org](http://www.NMTSA.org) for information about upcoming events and fundraising opportunities

## “Change the Picture”

*Help your child avoid 'stuck' behaviors and see things differently. Find out how inside!*

**Contact Us**  
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e-mail: [info@nmtsa.org](mailto:info@nmtsa.org)

### Leaving Stuck City: Take the Next Exit!

by *Bethany Jones, MT-BC, NMT Fellow*

Have you ever experienced that moment when your child mentions over and over again a specific toy, movie, CD, etc., but when you give it to them they become even more upset? Or maybe your child is a teenager, but they also seem to be talking about Barney, Disney movies, or any other entertainment that is completely inappropriate for someone their age? Ladies and gentlemen, your child is STUCK.

What do you mean by “stuck?” This phrase means that your child does not always want that specific toy, game, song, movie, etc. that they keep mentioning over and over. Instead, they are unable to stop their voice from the repetition. The neurons in the brain keep firing like they are on autopilot, and when your child tries to vocalize what they truly want, the only thing that comes out of their mouth is often what they do NOT want: their “stuck” idea. Think of it as if you were driving along on Loop 101, but suddenly there were no exits. You would keep circling around and around the city, “stuck” in the loop, never making it to your final destination. In the brain, the neurons are stuck driving on the autopilot loop and there are no new “exits” to share new ideas.

The more often your child is stuck in their words/actions/etc., the easier it is to stay stuck. The more often it happens, the stronger the “autopilot” becomes, and therefore the harder it is to break those patterns. If you notice that you receive the same response from your child every time you say or ask a certain question, change YOUR words. Ask in a different way, find a new way to make a statement, utilize visual supports; help facilitate your child's change out of the stuck pattern.

Another thing to consider is they often might be thinking something differently than what we hear coming from their voice. If you're not sure if your child's words are their true voice, give them an alternative way to communicate. Double check their choice by utilizing a visual support: index cards printed with yes and no, choices on a white board, anything that you can use to write down words.

To help change the picture, you are actually changing the way the brain works. This requires creating new neuropathways (sending the signals in the brain in different ways) in order for your child to access their true voice, wants, and needs. Think of it as building exit ramps off Loop 101 in order for you to end up at your desired destination. It may be as simple as reminding your child to use their true voice or giving them a communication support, but it may also require you to take the “stuck” items from your child.

This is just the first step. If you realize your child is stuck, then it is time to get to work to help change the picture. Is change easy? Not necessarily. Can it be done? Yes! Every person is different and therefore there is not one “cure” to help change the stuck patterns. Fortunately, there are many ways to go about the process and the therapists at NMTSA are excited to help. Talk with your therapist about specific strategies and techniques to help your family, and feel free to ask questions. We are here and very excited to help you CHANGE THE PICTURE.

Download an electronic copy of this newsletter, or sign up to receive e-alerts and this newsletter every quarter automatically! Do it all at:

**[www.NMTSA.org](http://www.NMTSA.org)**



**The ABC's of Autism  
According to ACT School  
(Changing the picture one letter at a time!)**

- A** Ain't so nice so hard to be me. (Aaron)
- B** Bad friend Autism. Can be man very smart good but not be just You. (Alan)
- C** Can do it with great fear. (Aaron)
- D** Different see things. (Joseph)
- E** Easy to love us. (Marianne)
- F** Feel my love of myself. (Marianne)
- G** Great minds working together. (Noah)
- H** Happy to be me. (Noah)
- I** Inside change is hard. (Joseph)
- J** Just hoping. (Andrew)
- K** Keep believing. (Noah)
- L** Love when I can teach other people how smart we relation to all others (Sheridan)
- M** Making new maps for the brain. (Collin)
- N** Not can be me. (D'Mico)
- O** Only me can be the true me. (Collin)
- P** Please believe we have smart brains. (Aaron)
- Q** Questioning us to have a better body. (Marianne)
- R** Really great God be in me. Your good. (Isaac)
- S** Super A stars. (Marianne)
- T** Too tough (Max)
- U** Unique how our brains think (Max)
- V** Very caring. (Joseph)
- W** Working to make our dreams come true. (McKenna)
- X** Xciting getting what my body needs. (Collin)
- Y** You really just hope to feel free. (D'Mico)
- Z** Zoo like body when mind not working. (Collin).

## Thanks for "Jumping" With Us!

We'd like to thank Todd and Diana Anderson for graciously sponsoring our first Jump for NMTSA event. It was a huge success and we look forward to making this an annual event! Thank you to all of our donors including Greg Raciak of "I've Got Your Back" Massage, N. Glantz & Son Sign Supplies, Mountain States Specialties, Inc., Pro Production Services, Monika Ogle/Cookie Lee Jewelry, Christine Valles/Homemade Tamales, Jamba Juice, Mimi's Café, Susan Phillips, Erica Ewald, Shari Massion, Barb Breckley, Sara Lee, Leslie Vanaskey, Charlotte Oliver, Sherrill Crowe and family and Elaine Rea for their bake sale items, and Jennifer and Seth Lansky and the Bagwell family for great raffle items!

And lastly, a big thank you to Daniel Ochoa and all of our musicians who gave us fabulous music to listen to!! Matthew Lowe, Aldo, and Chad Delk with special guests performances from Brendan Anderson, Sarah Studebaker, Carolyn Estrada, Melissa Lloyd, and Beth Eriksen. Thank you to Sabra Follis for coordinating the volunteers as well as everyone who helped out with the event. THANK YOU!

