



THE TRAILMIX



Issue 6:

Paths Your Child can Walk

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Introduction:

How Will My Child Survive?

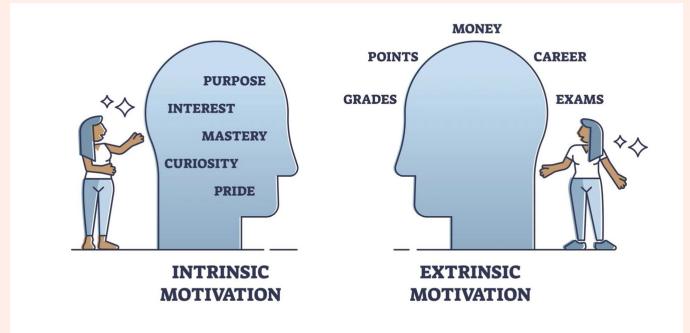
In this ever-evolving, fast-paced world, many parents are worried about the futures of their neurodivergent children. Amongst the numerous challenges neurodivergent individuals face, social stigmas and workplace discrimination are definitely one of the biggest causes of concern in the working world. Naturally, parents will get worried. However, neurodivergent individuals can definitely succeed in the working world. With each child's individual strengths and talents, there are definitely many paths for them to walk in the future.

Neurodiversity

BY KAYLYN TJHIN

After receiving the diagnosis, you may start to wonder about the future possibilities for your neurodivergent child. The world we live in right now does not make it easy for neurodivergent individuals to thrive, but with the right choices in mind, your child can excel in the area of their choosing.

First and foremost, in order to succeed and persist at a career, your child must have the necessary intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from within, that is fueled by internal qualities such as curiosity and passion. The job would feel rewarding and satisfying to the individual. Extrinsic motivation involves external rewards such as a paid salary. A combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is vital in having enjoyable, yet



the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

sustainable career. For people with ADHD, ASD and Dyslexia who are looking to choose a career path, here are some things to take into consideration. (Note: Every neurodivergent person is different, so some of these traits may not apply to your child in particular.)



Choosing a career path with ADHD

People with ADHD often excel in jobs that do not require long spans of held attention. Rather, they work best in jobs in fast-paced environments because there is often a focus on being flexible and engaged in many different tasks.

1. Nickerson C. Differences of Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation - Simply Psychology. simply psychology. Published December 1, 2021. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/differences-between-extrinsic-and-intrinsic-motivation.html>

2. Torpey E. Clusters, pathways, and BLS: Connecting career information : Career Outlook: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Bls.gov. Published March 25, 2015. <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2015/article/career-clusters.htm>

Some examples would be working as a firefighter, paramedic, teacher or athlete.

Some people with ADHD struggle to regulate their focus, and tend to procrastinate. Jobs with high structure and routine can help them to work better. Some examples would be working in the army, as a project manager, or as an accountant.

Research shows that adults with ADHD have more real-world creative achievements, suggesting that those with ADHD are able to tap into their creative side more easily and hence are suited to have creative jobs. For example, they could work as artists, musicians, actors, ³dancers, or perhaps in marketing and sales.

Choosing a career path with ASD

Autistic people generally have enhanced executive functioning skills, resulting in high levels of logic, and heightened abilities to process and analyse information logically. They are also able to analyse complex data. Because of this, people with autism are suited for jobs that require high levels of logic, such as

those in the accounting, finance, computing and data analysis industries.⁴

Many people with autism are also extremely passionate about one or more things or subjects known as special interests. Someone with ASD could consider choosing a career relating to their area of special interest, which can build on their strengths. Their passion will also serve as a driving force. One notable example is Satoshi Tajiri, the original creator of Pokémon,⁵ whose special interest in video games and insects sparked his invention.

Choosing a career path with Dyslexia

While people with dyslexia may struggle with written work, there are many jobs that require little to no written work.

1. Visual Arts

The field of visual arts encompasses jobs such as fashion design, interior design, and web design. It requires creativity and strong visual thinking skills, which many people with dyslexia excel in.

