



# Connections

Information + Support

Families of Children with Special Needs

Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, & Yancey counties

December 2011

## FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK - HIGH COUNTRY

2359 Hwy 105  
Boone, NC 28607

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(866) 812-3122

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(828) 265-5394

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### Our Staff

#### Kaaren Hayes

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Avery and Watauga Counties

#### Norma Bouchard

Outreach Coordinator for  
Alleghany, Ashe, Wilkes Counties

#### Teresa Emory

Outreach Coordinator for  
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

### Advisory Board Members

Jeannie Caviness  
Allie Funk  
Rose Matuszny  
Alice Naylor  
Amy Roberts  
Jessica Thackray

### An Affiliate of Family Support Network- North Carolina

### With Support From

Appalachian State University  
Children's Developmental Services  
Agency—Blue Ridge  
High Country & Mitchell United Way  
Friends of Family Support  
Network—High County  
Avery Partnership for Children  
Mitchell-Yancey Partnership for  
Children

## THE COOPER FAMILY by: Karen Bullock



The Cooper family has always been a happy one. A mother of two, Amy Cooper has always felt blessed by her two boys. When I spoke with Ms. Cooper, she didn't have a single thing to complain about. She seems to be a very happy mother with two wonderful, and adorable, boys. Even when she was telling me her story, she didn't once have a bad thing to say about any of the trials her family has faced these past years.

Amy's boys both seemed to be developing well during early childhood, until she noticed that one was having trouble chewing. She asked a pediatrician about it, and they said it was just a phase he was going through. Amy had a gut feeling that it wasn't just a phase. It seemed different somehow. So she sought the opinion of another doctor. They decided to put him through some testing to see if there was slowing in his development.

After some extensive testing, the diagnosis was in: Autism. She and her husband couldn't believe it. Mrs. Cooper said when she was pregnant, she worried about things like this all the time. What expectant mother wouldn't? But to be told that your fears were a reality was something else entirely.

Her family went through the common grieving stages of denial, anger, etc. until they came to accept that they just had to adjust. During this time, they decided to get the brother tested. There was a slim chance both would have Autism, but they wanted to be sure. The second diagnosis came in: Autism. They were floored by the results.

After receiving second opinions, Amy and her husband sat down to figure out a game plan. Right off the bat, Amy knew she didn't want to medicate her boys. She tried alternative therapies to gauge their development without any medical help. After being enrolled in a Community Based school, both boys have improved beautifully.

The Coopers give the boys vitamin supplements, avoid foods with gluten, casein (dairy protein), and artificial sweeteners/colors/anything to try and help the boys improve. So far, cutting gluten has helped a lot. Once gluten was cut out of their diet, Amy and her husband saw an almost instant change in their attitudes. The same happened when they cut dairy out. With the help of the supplements and other naturally found remedies, both boys are thriving.

Through all of the stress, Amy said she found some solace in Parent to Parent FSN-HC. Amy says she feels like the Coordinator of her chapter is everywhere. She even sees her at sign language classes from time to time, which she is taking to help communicate with her son with the more severe Autism case. The connections she's made through Parent to Parent have been very valuable to her. She says, "Knowing that there are other parents out there going through similar things, it's very comforting. It's great to know there's a support group out there that understands all the tough things you have to face. I'm very blessed to have such wonderful boys."





## *Festive Thumbprints*



### Directions:

1. Measure the nuts into the bowl of a food processor or blender. Pulse the machine to finely chop the nuts, and then set them aside.
2. Using an electric mixer, cream the butter. Gradually beat in the sugar until fluffy. Beat in the egg yolk and vanilla extract.
3. Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt into a bowl. Then stir the flour mixture into the butter one third at a time. Stir in the chopped nuts. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and refrigerate it for 20 to 30 minutes.
4. Lightly grease 2 large baking sheets. Heat the oven to 325°F. Roll the dough into 1 ¼-inch-thick balls and place them on the sheets about 1 ½ inches apart. Next, press your thumb into each ball to make a deep impression. (Tip: Before shaping the dough balls and pressing your thumb into the centers, dust your hands with flour to keep the dough from sticking.) Bake the cookies on the center oven rack for 20 minutes, and then transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely.
5. Spoon about ½ teaspoon of filling into each thumbprint. Store the cookies in a tin until serving time.

### Ingredients:

- ¾ cup chopped walnuts or pecans
- ½ cup butter, softened
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup fruit jelly or jam

**Support groups may be rescheduled in the winter due to holidays or inclement weather.  
Please contact your group coordinator.**

*Ashe and Wilkes County Support Group:* Norma Bouchard at 336/838-0977 ext. 212 or  
toll free: 866/812-3122 or bouchardnj@appstate.edu

*Mitchell and Yancey County Support Group:* Teresa Emory at 866/448-5781 or  
828/682-4772 or emorytd@appstate.edu

*Watauga County Support Group:* Kaaren Hayes at 828/262-6089 or  
toll free: 866/812-3122 or hayeskl@appstate.edu

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

**If everyone who received this newsletter sent:**

**\$1.00** We could provide services to families in 2 counties for 1 month.

**\$3.00** We could provide services to families in 3 counties for 2 months.

**\$5.00** We could provide services to families in 3 counties for 3 1/2 months.

**\$10.00** We could provide services to families in 3 counties for 7 months.

## YOU CAN DO SO MUCH FOR SO LITTLE

**Please mail a check today to:**

**Parent to Parent FSN-HC**

**2359 Hwy. 105 Boone, NC 28607**

THANK YOU!

With Support From

