

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Providing Complex Care for Core Symptoms and Co-morbidities

Nathan Call, PhD, BCBA-D

Interim Clinical Director – Marcus Autism Center

Associate Professor – Emory University School of Medicine

Marcus at a Glance

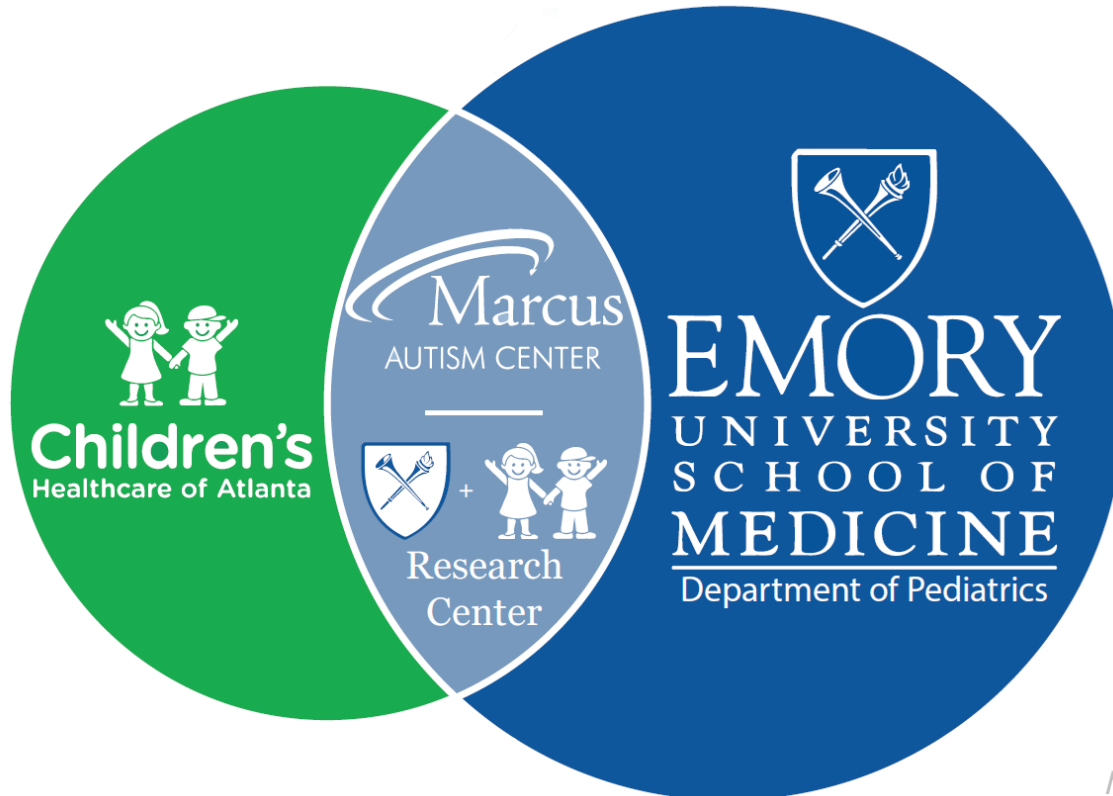
We serve:

- 5,000+ unique children per year at the Center
- 3,500 in schools and the community



Affiliations

- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
- Emory University School of Medicine; Dept. of Pediatrics
 - Division of autism and related disorders housed at Marcus



Clinical Programs:

- Multidisciplinary Diagnostic/Evaluation
- Skill acquisition
- Feeding
- Medical
 - Neurology
 - Developmental Pediatrics
 - Psychiatry
- Care coordination
 - Social skills summer camps
 - Respite and family day/weekend camps

- Severe Behavior

- Intensive day-treatment
- Brief behavioral interventions
- Parent training Multidisciplinary Toileting
- Crisis Prevention Program

Educational Programs:

- Educational outreach
- Model Classrooms
- Individual Case Consultation
- Infant & Toddler Community Outreach

Marcus Clinical Assessment & Diagnostic (CAD) Service

- Conducts gold-standard diagnostic evaluations
- Focused on the more challenging cases (younger, or with complexities)
 - Under 2 to 6 years
- Undiagnoses about 30% of referrals with a preexisting ASD diagnosis seeking a 2nd opinion
- Currently no waiting list for 6 and under

Medical Services at Marcus

- **Developmental Pediatrics**
 - Differential diagnosis for young children
- **Psychiatry**
 - Psychopharmacologic treatment for older children
- **Medical follow-up**
- **Medical “Front-Door”**
 - Front-line consultation with caregivers
 - Address any underlying medical issues

Intensive ABA-based NDBI intervention

- Combination of discrete trial instruction and natural environment teaching
- 15 hours/week

Focused on kindergarten readiness for children less likely to benefit from less intensive intervention due to 4+ of the following:

- Fewer than 10 functional words
- Fewer than 10 vocal imitations
- Limited foundational social skills present by 18m (e.g. responding to name, eye contact, orienting toward a speaker)
- Behaviors that interfere with teaching (e.g., high rates of stereotypy, elopement)
- Reliance on prompts to speak
- Fewer than 5 reinforcers
- Poor generalization, stimulus over-selectivity, instructional control issues, etc.

Continuum of services that range from parent training to intensive day-treatment

Intensive Day-Treatment

- Behaviors putting child or caregiver(s) at risk for significant harm, OR
- Causing a more restrictive placement than would otherwise be necessary
- Up to age 21
- Gold standard functional behavioral assessment (i.e., functional analyses)
- Treatment development
- Focused on caregiver/teacher training & ongoing support/follow-up

Brief Behavioral Interventions (BBI)

- 12 weeks of home/community-based coaching from a BCBA

Parent Training

- Children with ASD are likely to exhibit food selectivity or outright food refusal
- Has led to recurrence of some nutritional challenges (e.g., scurvy, rickets)
- Multidisciplinary treatment involves behavioral strategies in collaboration with nutrition/OT and GI
- Services include:
 - Intensive day-treatment
 - Outpatient
 - Nutrition/OT

- Employ well-established behavioral interventions for treating enuresis
 - Fluid loading
 - Frequent scheduled sits
 - Potent reinforcement for continence

- Multidisciplinary treatments for encopresis
 - Includes pediatric gastroenterologist
 - Short-term use of suppositories to elicit bowel movements (usually faded out within 10 days of acquiring continence)

- **Social/Emotional Engagement, Knowledge, & Skills (SEEKS)**
 - Focus is on creating a learning climate where social emotional learning competencies are embedded within a universal design for learning framework.
 - Training is provided to district and school personnel at the systems level to develop sustainable leadership and coaching teams.
 - These teams ultimately deliver trainings and serve as mentors for school-based personnel and families.

ABA-based classrooms embedded within public school settings:

- Focus on a “train the trainer” model
- Over 3 years, progress from
 - Acquiring skills in ABA techniques
 - Demonstrating mastery and data-based decision making
 - Training others

Individual Case Consultation

- Consultation includes:
 - Monitoring students' progress and the staff's procedural integrity when implementing behavioral procedures with a student.
 - Assisting school staff in recording and interpreting data for educational and behavioral programming.
 - Assisting school staff or administrators with IEP preparation and attending IEP meetings.
 - Design intervention strategies that take each school's resources into account, developing case-specific solutions to complex problems that can be applied to other students.

Infant & Toddler Community Outreach

- Building capacity of community systems to better screen/detect, and provide supports and services to infants and toddlers at risk for autism and their families.
 - Coaching and training for early childhood and Part C providers with the knowledge and skills needed to coach caregivers on supports and strategies to enhance their child's early communication skills and social development.