3. Boot N, Nevicka B, Baas M. Creativity in ADHD: Goal-Directed Motivation and Domain Specificity. *Journal of Attention Disorders*. 2017;24(13):1857-1866. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1087054717727352>

4. Murphy J. Why People With Autism Are More Logical. *SCIL Psychology*. Published March 19, 2023. <https://scil.com.au/why-people-with-autism-are-more-logical/>

5. How Special Interests Can Become Careers. American Autism Association. <https://www.myautism.org/news-features/how-special-interests-can-become-careers>

2. Sports and Recreation

Sports and recreation involves jobs such as sport coaching and personal training. Some people with dyslexia prefer a more physical job, where fast reflexes and visualisation skills are put to good use. A famous example would be Muhammad Ali, who had dyslexia but still succeeded as a sportsman in spite of it.

3. Sales and Marketing

A job in the field of sales and marketing involves strong verbal and visual communication skills. People with dyslexia tend to be very good social communicators, and interact well with other people. Having a job

that requires good communication and social skills plays to their area of strength⁶. One example of a successful person with dyslexia in this industry would be Benjamin Braun, the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of Samsung Europe.

Ultimately, the job should hold meaning for the child. Everyone finds different things to be meaningful and fulfilling. Your child should choose to do something that gives them satisfaction and enjoy their work as much as possible. After all, it is incredibly rewarding to be able to do what you love.



Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of Samsung Europe Benjamin Braun sharing about Samsung at IFA 2022. Benjamin Braun has dyslexia.⁷

“ My dyslexia certainly helped me get where I am today.
– Benjamin Braun⁸ ”

6. The best jobs and careers for people with dyslexia. APM | Australia. Published 2021. <https://apm.net.au/job-seekers/resources/the-best-jobs-and-careers-for-people-with-dyslexia>

7. 삼성전자, '더 스마트한 일상·지속 가능한 미래'를 위한 비전 공유. Samsung.com. Published 2022. Accessed December 5, 2023. <https://news.samsung.com/kr/%EC%82%BC%EC%84%B1%EC%A0%84%EC%9E%90-%EB%8D%94-%EC%8A%A4%EB%A7%88%ED%8A%B8%ED%95%9C-%EC%9D%BC%EC%83%81%C2%B7%EC%A7%80%EC%86%8D-%EA%B0%80%EB%8A%A5%ED%95%9C-%EB%AF%B8%EB%9E%98%EB%A5%BC-%EC%9C%84>

8. Neurodiversity in marketing: How my dyslexia helps me as a CMO. www.campaignlive.co.uk. Accessed December 5, 2023. <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/neurodiversity-marketing-dyslexia-helps-cmo/1816310>

Featured Artwork:



Thanks to Ophelia, Claire, Isla and Erin, students of Catchwise Learning, for their amazing pieces!

Beyond Grades: Nurturing Your Child's Unique Talents

BY ISABELLE LIM

Amongst kiasu parents, their children's grades remain a top priority. In Singapore, academics is often overemphasised, leaving no room for children to discover their interests and chase their passion. Many have back-to-back tuition or are drilled with assessment books. While academic success is undeniably important, cultivating a child's passion holds equal significance. Not only does passion serve as a source of motivation, it also instils a love for lifelong learning.

Parents should be more open-minded and recognise the value of nurturing their child's interests, as it equips them with crucial problem-solving skills, cultivates values and enhances intrinsic motivation. It takes an immense amount of understanding and patience to fully accept your child's individuality and an even greater step to cheer them on in whatever pursuits they may have. Though pursuing passion over

academic success may not be the most ideal choice in parents' eyes, it is important to remember that your child is still growing. What they need is your support so that they can grow up to be well-rounded individuals.



