

## Happy DRJ: An app for ASD

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### Abstract

The Happy DRJ app was created and geared for children 2+ diagnosed under the autism spectrum. However, children with other diagnoses are also benefiting.

When the mind is in a calm state, learning increases. The Happy DRJ app helps to build a bridge between a calm and focused mind and learning through the use of midline exercises and social stories. Midline exercises are movements that cross the midline of the body. These exercises engage the left and right hemispheres of the brain resulting in communication that offers improved focus while calming the child, readying them to improve awareness. The Happy DRJ app includes five easy-to-perform midline exercises that provide the maximum opportunity to focus the mind. The social stories component of the Happy DRJ app provides short and informative “how to” stories about engaging with the world around us. The stories are animated using three friendly and helpful cartoon characters. Additional stories are added on a regular basis at no additional cost. When a child is unable to express feelings and emotions, frustrations increase. If this frustration is not addressed, the child will disengage with the world around them.

Tools provide us the opportunity for a much more engaged and fulfilling life. For children diagnosed under the autism spectrum, effective tools allow or create a bridge between realities. The Happy DRJ app has demonstrated its effectiveness with these children in several countries throughout the world, while remaining inexpensive. The Happy DRJ app is currently available in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Chinese, Dutch, Hindu, Bangla, Filipino, Portuguese, Telegu, Tamil, Arabic, And Japanese. The cost of Happy DRJ is a one-time fee of under \$1 USD.

### Biography

Jennifer Dustow has focused on helping others since 2000. Whether as a counselor at Ho`okupono Adolescent Day Treatment Program working with students medically classified with attention deficient hyperactive disorder (ADHD), or as a volunteer for the Suicide & Crisis Center communicating direct steps to remove an individual from a potentially deadly consequence, Dustow has found helping others in need makes her heart sing. Equipped with a Doctoral of Education – Educational Leadership from Argosy University, she is now intently focused on mainstreaming children suffering from autism into productive educational situations. Also a certified cognitive behavioral learning specialist, Dustow has spent the last five years working one on one with children diagnosed under the Autism Spectrum. As owner of Cornerstone Educational Preschool, she directs the preschool’s programs targeting children with autism. Dustow also holds a Master of Arts in Organizational Management, Bachelor of Science in Human Services with a focus on child development and family counseling.



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