



## OCTOBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

[rcghealthnetwork.com](http://rcghealthnetwork.com)

# FALL INTO SAFETY



Recognizing Children's Gifts  
Behavioral Health Network



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**Look who is celebrating a birthday in October:**

William  
Daniela  
Nathasha  
Melina  
Taquisha  
Stephanie  
Kevin  
Jonathon  
Courtney  
Megan

**Happy RCG-versary to:**

**2 years**

- 10/8 Dana Reyes

**6 years**

- 10/6 Courtney Bise

**Welcome to the RCG Team:**

Justin Stevenson  
Sybil Kettle  
Christina Womack

**New Job Titles & Roles**

- Roger Anderson - Center Based Coordinator
- Jordan Butler - Mentor Therapist

# Training Team Announcements



The RCG Training team has some recent exciting changes we'd like to share with you!

## 1. Behavior Skills Learning is LIVE!

RCG has its very own online training platform called Behavior Skills Learning! Since August, every new team member still gets the same great 40 hours+ worth of training complete with ASRs and Quizzes - all online! This is combined with in-person, interactive training to enhance the learning experience and ensure that competencies are met for a multi-elemental training approach!

## 2. New Monthly Team Member Onboarding Process

Our onboarding process has been updated to allow for a quicker hand off of new team members to their supervisor! Our Onboarding coordinator, **Jamie Melhorn**, oversees this process which includes ABA, HIPAA and RCG introductory online training, RBT certification, CPR certification, Safety Care Certification and on-the-job training with a training mentor all within their first month at RCG.

Once this process is complete, each supervisor gets a checklist of competencies that the new team member has been observed demonstrating to help them get a better picture of ongoing supervision and support needs for that team member.

## 3. Our Team is Growing

You may have seen the new announcement that we have a full time Training Mentor - **Jordan Butler**. We are so excited to add her to our amazing onboarding team!

In addition to this, the training team is growing in other ways across the company:

- **Amanda Wells** is expanding her director duties to oversee the Early Childhood Education Program here at RCG. She will be providing the clinical direction and oversight to all of RCG's early learners, including the School Prep program and any center-based and in-home client under the age of six years old. She is so excited to work with Chloe Bailey, Kevin Loving, and Roger Anderson on this team while continuing to oversee the clinical direction of our amazing RCG Training Team!
- To further help support the ECD program, **Lydia McCormick** is overseeing clinical supervision of our early learners at the Henrico Center to help establish goals for that region's Early Childhood Development program!
- **Courtney Bise** is continuing to lead the efforts in QA and Ethical best practices by providing hands-on leadership training to our supervisors - starting with the Early Childhood Development program. She is also working hand-in-hand with Mari Loving, our Billing Compliance Coordinator, to keep us all up-to-date on compliance best practices!
- **Kara Herring and Tara Dailey** have led the charge with Sarah Shreckhise to begin RCG's diagnostic assessment program! Kara and Tara will be conducting their very first ADOS assessment in October to provide a much-needed service in the state of Virginia.

## More to Come...

The RCG Training Team is committed to the highest quality training by using data-driven decisions to nurture growth, develop skills, and inspire passion to the RCG community and beyond. Stay tuned for more announcements related to the RCG Leadership Academy, RBT Academy, and more Behavior Skills Learning opportunities!



## RCG TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

# Molly Milefsky

**Q: How long have you been at RCG and what is your current job title?**

A: I have been with RCG for 5 years and am an ABA Therapist. It is exciting to see how much growth has happened here.

**Q: What do you like most about working at RCG?**

A: I like the challenge that each new day brings and that there it's never monotonous.

**Q: What is something that makes you feel safe?**

A: Something that makes me feel safe is going home to my house in the country.