Parents should support their children in every step of the way¹

As a parent, how does one encourage their child to pursue their passions aside from academics? Every child is unique. Parents need to acknowledge that each child possesses different strengths and weaknesses, different interests and personalities. Some may be musically-inclined, while others may have an interest in, say, gardening. Our role as a parent is to be present. To listen to them ramble

1. Autism: What It Looks Like & 6 Ways to Help. www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org. Accessed November 30, 2023. <https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en/healthu/2023/04/24/autism-what-it-looks-like-6-ways-to-help>

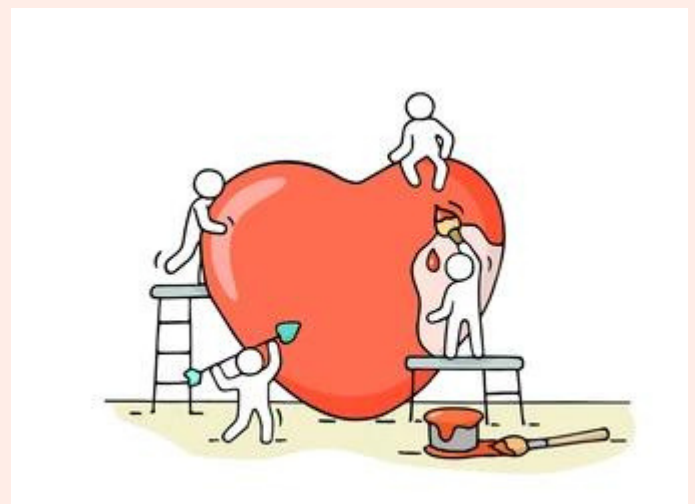
about their newfound passion, to probe them to share more about it and to then provide the necessary resources in allowing them to further explore their passion. Showing interest in what they enjoy doing also helps to build a closer relationship with them. allowing your child to feel safe entrusting anything to you.

Observing and understanding what brings excitement to your child's life is the first step to finding out what your child is passionate about. As much as possible, provide them with opportunities to go out into the real world, to find their footing. They should not be confined within the classroom, nor should they be suffocating under academic pressure. Exposure to diverse experiences plays a significant role in sparking curiosity and lays the foundation for a journey of self-discovery. Through self-discovery, they can gain self-confidence and push to be the best version of themselves.

Having found a passion provides one with a path to go down, a direction in life. But working towards one's passion is certainly not an easy task. Inevitably, challenges would pop up along the way, threatening your child to go off course. Now, this is where you come in. As a parent, your

guidance is of utmost importance. Your child may feel apprehensive, confused and lost. Your job is to hold their hand as they take their first steps. It could be being physically and mentally present in their space, or through words of gentle encouragement. Such actions, although simple, are much more impactful than you think. The comfort that accompaniment brings may have been just what they needed to venture out there and pursue their interests.

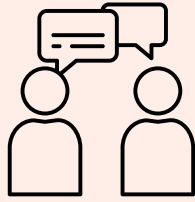
Helping children nurture their passion beyond academic success is something often overlooked, yet plays a crucial role in a child's holistic development, allowing them to navigate life with purpose.



1, 2, 3, Aunt Agony

BY WONG E VEE

In this fast-paced, ever-changing society, the future is filled with both opportunities and challenges. While challenges may be daunting, they are part-and-parcel of life, and the most important thing is overcoming them. As your child explores the different pathways available, learning from the experiences and advice from others can be a useful tool in navigating challenges. Here are some advice from specialists and neurodivergent individuals:



1. Collaboration and Communication

To properly equip your child with the necessary tools to navigate different pathways, collaboration and communication between different stakeholders is necessary. Currently, many parents bring their children to different therapists and specialists, but there is little communication between them. Ms Samantha Tang, a psychologist specialising in the field of educational intervention, finds that many therapists “do not

communicate with parents on how to follow through with the strategies at home.”

“Whatever the child has learnt [in therapy] remains only in the therapy room. The child can function with the therapist, [but] more can be done to generalise the skill sets into a home setting or school setting.” Ms Tang said.

Similarly, Ms Low Kiah Yen, a speech and language pathologist from Ovspring Developmental Clinic said “How the parent can support the child is to first be in touch with the people that the child comes in contact with, [such as] the child’s teachers, therapists, and tuition teachers. [This would] establish a line of communication.”

Clearly, communication and collaboration between parents and various stakeholders is key to ensure that our children can develop, grow, and are able to brave any storms that come their way in the future.



