



Center for Autism & Related Disorders at Kennedy Krieger Institute

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Fall 2022 | Volume 8

CARD Clinic Update

A Message From Stephanie Morris, MD

I am excited to announce that I have joined the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute as the new medical director. Since I am new to the Mid-Atlantic region, I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Stephanie Morris, and I am a board-certified pediatric neurologist, mother to three amazing children, and devoted advocate of quality, comprehensive *and* accessible pediatric healthcare.

Before joining the faculty at Kennedy Krieger in June 2022, I was an assistant professor of neurology and pediatrics at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, and I served clinically as head of the General Neurology Section in the Division of Pediatric and Developmental Neurology and director of the Fragile X and Neurofibromatosis (NF) Clinical Programs. I have a broad clinical background in pediatric neurology, with specific expertise in the diagnosis and management of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, especially as they occur in the context of neurogenetic conditions.



I am beyond thrilled to be a part of the CARD family, and am honored to help lead a program of this stature and contribute to its continued excellence and growth. I am committed to CARD's tripartite mission of delivering state-of-the-science clinical care, conducting innovative research and providing high-impact education and training to our next generation of clinicians. Our youngest and most vulnerable patients are a fundamental focal point and serve to drive my passion for ensuring equitable and expedient access to exceptional clinical care for children and families affected by neurological and developmental disorders. The team at CARD is outstanding, and I am excited to share my enthusiasm, motivation and vision for the future of this world-class program.

Stephanie Morris, MD
Medical Director, Center for Autism and Related Disorders
Kennedy Krieger Institute

Introducing SPARK Sundays

SPARK Partners With We Rock the Spectrum - Baltimore

Over the next 12 months, **SPARK at Kennedy Krieger Institute** and **We Rock the Spectrum - Baltimore** are partnering to host **SPARK Sundays**. We Rock the Spectrum - Baltimore is a sensory gym, exploration environment and gathering place in Owings Mills, Maryland. On the **second Sunday of each month, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**, kids who register in advance for SPARK Sundays will **play for free and reduced pricing**. While the kids explore the gym, the SPARK team will simultaneously host **information sessions for parents and caregivers** about participating in SPARK research, educational workshops, support groups and other activities.

To register for upcoming Spark Sundays, you may email IgniteSPARK@KennedyKrieger.org or call 443-257-3162.

Learn More. Get Involved.
Stay Connected.

[KennedyKrieger.org/Connect](https://www.KennedyKrieger.org/Connect)



The RUBI Program

Highlighting RUBI Parent Training for Disruptive Behavior

RUBI Parent Training (RUBI PT) is a time-limited parent training program for parents of young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and mildly-to-moderately disruptive behaviors, such as tantrum behavior or difficulties following directions. The program was designed by the Research Units in Behavioral Intervention (RUBI) Autism Network.

Sessions typically occur weekly for about six months and focus on teaching parents about the principles of behavioral change as well as various intervention strategies, such as prevention strategies, reinforcement, planned ignoring, teaching children to follow directions, teaching communication skills and teaching adaptive or daily living skills. During sessions, a therapist discusses various skills and strategies, then parents practice those skills and strategies through vignettes and roleplaying. Each parent then develops a specific plan that uses these skills and strategies with their child. Prior research shows that RUBI PT is effective in reducing behavioral difficulties and increasing adaptive or daily living skills.

Since January 2021, CARD has provided RUBI PT for parents of 2- to 7-year-old children with ASD and mildly-to-moderately disruptive behaviors. Our clinicians have extensive clinical expertise in RUBI PT. Parents have found the

program beneficial, and have provided feedback such as:

- **“Now I can understand why my child is whining and getting aggressive.”**
- **“I got to know how to deal with tantrums.”**
- **“I learned that parent training for children with autism should be different from the usual parent training. It was an eye-opening experience.”**

In November 2022, CARD psychologists will train additional clinicians to implement RUBI, thus expanding our capacity to provide RUBI services. We also hope to offer a RUBI PT group treatment program for Latinx families in the future, which will be led by Dr. Yoreidy Tavárez. While implementing this clinical program, RUBI PT-trained clinicians and the CARD informatics team are working together to evaluate the effectiveness of this program at CARD. We hope to answer important questions such as:

- “Who gets the most benefit from RUBI PT?”
- “Who does not respond to RUBI PT?”
- “What are the reasons that parents drop out of the treatment?”

This information will help us further tailor our program to provide the best outcomes for CARD’s patients. It will also assist clinicians of other organizations in better serving their patients and families.

If you are interested in RUBI PT, email CARDInfo@KennedyKrieger.org or check with your child’s CARD clinician.

CARD Golf Event Update

On August 15, the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) hosted a charity golf event at the Country Club of Maryland in Baltimore County. The weather was beautiful, the course was lush and green, and most importantly, we raised over \$30,000. Thank you to everyone who joined us for a lovely day of golfing for a good

cause. We are particularly grateful to our sponsors and thanks to all of our golfers for purchasing all those mulligans!

The fun isn’t over yet and we are looking forward to hosting a second tournament next year. If you are interested in joining the 2023 golf event planning committee, please contact Joy Johnson at JohnsonJoy@KennedyKrieger.org.