

# Spring 2022 Newsletter

## CARD Odenton Quarterly Newsletter

*We're excited to share with you the spring edition (March/April/May) of the quarterly newsletter for the Center for Autism and Related Disorders' (CARD) Odenton team. The spring months hold a special place in our hearts. We celebrate our clinical social workers in March, occupational therapists in April, and speech and language pathologists in May. The month of April is a month dedicated to raising awareness and acceptance of autism spectrum disorders in the community.*

*This newsletter will be our last edition. We look forward to engaging with you in person in the upcoming months as permissible by COVID-19 protocols.*

In this issue, please find:

- On page 1, clinical social worker Catherine Debus shares a family support resource available at CARD.
- On pages 2-3, occupational therapist Alex Himes shares strategies to support your child's chores at home at appropriate age levels.
- On pages 4-5, speech-language pathologists Casey Roetz and Kelly Amato share strategies of using sign language to support communication.
- On pages 6-9, we spotlight staff members who are new to our team and those who have been supporting us over the years.

Enjoy the beautiful changes that spring brings into our lives!

Biji Philip, PhD, CCC-SLP  
Site Clinical Director



# Circle of Security Parent Training

“I wish my child came with an instruction manual,” or “What does my child need from me?” If you have ever asked yourself either of these questions, you may want to consider Circle of Security Parent Training. Circle of Security helps parents learn to read their child’s cues more effectively so parents can meet their child’s needs. It is a short-term, parent-only training facilitated by social work at CARD. Virtual sessions are one hour in length and can be scheduled weekly or biweekly to fit a family’s schedule. One or both parents may attend the sessions.

Circle of Security is based on decades of research and helps parents to:

- Understand their child’s emotional world by learning to read their emotional needs.
- Support their child’s ability to successfully manage emotions.
- Enhance the development of their child’s self-esteem.
- Honor the innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure.

If you are interested in Circle of Security, you can self-refer by calling the care center at 443-923-7630.

A past participant shared her thoughts about her experiences after participating in Circle of Security:

“Circle of Security has helped me to understand my children better, to be able to help them to cope with their feelings and emotions in a positive way. I am very glad for classes like Circle of Security because it really opens your perspective as a parent in seeing your children going out to the world and watching them come back to you to fill up their cup with love, understanding and support. 😊”



# Functional Chore Checklist

As parents and caregivers, we all know that our never-ending to-do list seems to grow every day. Between pick-ups and drop-offs, preparing breakfast and getting backpacks ready, folding laundry and completing those adult chores like dropping the car to the repair shop, we could all use an extra pair of hands. I'm here to tell you that you actually have an extra set of hands with you: your child's!

Although it may feel counterproductive, involving your child in your day-to-day tasks can be beneficial for not only parents and caregivers but also your child. Encouraging children to participate in functional chores can have incredible benefits, including, but not limited to, regulating their arousal through engagement in heavy work tasks, improving motor skills, establishing routine, teaching life skills, and also helping you as parents to get some things checked off that to-do list.

When I recommend functional chores during my evaluations and treatment sessions, I frequently get asked, "What chores are appropriate for my child's age?" To take away the guesswork for families, I have compiled a few chores that are appropriate for each age range. It is important to remember that chores and daily tasks look different for every family, and that this is not a strict, comprehensive list. Furthermore, sometimes it takes time for a child to learn the motor skill or sequence of the task, so do not give up if a chore is a challenge for them the first time you introduce it. Provide your child with an accepting space and time to learn the new task, and you may be surprised by the results!



# Chore Checklist Contd.

<b>2-3 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Put toys away in bins</li><li>- Scoop and pour food into pet's food dish</li><li>- Place dirty clothing into hampers</li></ul>
<b>4-5 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Take dishes from the table to the sink</li><li>- Carry groceries from the car to the kitchen</li><li>- Water flowers with a small watering can</li></ul>
<b>6-7 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Wipe countertops and kitchen tables</li><li>- Fold and put away towels</li><li>- Rake leaves</li></ul>
<b>8-9 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assist with meal preparation</li><li>- Clean their bedroom</li><li>- Sweep the floor</li></ul>
<b>10-11 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Take out the garbage</li><li>- Assist in washing the car</li><li>- Load the dishwasher or wash dishes by hand</li></ul>
<b>12-13 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Clean the bathroom</li><li>- Make and pack their lunch</li><li>- Vacuum the floors</li></ul>
<b>14+ Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Do laundry</li><li>- Change the bedsheets</li><li>- Prepare meals with supervision as needed</li></ul>

Getting your children involved in household tasks can be beneficial for all family members, and it is much more than having daily tasks checked off your list. Chores encourage improvements in many skill areas, and even your youngest can be involved in some way. By allowing your child to participate in daily tasks, everyone will have more time to enjoy together as a family.




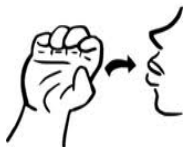




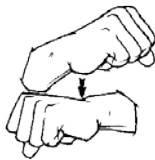
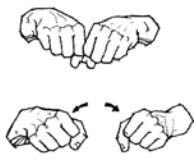








**Alexandra M. Himes, MOT, OTR/L**  
Occupational Therapist

# American Sign Language

American Sign Language (ASL) can be used for children and adults of all ages and language levels to facilitate expressive and receptive language skills at home. An important piece to remember when implementing sign language at home is to focus on modeling signs without expectation—meaning you will model various signs across contexts without expecting your child to produce these signs themselves. By modeling signs, we are helping a child learn what these signs mean as well as how they can use them in everyday situations. We are also adding a visual component to spoken language, which may be helpful for individuals who benefit from support with receptive language tasks. For children who have strong motor imitation skills, you may even notice them attempting to copy some of your signs!