2. Understand Your Child

In preparation for the future, it is important to first understand your child, their condition, and why they behave in certain ways. According to Ms Low, “To address behavioural concerns, we must first understand where this behaviour is coming from.”

Ms Low also mentioned that besides understanding their behaviour, accepting it is also important.

“Sometimes we have to let the parents know that at this point in time, this is how the child will behave. There is no way to eliminate this behaviour; this is their biological makeup. Instead of feeling that they need to correct this behaviour all the time when they see it, being accepting is important.”

Understanding and accepting your child will go a long way in your child’s journey, even as they embark on their future endeavours. This can also allow you to implement more effective strategies for growth and development.

As for how to understand your child’s condition, there are many ways of doing so. Of course, communicating with your child’s

therapists or teachers is one of the most effective ways, but there are other steps you can take as well.

Mr Chong Ing Kai, the founder of the start-up Stick ‘Em, shared about how he used the online platform Reddit to read up about his ADHD. “Go to subreddits to read up on how people are dealing with what they are facing. If something you read about resonates with you, read up more about it and see how you can change your patterns.”

Equipping yourself with as much knowledge and information about your child’s condition as possible can help you prepare them for the future.

As Mr Chong brought up, “The earlier you realise how your mind works, the better you can adapt your patterns and schedules to it, and that will allow you to be more productive.”

However, a full understanding of your child extends beyond their condition; to truly understand your child would be to know their strengths and interests, particularly in non-academic areas.

For Mr Chong, his parents understood him and played supportive roles in his journey.

When he was a child, his father would bring him to the Science Centre for free robotics classes and events. These were not formal robotics lessons, but Mr Chong felt that they were sufficient. "These were very good opportunities for me to realise what I liked to do," he remarked, "that eventually was the reason why I started Stick 'Em."

Ultimately, understanding your child is essential to helping them grow and explore the different pathways in the future.

3. Explore Everything

When it comes to the future, figuring out which exact pathway to take can be difficult. There are many different considerations to be made before coming to a decision. However, there are ways that may just make this a little easier.

In Mr Chong's case, his advice would be to "explore everything".

"Don't waste your time. If you want to figure out what you're good at and where your place in this world is, take the initiative. Volunteer or do internships. Don't just sit at home and play games [all the time]."