**Q: What motivates you to work hard?**

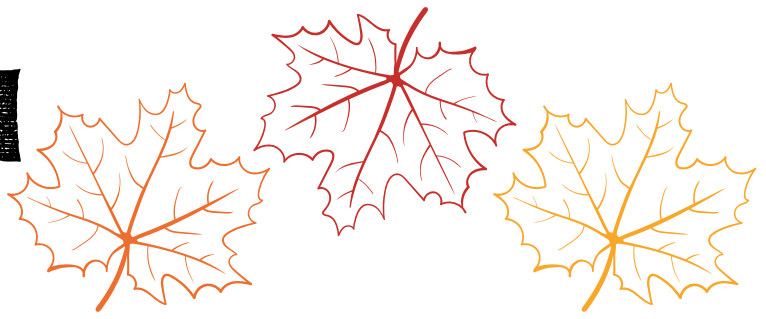
A: I am motivated to work hard because I love to see the progress in my clients and knowing that I have my own children to work hard for.

**Q: What is your favorite candy at Halloween?**

A: My favorite sweet treat is gummy bears.



# CARE TEAM



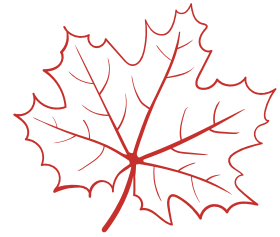
Greetings RCG Team and Families,

In order to "safely" support RCG's CARE goal to create a client readiness model we have been requesting our families to complete their RCG consent form packets. Many of you have already returned your updated forms, THANK YOU! These consent forms are universal forms for all our clients at RCG, that will be valid for one year, while ensuring all of our clients are compliant across all programs and services.

As we know, some forms may not be applicable to the current program you are in however, we ask that you complete all consent forms in case there is a need for a change to any service. In the event program changes are made and/or other RCG services become available, the client readiness approach will allow that transition to be seamless. We are delighted to see the positive response to our new approach and hope you have a deeper understanding of our level of commitment to supporting all our families in ensuring our clients are in compliance with insurance regulations, state mandates, as well as all RCG guidelines.

Services could include but are not limited to:

- Applied Behavioral Analysis
- Speech Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Coffee Chat
- Transportation
- School Prep
- Life Prep
- Virtual Campus
- Virtual Classes
- Assessment Testing



Stay tuned to hear how we plan to support our RCG Team by implementing a team member readiness approach!

If you have questions about completing your client readiness forms or have not received an email containing your forms, please feel free to reach out to the CARE Team.

\*Please note, if you have any updates or changes to insurance, please send that information to the Care Team as soon as possible\*

## CARE TEAM

Phone: 804-897-1753 option 9

Fax: 888-857-8088

[careteam@rcghealthnetwork.com](mailto:careteam@rcghealthnetwork.com)

RCG's CARE team continues to CARE by staying Committed to Assisting our team and families with their needs while providing Realistic Expectations.



- LaDonna Branson, Supervisor of Administrative Services
- Leo Rodriguez, Operations Analyst
- Angel Williams - Administrative Specialist



# FEC FULFILLMENT



Thank you for your commitment to RCG's session fulfillment!!!

**Fulfilment**-(noun) the achievement of something desired, promised, or predicted.

Research has shown that regular session attendance increases client progress and is a necessity for positive outcomes. The session fulfillment policy for all our clients at RCG is 85% completion of all scheduled sessions. The percentage is determined based on total session numbers for the month.

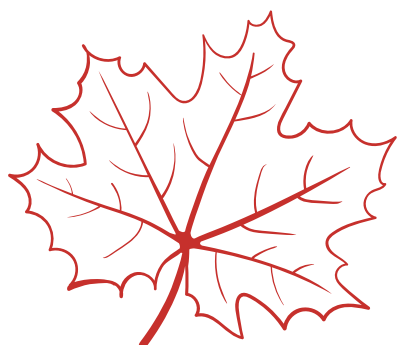
For the month of August the session fulfillment average rate was 95% for all clients across all programs which means you as parents/guardians have worked diligently to ensure your child is maximizing services. We truly appreciate your cooperation and participation in helping us to fulfill one of our four core values, "providing excellent service to our children and families."

We appreciate your efforts and look forward to a continued relationship and upward trend in fulfillment of therapeutic services.

The FEC Resource Center was created with the goal to provide our families at RCG; resources that we hope can help your family navigate through day to day life.