We have attached some examples of frequently used signs and encourage you to use these signs when you say these words during the day. It is okay to model as many signs as you know in a sentence, even if you do not know all of the signs. For example, you can combine “I,” “want,” and “eat” in a sentence that’s spoken as “I want to get something to eat” or “I want to eat a snack!” If there is a sign you would like to look up, the website [www.aslpro.com](http://www.aslpro.com) offers a comprehensive ASL dictionary with video models. See the next page for some examples of frequently used signs.

# American Sign Language Contd.

<p>I</p> 	<p>Want</p> 	<p>Eat/food</p> 
<p>Drink</p> 	<p>Sit</p> 	<p>Stand</p> 
<p>Wait</p> 	<p>Finished</p> 	<p>Work</p> 
<p>Break</p> 	<p>Help</p> 	<p>Bathroom</p> 
<p>Stop</p> 	<p>Play</p> 	<p>Thank you</p> 
<p>Please</p> 	<p>Yes</p> 	<p>No</p> 

**Casey Roetz, MS, CCC-SLP**  
Speech-Language Pathologist

**Kelly Amato, MA, CCC-SLP**  
Speech-Language Pathologist

# Staff Spotlight Corner



**Jill Jachelski** is a graduate student at West Virginia University's School of Medicine. She is currently a graduate extern at CARD Odenton. Jill graduated from Towson University in 2020 with her bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology and audiology and will be graduating with her master's degree in communication sciences disorders in May 2022. Jill is originally from Harford County, Maryland and is currently living in Prince George's County, Maryland. She enjoys working out, eating healthy, and watching Netflix and Marvel movies.

Jill has always been interested in working with children, because of her experience as a clinic assistant for SLP's, OT's, and PT's. She took an interest into CARD due to her passion to learn about neurodiversity and to ensure every patient feels represented in their own right. She has appreciated her time at CARD Odenton and has developed many new skills to help her excel as a clinical fellow.

# Staff Spotlight Corner Contd.



**Nicole Brooks** has been a therapeutic assistant at CARD Odenton since February 2020, after receiving her bachelor's degree in hearing and speech sciences from University of Maryland. Though her initial time at CARD was cut short due to COVID, she fell in love with the unique and collaborative therapy experience the Achievements program offered. This further solidified her decision to pursue a career in speech therapy, and she was accepted into Towson University's graduate program in speech language pathology, Class of '22.

Throughout the uncertainty of COVID-19 and the added stress of graduate school, Nicole found comfort and consistency in her coworkers and patients at CARD. She decided to return as a therapeutic assistant in fall 2020 and to continue to gain experience in treatment of individuals with autism spectrum disorders, this time with the added knowledge and context of her graduate school studies. In addition to CARD and TU, Nicole has also had experience as a graduate clinician at the Institute's Powder Mill Campus, where she worked with individuals with ASD ages 13-22.

Currently Nicole is completing her final semester of graduate school and is back where it all began—at CARD Odenton—this time as a graduate student clinician where she continues her role as a therapeutic assistant. Nicole is so thankful for everything the Institute and CARD has taught her, including introducing her to the intriguing world of ASD and allowing her to work with amazing patients whom she can't wait to see every day. She looks forward to finishing her internship and continuing working with individuals on the spectrum—this time as a clinical fellow!



# Staff Spotlight Corner Contd.



**Michelle Gast** is a speech-language pathologist with seven years of pediatric experience working primarily with children with neurological, developmental and musculoskeletal differences. Michelle received both her bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology and audiology and Master's degree in speech-language pathology from Towson University.

Michelle has worked at CARD since July of 2017. During her time at CARD, Michelle has worked in the Achievements program, participated in multi-disciplinary evaluations, and provided individual and group-based therapy in the CARD clinic. Michelle has additional training in motor speech disorders, assistive technology and pediatric feeding disorders. Michelle is passionate about ongoing professional development to help see the biggest picture possible when helping children and their families.

Michelle believes that every family deserves to have the tools to help their child reach their greatest potential and is passionate about providing family-centered care. It is of greatest importance to her to provide each family access to education about their child's development, resources for ongoing support, and to prioritize a collaborative partnership between the family and clinician. She is grateful to be part of each family's journey.

Michelle lives in Anne Arundel County, Maryland with her husband, 1-year old son, and rescue dog. She likes spending time with her family, being out on the water, and enjoying her new role in motherhood.

# Staff Spotlight Corner Contd.



**Katie Ramey** has been a speech-language pathologist at CARD Odenton since July 2018. Katie completed her clinical fellowship year at CARD Odenton as well. She received her bachelor's degree in hearing and speech sciences, with a minor in human development, from University of Maryland. Katie volunteered at the UMD speech-language therapy preschool and at a local summer camp for autistic children during her time in college. She received her master's degree in speech-language pathology from the University of Delaware. She completed clinical practicums at a variety of settings, including a preschool within the Delaware Autism Program, an outpatient therapy clinic at Nemours/Al DuPont Children's Hospital, and an Adult Integration Program for 18-21 year olds with varying disabilities.

During Katie's time at CARD, she has been active in the Achievements program and in clinic programs. Katie is passionate about providing family-centered speech therapy via telehealth to better serve families who live far away from CARD or would not otherwise be able to travel for in-person therapy.

Outside of work, Katie enjoys spending time with her dog, her family and friends, and tending to her houseplant collection.