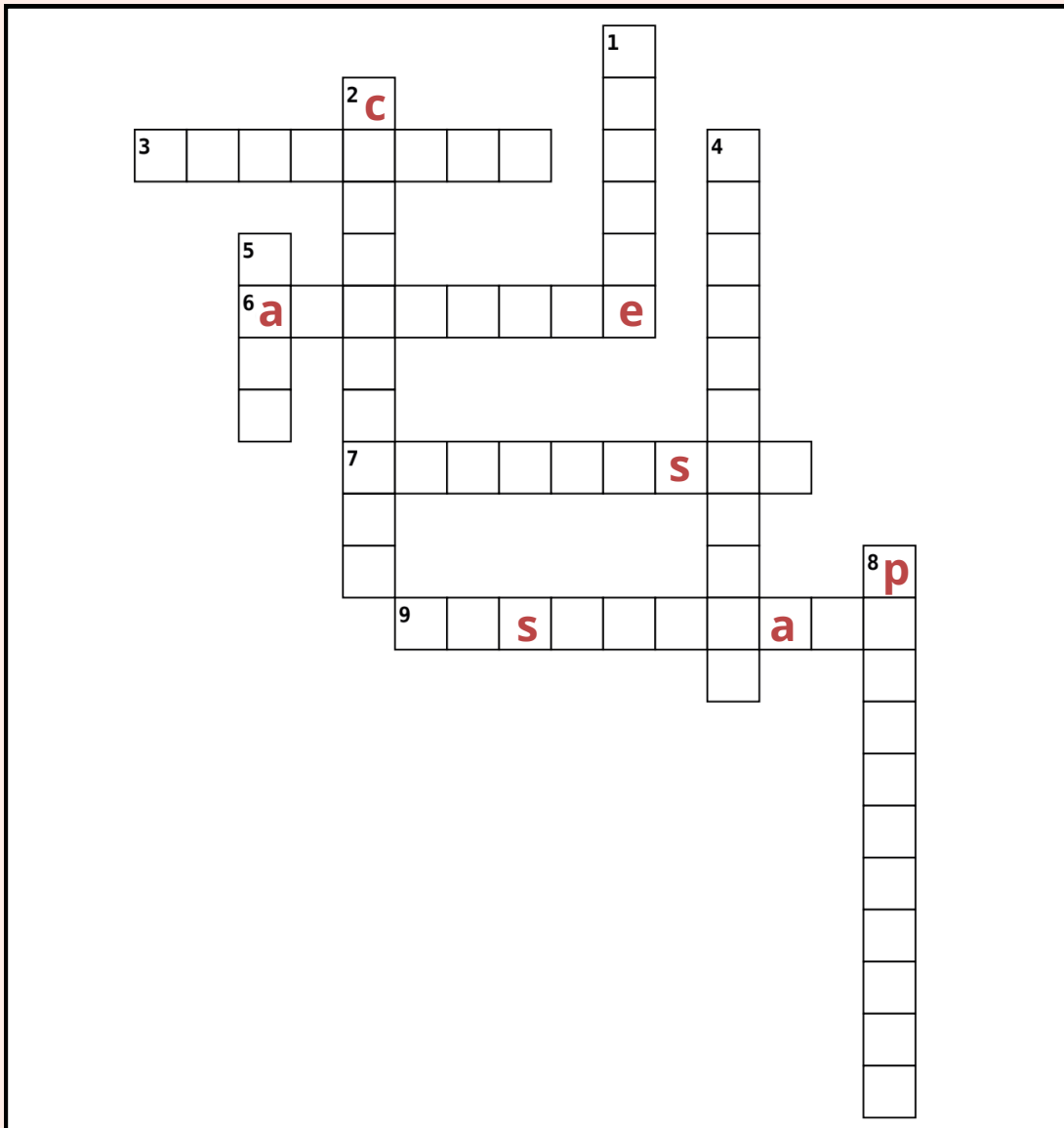
Exploring different areas and trying many different new things is the best way for your child to figure out which pathway to embark on. In today's society, there is an increasingly wide variety of opportunities and things to do, so exploring new things will not only help your child find interests, but also give your child enriching experiences.

Your Child's Path

Collaborating and communicating with stakeholders, understanding your child, or encouraging your child to explore their passions are just some ways that you can support and help your child figure out which path they want to walk in the future. At the end of the day, what matters most is that your child can pursue their interests, do what they like, and be happy. After all, this is their future and their path to walk.



CROSSWORD!



Answers:
Down:
1. future
2. creativity
4. visualising
5. walk
8. personality
Across:
3. flourish
6. aptitude
7. intrinsic
9. passionate