While we are all almost 7-months into this pandemic, and nearly through 2020, we wanted to share these articles that we hope will help promote social emotional awareness. In addition there are activities for your children who are learning virtually or hybrid.

[Social Emotional Wellness: Considerations for Parents and Caregivers](#) (Virginia Department of Education)



Jamilya Brown  
Family Engagement Coordinator



# FALL FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES

Visit an Apple Orchard at Carter Mountain Orchard



Carve a pumpkin with these fun ideas

Go on a family picnic in the park while social distancing or have a picnic in your own backyard. Grab your favorite snacks, something warm to drink and have fun.

Have a family movie night at Goochland Drive-In Theatre





# LET'S HEAR FROM THE **CLINICAL TEAM**

Training/Assessment - Early Childhood - School Aged - Life Prep - OT/Speech



# TRAINING & ASSESSMENT



## Assessing Safe Environments

These helpful tips are great during Halloween and trick-or-treating but can also be adapted for any event or situation.

### 1. Plan your route

- If you have older children, review the route they will be taking and the friends they will be going with. Remind them that staying with a group is best and if they get separated from the group, make sure they know who to contact. Also provide reminders about staying in well lit areas, avoiding open flames, and approaching houses that are well lit. You can role play these skills at home with them the days before Halloween. Also, parents make sure you have contact information for some of the individuals in the group in case of an emergency.
- If you have younger kids, plan to accompany them trick or treating on their route and up to houses to receive candy.

### 2. Ride through the area you plan on trick or treating in.

- Take a ride through the neighborhood you are trick or treating in prior to Halloween to ensure it is well lit and low in traffic volume. If you have younger kids, I would recommend taking them out before the sun sets to ensure they are seen/visible to any cars.
- If your route is not well lit or you are going out after the sun sets, ensure children have flashlights, glow sticks, or costumes that contain reflector strips.
- Look for open flames if you are approaching houses. Some houses may have candles lit or pumpkins with candles or open fires. Teach kids how to avoid open flames when going up to houses. You can do this by role playing how they should approach a house at their home prior to leaving.

### 3. If you are attending a Halloween Party, identify exits upon arriving.

- Make sure they are free of any decorations to make getting out easy, if they are blocked, notify the host. Walk your child through the house to show them the exits in case of an emergency.

Halloween Fire Safety Tips

Halloween Safety.

Kara Herring, M.Ed, LBA, BCBA  
Training and Professional  
Development Senior Clinical  
Supervisor





# EARLY CHILDHOOD



## Safety Skills for Preschoolers

Utilize Behavior skills training which is a research-based intervention that consists of several different teaching components; instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback (Miltenberger, 2004).

One of the most effective ways to utilize BST is through in-situ training which entails pausing the individual in real-time when a skill is not being performed correctly, having the trainer immediately enter, and direct the learned in correctly carrying out the safety skill. This should be followed by verbal feedback/praise. A great way to use this strategy during Halloween time is crossing the street.

**Step 1: Instruction:** Provide a description of the skill including when to perform this and the rationale behind the skill. Example: When crossing the street, remember to stop on the curb, look both ways for cars, and then proceed when the road is clear.

**Step 2: Modeling:** Physically model the skill you are teaching the learner. Example: Model the correct way to cross the street while walking through what was discussed in Step 1. You can also utilize peer modeling or video modeling during this step.

**Step 3: Rehearsal:** Have the learner practice this skill as many times as possible. Create opportunities naturally through role playing. Example: Have the learner role play with individuals such as mom, dad, or a grandparent. Practice this skill with multiple people in different settings.

**Step 4: Feedback:** Give the learner specific feedback as the skills are being practiced in the real-world. Example: If the learner incorrectly crosses the street, the trainer should immediately step in, explain what was incorrect, remind the learner the appropriate procedure while also giving reinforcement to the safety skills display correctly. If the learner correctly crosses the street, let the learner finish out the procedure independently and come into contact with natural reinforcement of getting to the other side of the street paired with reinforcement of social praise.



