



SPECTRUM STRONG

JUNE

2026

A NOTE FROM THE SPECTRUM STRONG TEAM



This month, Spectrum Strong officially turns one year old, and what an incredible year it has been!

Just one year ago, Spectrum Strong was little more than an idea shared by parents and a teacher at a parent workshop who saw a need for connection, support, and understanding within our community. By June, we were gathering with families, listening to your stories, learning about your experiences, discovering what was most important to you and what you hoped to gain from being part of the Spectrum Strong community.

Over the past year, we have learned so much and grown in ways we never could have imagined. We have shared resources, hosted workshops, created opportunities for learning, and worked to build a community where autistic individuals and their families feel welcomed, supported, and valued. But more than anything else, we have made meaningful connections.

We have loved watching our children play together, build friendships, and experience events in spaces where they can be themselves. We have enjoyed connecting families with resources and information. Most importantly, we have had the privilege of watching relationships form among parents, caregivers, and families who understand the joys, challenges, and unique experiences that come with this journey. Seeing those connections grow and knowing that fewer families feel alone is what Spectrum Strong is all about.

As we celebrate this milestone, we are filled with gratitude for each and every one of you. Thank you for trusting us, supporting us, volunteering with us, attending events, sharing ideas, and helping shape Spectrum Strong into what it is today.

We have so many exciting things in the works for the year ahead and cannot wait to continue growing—not only as an organization, but in the ways we support parents, families, autistic individuals, and our communities.

Thank you for being part of the Spectrum Strong family. Here's to an amazing first year and many more to come!

Upcoming Events

TUESDAY, JUNE 16
PARENT WORKSHOP:
HOW MUSIC THERAPY CAN SUPPORT
YOUR CHILD

SUNDAY, JULY 19
FAMILY MUSIC DAY CAMP WITH
DYNAMIC MUSIC THERAPY



Research has shown that music can be a powerful tool for autistic individuals, supporting communication, social connection, emotional regulation, motor development, and learning. Because music engages multiple areas of the brain simultaneously, it can create meaningful opportunities for engagement, self-expression, and skill development while honoring each individual's unique strengths and preferences.

Join us on Tuesday, June 16 from 5:30–7:00 PM at First Presbyterian Church in Hudson for our parent workshop, *How Music-Based Strategies Can Support Autistic Children*, presented by Tatum Kline and Alison Edwards who are both Board Certified Music Therapists. Parents and caregivers will learn practical, neuroaffirming ways to use music to support communication, emotional regulation, learning, and connection for autistic children of all ages. Childcare will be available, and registration is open now at spectrumstrong.net/event-list.

Then, put what you've learned into action at our July Family Music Event on Sunday, July 19, 2026, from 10:00 AM–12:00 PM at Weitkamp Park! Bring the whole family for a fun-filled morning featuring music and movement activities, instrument exploration, songwriting, DIY projects, and more. Pack a picnic lunch and stay to enjoy the park's fantastic playground and brand-new splash pad. Come for the music experiences and stay for a great summer afternoon of connection and fun. Registration for this family event will be opening soon on our website so stay tuned!



SUMMER SAFETY FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND TEENS: SUPPORTING SAFE, ENJOYABLE SUMMER EXPERIENCES

Summer brings opportunities for fun, exploration, and new experiences. It also brings changes in routines, increased time outdoors, and unique safety considerations. For many autistic children and teens, summer can be a wonderful time to pursue interests, connect with family, and enjoy community activities. By planning ahead and teaching safety skills in supportive, individualized ways, families can help create safer and more enjoyable summer experiences for everyone.

Water Safety: Our Highest Summer Priority

Water can be calming, fascinating, and highly motivating for many autistic individuals. Research has shown that autistic children are at increased risk of drowning, often related to wandering (sometimes called elopement or bolting) and attraction to water. Studies have found that approximately half of autistic children engage in wandering behaviors at some point, and drowning is one of the most significant risks when a child goes missing.

Water Safety Tips

- Provide close, active, and uninterrupted supervision whenever children are near water.
- Designate a specific "water watcher" during gatherings or pool parties.
- Enroll children in swim lessons that are individualized and responsive to their learning style and sensory needs.
- Practice water safety skills regularly, not just during vacations or special outings.
- Teach children how to:
 - Float on their back
 - Find the pool edge
 - Exit the water independently
 - Respond to safety words such as "stop" or "come back"
- Use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets for boating, fishing, and activities in natural bodies of water.
- Remember that water wings, puddle jumpers, and inflatable floaties are not substitutes for supervision or swimming skills.
- Secure home pools with four-sided fencing, self-latching gates, and locked access points.
- Consider sharing information about your child with trusted neighbors and caregivers if wandering is a concern.



Many autistic children are naturally drawn to water because of its sensory qualities. Rather than viewing this interest as a problem, we can recognize it as a strength while teaching the safety skills needed to enjoy water safely and confidently.

Bike and Scooter Safety

Bikes and scooters provide opportunities for movement, independence, and recreation. However, they also require important safety skills that may need additional teaching and practice.

Bike and Scooter Safety Tips

- Always wear a properly fitted helmet.
- Ensure bikes and scooters are the correct size for the child or teen.
- Practice riding skills in quiet, low-traffic areas before moving to busier environments.
- Use visual supports, social stories, or video modeling to teach:
 - Stopping at driveways and intersections
 - Looking left, right, and left again before crossing
 - Watching for cars backing out of driveways
 - Following community bike and pedestrian rules
- Wear bright or reflective clothing when riding in the evening.
- Teach children to ride with awareness of their surroundings while still honoring sensory needs.
- Consider adding identification information to helmets or bikes if wandering or communication differences are present.
- For children who are still learning safety awareness, ride together and provide ongoing coaching.



Many autistic children learn best through repetition and predictability. Creating a consistent riding route and practicing the same safety routines each time can help build confidence and independence.



SUMMER SAFETY FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND TEENS: SUPPORTING SAFE, ENJOYABLE SUMMER EXPERIENCES

Severe Weather Safety

Summer often brings thunderstorms, tornado watches and warnings, extreme heat, and power outages. These situations can be stressful because they often involve sudden changes, loud noises, and disruptions to routines.

Preparing ahead of time can make severe weather events more manageable.

Severe Weather Safety Tips

- Create a family emergency plan and practice it regularly.
- Use visual schedules, social stories or visual modeling to explain

what happens during:

- Thunderstorms
- Tornado warnings
- Power outages
- Emergency sheltering
- Identify a designated safe space in your home and practice going there, even when there is no severe weather present.
- Keep comfort items, communication supports, headphones, and sensory tools together in an emergency kit that you can bring with you to your designated safe space.
- Charge communication devices before storms when possible.
- Discuss weather alerts in simple, concrete language.
- Practice what to do if outdoor activities are interrupted by severe weather.
- If your child is sensitive to loud sounds, keep noise-reducing headphones readily available.



Building Safety Skills Through Practice

Safety skills are often learned best through ongoing practice and repetition rather than one-time conversations. Consider:

- Using visual supports, social stories and video modeling to assist in teaching
- Practicing skills in real-life settings
- Role-playing different situations
- Celebrating successful use of safety skills
- Teaching skills in a way that matches your child's communication style and developmental level

Every autistic child and teen has unique strengths, interests, and support needs. By combining preparation, skill-building, and understanding, families can help create a summer filled with fun, exploration, and safety.

Watch our website for a social story about being safe in the water. If you need any other visuals or social stories for this summer, please reach out and we will create something for you.

Wishing your family a safe and enjoyable summer from all of us at Spectrum Strong!