## Vision Therapy

*Jennifer Watson & Tennille Moore, Vision Skills Specialists*

Vision is more than "20/20." It is estimated that 1 out of 4 children suffer from an undiagnosed vision problem. According to the National PTA, vision disorders are the number one handicapping disorder condition(s) for children. Vision is more than just "20/20" eyesight. It involves eye teaming, tracking, focusing and visual perceptual skills. Behavior is the response to how the world is being perceived; this is often a distorted world. When your visual system is impaired, it can affect your learning. It can also cause neurological, social, and behavior challenges when a visual system is not efficient. Symptoms in your child that you can look for include:

- Squinting, rubbing their eyes, or excessive blinking
- Avoid near work
- Looking out the corners of their eyes (peripheral area)
- Reports blurry or double vision
- Tilting their head or close/block an eye when reading
- Behavior problems
- Difficulty in copying from a chalkboard
- Complaints of headaches/dizziness
- Have an eye turn

Vision Therapy is a type of physical therapy for your eyes and brain. Vision Therapy is prescribed by an Optometrist, who will give a comprehensive eye exam. It is a highly effective non-surgical method that teaches your eyes and your brain how to work more effectively. Something exciting about our vision is that it is *learned*, which means that with exercises and the guidance of a trained Vision Skills Specialist, your child can learn those skills and develop a stronger visual foundation! In the case of learning disabilities, vision therapy is specifically directed toward resolving visual problems which interfere with reading, learning and educational instruction. Some exercises that you can start with are:

\* Toss bean bags/sponges to your child and have them either catch it or slap it down to the ground. This can be done standing on a pillow

to help them become aware of their vision and balance. To make it more challenging, call out a hand (left/right) and have them slap/catch the sponge with that hand. This works on directionality as well.

\* With any type of board game, hold a target up close to their nose and have them make the object single and clear. Then, have them take the object and try to place it in a moving cup. Encourage them to follow the cup *just with their eyes and not their head!* This will work on vergence, tracking, and hand-eye coordination.

Remember, happy eyes make a happy body! To learn more, call 480-251-5435 or go to [www.moorevisionskills.info](http://www.moorevisionskills.info)

For a FREE WEBINAR about vision therapy, go to [www.lynnhellerstein.com](http://www.lynnhellerstein.com) and sign up today! She is a pioneer in vision therapy and is a wealth of knowledge.

## Staff Tidbits

NMTSA sadly says goodbye to Michelle Hardy as her family moves to new opportunities in San Diego. You will be greatly missed, but your hard work, dedication, and smiling face will be remembered in our halls. Good luck with your new adventure!

NMTSA is proud to present Emily Holly and Dineen Rouse, ACT special educators. Emily is a graduate of Arizona State University and holds a bachelor's degree in special education. She graduated from ASU in 2009 and is very excited to be a part of our team. Dineen is a graduate of Dowling College in Long Island, NY and holds an associate's degree in early childhood, bachelor's degrees in both elementary and special education, and a master's degree in educational leadership. Prior to being hired at NMTSA, Dineen worked as the director of education at the New Foundation in Scottsdale. Welcome!

We warmly welcome the newest additions to our wonderful ACT staff: Amber Bagwell, Manny Vasquez, Julia Woodford, and Ashli Woods.

## Making Sense of Sensory Processing

*Sarah Studebaker, MME, MT-BC, NMT Fellow*

Sensory processing refers to how we use the sensory information we take in from our own body and our environment. When all of this information works together, it gives us a picture of what is happening around us and helps us to navigate through our world accordingly. Take a moment to consider the following scenario.

Imagine you are setting the table for dinner. You count out the dishes, select the appropriate utensils, and place them all on the table. You pull the salt and pepper out of the pantry and place them on the table. The kitchen timer goes off to alert you to pull dinner out of the oven and place the items in a serving dish. It smells terrific.

Now imagine the same scenario from a different perspective of someone that processes sensory information differently. Your hands fumble around for the right utensils, and somehow you end up with all spoons on the table. You drop and break a couple of plates because your foot caught the leg of one of the chairs. You have a hard time finding the salt and pepper in a pantry full of so many things. The kitchen timer hurts your ears. You spill some of the casserole on your hands, the smell overwhelms you, and you bump your elbow on the countertop on the way to the table.

No two sensory systems are created equal; each one of us is unique. However, there are a few common tendencies to look for when breaking down sensory processing issues.

Some individuals are *hyposensitive* (or under-reactive), meaning their sensory system cuts off some sensory messages. Someone who is hyposensitive might appear passive, react slowly, seem to prefer to be still, etc. Still be on the lookout for lots of over-active behaviors as well because they might be trying to overcompensate for the lack of sensory input that is getting through.

Other individuals are *hypersensitive* (or over-reactive), meaning there is just too much sensory input getting through. Someone who is hypersensitive might be overly protective, be constantly on their guard, avoid certain activities, prefer sameness, etc. But be on the lookout for shutdown behaviors as well because they might overcompensate for this overload by shutting down, tuning out, or withdrawing from activities.

So, how can you go about helping someone develop better sensory processing skills?

**STOP.** When you have looked at a behavior through the same eyes for so long, allow yourself the split second to stop long enough to try it differently this time.

**THINK.** Put on a new set of eyes. Put yourself in their shoes. Ask Why...? How come...? Is it possible...? Still not sure what to think? Educate yourself. Talk with your therapists. Read up on sensory issues (see recommended selections below).

**TRY.** Don't be afraid to roll up your sleeves, try a few things, and see how it goes. Evaluate. Whether it works or not, learn from it and try again.

For more information and further ideas, the following books are wonderful resources and are currently available in our Parent Empowerment Center. See your therapist if you're interested in checking out a book.

*Raising A Sensory Smart Child: The Definitive Handbook For Helping Your Child With Sensory Integration Issues* by Lindsey Biel and Nancy Peske.

*The Out-Of-Sync Child Has Fun: Activities For Kids With Sensory Processing Disorder* by Carol Stock Kranowitz.