Kevin Loving, M Ed, BCBA, LBA  
Clinical Supervisor



# SCHOOL AGE



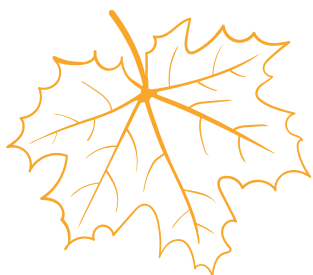
## Teaching Stranger Danger

“Stranger danger” has been a common concern for school-aged children for a long time. Caregivers want to make sure their child knows who to trust and who not to trust when they are on their own. This is an important skill to teach whether you plan to leave your child alone or not. Think of the child who gets accidentally separated from a parent in the grocery store. Preparing them to know who to go to and how to get help are key elements in keeping a child safe.

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The next step is learning how to get help from a community helper if they are separated from you. This will involve learning how to identify community helpers and answer some social questions such as “What’s your name?”, “Who are you here with?”, and “What is your mom’s phone number?”. If your child has a hard time communicating it may be best to have an item such as a bracelet, necklace, or card on them at all times that includes the child’s diagnosis and how to contact you in case of separation.

Once you have the skills it is time to practice! Start with talking through hypothetical scenarios or role-playing in your home environment. Once they have it down you can generalize these skills to the environment where you think they could need it someday. For example, go to the grocery store and practice asking a cashier for help. Being prepared and feeling confident in your child’s “stranger danger” awareness can be a great way to not only increase their exposure to new and fun environments but to do so in a way that keeps them safe.



Erin Jones, MS, BCBA, LBA  
Clinical Supervisor





# LIFE PREP



## Internet Safety

Having individuals with ASD use the internet can lead to many beneficial outcomes like maintaining friendships through social media or building and exploring one's interests. However, many of the benefits of using the internet can also include potential risks like cyberbullying and identity theft.

A helpful resource I find beneficial is an acronym adapted by Cerebra.org called PLAY IT SAFE which can provide many beneficial guidelines on how to stay safe online while being able to still have fun! Here is an example of a visual that can be used to teach or to have around the environment as a reminder:

**P** - personal information: don't share your full name, where you live or go to school

**L** - let a trusted family member or adult know if someone asks you for personal information

**A** - attachments: ask a trusted adult before opening attachments. Bad ones can break your computer

**Y** - your feelings are important: if something you see online makes you feel upset, tell a trusted adult

**I** - Information: Not everything you see online is true. If you are unsure, ask a trusted adult

**T** - Take breaks!! Take breaks often to stretch, socialize, and give your eyes a rest.

**S** - Spend your money safely: Don't buy things from unfamiliar stores or links, and don't send people money.

**A** - act politely: don't say things you wouldn't say in real life

**F** - friends online should stay online. If someone asks you to meet up, tell them no.

**E** - enjoy yourself and have fun!



Tara Lamm, BA, BCaBA, LABA  
Life Prep Clinical Supervisor



### Speech Language Action Tip



For children and young adults with complex communication needs, expressing feelings of pain can be quite a challenge. While it is a challenge, it is an important topic to consider. Initial learning in this area can focus on being able to label and identify body parts on themselves as well as on others in pictures.

One idea for younger learners is to use a drawing of a body and marking places that may end up having scrapes or bruises to review the vocabulary word, “hurt.” Communication boards related to communicating pain or injury could also be used. Families may also want to consider using a communication diary regarding ways that their children show pain. If there are certain behaviors that are exhibited when a child is sick or in pain, these should be communicated with all other care providers.

Individuals who use communication devices should consider creating back-up systems such as paper-based copies or taking pictures on a personal device such as a phone or tablet.

Reach out to your SLP provider for help developing communication supports related to pain or injury. Additionally, there are many existing resources to support communication around pain and distress.

Consider reviewing this tool called the [Disability Distress Assessment Tool \(DisDAT\)](#), which supports caregivers in strategies for identifying pain or distress in individuals who have communication challenges. There are also free apps that offer visual aids such as 5-point scales to help individuals communicate about pain.