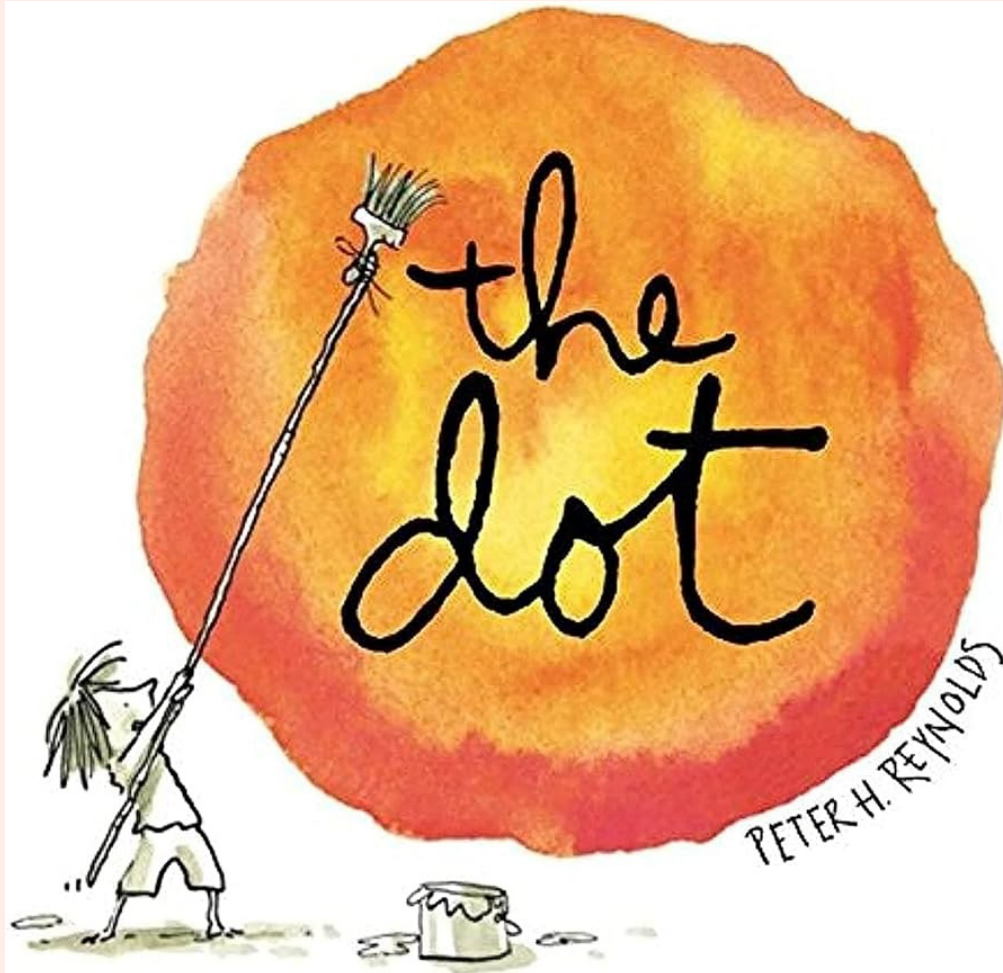
Down:

1. time regarded as still to come
2. the ability to bring into existence something new
4. in the process of forming a mental image of
5. to move at a regular pace, lifting and setting down each foot in turn
8. a set of enduring patterns in one's behaviours or thoughts

Across:

3. to thrive, to prosper
6. a natural ability for something
7. belonging naturally, internal
9. having deep and intense emotions about something

BOOK RECOMMENDATION!



The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds

The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds is a simple yet inspirational book about not being afraid to pursue your passions and try new things. This children's book has drawings and short sentences, making it suitable for children. This book is an all-time favourite of the students at Catchwise Learning and can serve as a motivation for children to try new things and pursue their interests.

PARENTING HACK!



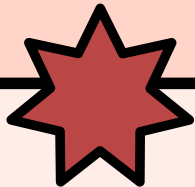
Fidget toys like stress balls, pop-its, and fidget spinners are a very common sight in the market, but did you know that giving children fidget toys is actually beneficial for them? Studies have shown that children who use fidget toys like stress balls actually focus better and are less distracted.¹ Fidget toys can also help reduce stress and increase concentration for both children and adults.²

1. Stalvey, Sheryl|Brasell, Heather. Using Stress Balls to Focus the Attention of Sixth-Grade Learners. *Journal of At-Risk Issues*. 2019;12(2):7-16. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=E1853381>

2. Isbister K. Popping toys, the latest fidget craze, might reduce stress for adults and children alike. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/popping-toys-the-latest-fidget-craze-might-reduce-stress-for-adults-and-children-alike-158746>

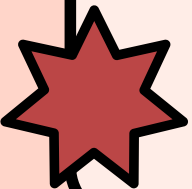
THE END!

We hope you
enjoyed this issue of
The Trailmix!



**Want to give feedback? Want to write an
article or stand a chance to be featured
in our next issue of The Trailmix?**

We want to hear you out! If you have
any feedback, suggestions, ideas,
articles, or artworks, contact us at
contact@catchwiselearning.com!



note: Ts and Cs apply

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