

Ms. Raquel Regalado, Board Member

**SUBJECT: SNIPS FOR AUTISM AND SMILES FOR AUTISM
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, EVALUATION AND TECHNOLOGY

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Visits to the hair stylist and dentist can be challenging for parents and/or caregivers of typically developing children; but for those who care for children with autism these visits tend to be even more stressful and can result in trauma.

Aiming to help families confronting these challenges and focusing on making Miami the best city for children with autism to live in, local board certified behavior analyst Priscilla Deal has created two free community programs: Snips for Autism and Smiles for Autism.

Snips for Autism is a program available once a month that teaches families and stylists how to use behavior analytic techniques to make the hair cutting experience easier and even fun for the child with autism. Every month a participating hair salon will open its doors to the autism community and a team of experienced behavior analysts to practice the haircut process with the behavior analyst and the stylist. An actual haircut will not take place. The stylists will act out the cut with the child while the behavior analyst guides the parents and stylist on specific ways to improve the child's behavior. In addition, the behavior analyst will teach the parent and stylist about desensitization techniques to further improve the child's experience and ultimately make haircuts successful.

Smiles for Autism is a program also available once a month whose goal is to help dental office visits be productive for children with autism without having to sedate or restrain them. Every month a participating dental office will open its doors to a board certified behavior analyst to have the kids and their families tour the office with the behavior analyst and the dental staff. The dentist will receive tips on how to work with children on the autism spectrum and parents will receive tips on how to decrease problem behaviors. Through the use of techniques including conditioning, positive reinforcement, extinction, manipulating environmental variables and repeated exposure, this program is an effort to brake the barriers faced by families in maintaining the oral health of children with autism.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MS. RAQUEL REGALADO:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, through the Superintendent, disseminate information to parents and caregivers about the availability of two free community programs for children with autism: Snips for Autism and Smiles for Autism.