[Autism 5-Point Scale EP](#)

[Small Talk Pain Scale](#)

There are also Resources related to managing Emergencies:

- [Effective Communication in Children's Hospitals: Handbook of resources for Parents, Patients, and Practitioners - Central Coast Children's Foundation Augmentative Communication Inc. Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Communication Enhancement \(AAC- RERC\)](#)
- [Blood Draw Tool Kits \(Autism Speaks\)](#)

Sarah Shreckhise, MS CCC-SLP, BCBA, LBA  
Lead Speech-Language Pathologist



# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



## Tips to Safely Expand Diets in Children with Sensory Aversions

New food introduction is often a stressful time not only for children but for the whole family. Below are some strategies to help with the mealtime stress.

**Develop a routine around feeding** - When possible, sit down and put the same foods on everyone's plate.

**Present preferred foods along with not preferred foods**

**Forget the rules** - If you have rules about what your child must eat, such as a 'one bite rule,' or 'clear your plate before you leave the table', consider letting these rules go. Here are a few reasons why:

- These types of demands can make kids feel stressed. When our bodies get stressed, they release cortisol. Cortisol suppresses appetite and makes your child even less likely to eat.
- The research shows that these types of demands don't help kids eat new foods in the long run. They are likely to backfire and make picky eating even worse.

**Keep in mind that chewing and swallowing new or not preferred foods may not happen on the first attempt.** Children often require multiple exposures before becoming comfortable enough to interact with non-preferred foods. Instead of saying "take a bite", prompt your child to smell, touch, or lick the food first.

**Repeat, repeat, repeat.** Research shows a child takes 8-15 exposures to a new food just to enhance acceptance of that food.

References:

- The Pocket OT - 5 Tips for Picky Eaters
- Savage, Jennifer S., et al. (2008) Parental Influence on Eating Behavior. J Law Med Ethics
- Prevalence of picky eaters among infants and toddlers and their caregivers' decisions about offering a new food

Lindsey Olsen, MOT  
Occupational Therapist





# Halloween Tips

for families living with  
**Autism Spectrum Disorder**



If your child plans to go trick-or-treating, review the steps, practice at home and limit the amount of time or homes visited.



If your child plans to wear a costume, bring a change of clothes in case they become uncomfortable.



Bring along useful supplies such as a flashlight for safety, earplugs or headsets to block out noise and a toy or something that brings them comfort.



When allowing children to eat candy, monitor for any dietary restrictions or allergies.



# HELPFUL RESOURCES

## Learning at Home:

- Talking is Teaching
  - [Staycation Toolkit](#) (Early Learners)
- Illinois Early Learning Project
  - [Learning at Home During Trying Times](#) (Early Learners)
- Amazing Educational Resources
  - [Free Learning Opportunities for Families](#)
- The Library of Congress
  - [Presentations and Activities to Help Students Learn about History](#)
- NASA
  - [Interactive Lessons about Space, Earth, Solar System and Universe](#)
  - [STEM Activities for Students of All Ages](#)
- The Kennedy Center
  - [Lunch Doodles with Mo Wilems](#)
    - [Tour the Kennedy Center with The Pigeon](#)
- The Smithsonian
  - [Free Smithsonian STEM Games & Simulations](#)
  - [Meet the Animals of the National Zoo](#)
  - [3D Exhibits and Virtual Tours](#)



# Behind the newsletter

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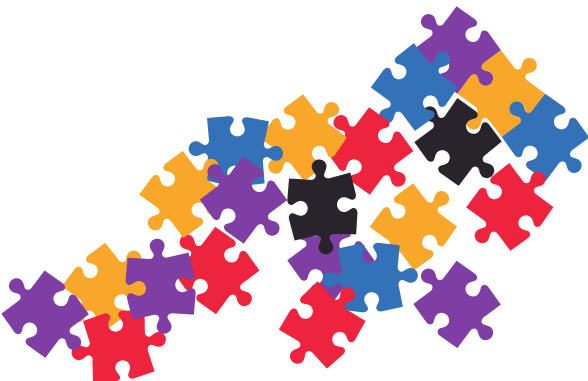
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- Tara Lamm, BA, BCaBA, LABA
- Sarah Shreckhise, MS CCC-SLP, BCBA, LBA
- Lindsey Olsen, MOT







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